Michael B. Teitz

*Michael B. Teitz: Fifty Years of Planning and Policy, from U.C. Berkeley to the Public Policy Institute of California*

Interviews conducted by
Shanna Farrell and Todd Holmes
in 2017

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Michael B. Teitz in 2018
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Michael B. Teitz is Professor Emeritus of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley. He is also a Senior Fellow and Director of Economy at the Public Policy Institute of California, which he helped establish. In addition to a distinguished, thirty-five year career at UC Berkeley, and policy work that still continues at PPIC that still continues, he has served as a consultant to local, state, and national governments, both in the United States and Internationally. In this interview he discusses growing up in London during and after World War II; Coming to the United States for graduate school; the various events and changes he experienced at UC Berkeley between 1962 and 1998; developments in the fields of Planning and Regional Science; his consulting work for local and state governments in the U.S. and Saudi Arabia; and leaving Berkeley to establish PPIC and serving as its founding Research Director.
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Afterword
Farrell: This is Shanna Farrell with Professor Michael [B.] Teitz on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. We are in San Francisco, California. Mike, can you start by telling me where and when you were born and a little bit about your early life?

Teitz: Okay. Well, I was born in London [England], in the City Road, within the sound of Bow Bells [bells of St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside district, London]. I am actually a Cockney, technically speaking. I was born on July 18, 1935. My father was Alexander Teitz, who had been an immigrant from Estonia just before the First World War. He was running from the Russian army draft, which at the time was twelve years, and if they had got him, then I wouldn’t exist. So that was my first big piece of luck, I guess.

My mother was Edith [Freedlander] Teitz, née Freedlander, F-R-E-D-L-E-R. She was one of, I think, six daughters and a son to my grandfather. His name was Morris Freedlander. It was a big family as things were in East London. He had come, I think, probably from Lithuania, although there has always been a certain amount of uncertainty about that, and it was a Jewish family. My father was not Jewish, and although it was never talked about, it must have been a truly immense scandal for my mother to have married him. He converted, in a manner of speaking, since his English never was that good; I think his Hebrew was even less. But he at least nominally converted.

But his family had been—nominally, at least—Russian Orthodox. They were recorded in the books in St. Petersburg [Russia] and in Tallinn [Estonia] as of the True Faith [Russian Orthodox]. But he actually had in his possession a Lutheran bible. And the Estonians were ruled by the bishop of Copenhagen [Denmark] for 300 years before Peter the Great took over the country—and it wasn’t a country, it was a people. And they were all staunch Lutherans, and they still are Lutherans, other than the Russians who live there.

He grew up—and we actually did visit it once—on the island of Saaremaa, in a small village. I may have gotten that wrong; it could be that the village was Upa. I’m blanking, okay? It’s actually an incredibly beautiful island off the west coast of Estonia. People don’t think of Estonia as having islands off the coast, but they are there. The Baltic [Sea] in the summer is extraordinarily beautiful: this flat, wonderful landscape, and the shoreline with shallow fields of grass fading into wetlands.

So somehow, they met. He was essentially a farm boy. They lived in a farming village, and the houses are still there; we visited once. They had long houses, with the people living at one end and the animals living at the other end, because the winters are very cold, and they needed to keep the animals
warm and safe, and the animals kept them warm, I think by sort of osmosis through the walls. His parents, we think, were peasants. We have a picture of them, wearing wooden clogs; on the other hand, very dressed up. We think he had four sisters, but we’ve never found any trace of them.

When we went to the village, we actually found a whirligig mailbox with the name “Tiits” on it. Now, in Estonian, the name is T-I-I-T-S. When he came to London, obviously, the immigration changed it around. It’s spelled various ways on the documents I’ve seen. His conversion, I think, also further changed it into a form that is a fairly common German-Jewish name, but it’s not pronounced the way the German-Jewish pronunciation would have it, which has always been a source of—how shall I say—continual correction for me. [laughs] Everybody gets it wrong. They either spell it wrong, or they say it wrong.

My mother’s family lived in—my grandfather was a patriarch who had a green grocery, a very small business. They lived in a house in Clarence Road in Hackney [Borough, London]. I think number thirteen, if I remember right. And we were living there from the time of my birth together with my two sisters, Betty [Teitz] and Mil [Teitz], and my older brother David [Teitz], who was always called “Peter” outside, for reasons, again, I have no idea why. These quirks of family are very strange and interesting, I think. It was a very modest house—yellow brick. He had some sort of grocery thing in front. He didn’t sell off a barrow, unlike Ted [John Edward] Cohen, who was a person that my mother knew. Ted Cohen was the founder of Tesco [PLC], which is this enormous grocery chain. My mother was always rather proud of having known him when he was pushing a barrow around East London. He was a barrow boy.

I lived there, and actually, my first conscious memory that I have somewhere available is of sitting on the floor in Clarence Road, I think in the basement, and I had a red truck—a fire truck, I think, made of wood—and a book. The book was named Toytown. I’ve often wondered where Toytown went to, because Toytown and the truck disappeared very rapidly, because that memory must have occurred—and it may even have been at the time that we were moving, in 1939, when the war came. In September, the British government undertook this extraordinary effort and moved, I think, several hundred thousand women and children out of London in the space of a month. The reason they did that—it may sound strange—but the belief among government officials at the time, and many military strategists, was that, quote, “The bomber will always get through.” They anticipated what happened to Warsaw [Poland] and the other cities, and they thought London would be bombed flat. Of course, it didn’t quite turn out that way, fortunately for me, again.
So in September 1939, my mother, and my brother, and my two sisters were all evacuated from London, and we went to King’s Lynn [England], which is a town on the coast of Norfolk [England], perhaps a hundred and some miles north of London—120, probably, L-Y-N-N.¹ We stayed there, like all the other families, probably only for a few weeks. My only memory of that time is of having or seeing a merry-go-round that wound up and turned, and I quite distinctly remember that. We obviously came back, because as soon as it became evident that what was called the “phony war” was going on, everybody said, “enough of this—we are heading back to London in a hurry”, because people did not like being evacuated very much. Londoners—you know, there are many accounts of this—but it was not congenial to them. They were taken away from their communities in the name of safety.

So we returned to London. I don’t have any memory of the going or coming, but I know we went back. But when we came back, we no longer lived in Clarence Road. We lived in a house at number eighteen Heyworth Road [London], H-E-Y. That was also in Hackney, about a block from Hackney Downs, which is now a large park—not very large; a good-sized park—that featured a good deal in my life later. And there, we were upstairs in a large house that had been divided into two. That part of Hackney had been developed in the early 1900s or late 1800s as a suburb for upper-middle-class families—or middle to upper-middle; probably more middle-class families—who could afford a decent-looking house with a bow window and some steps to the front door, and a front garden, and iron railings in front—all that.

I assume we must have come back in late 1939, and we were certainly there through the summer of 1940, when the war came in all its savagery. That’s when I started to have experiences that were, to say the least, life threatening. The war was probably the most formative experience of my life. I was close to death at least twice, if not more. I saw the effects of it, and they are sharply, sharply imprinted. I can visualize them very clearly. They are mostly in the form of snapshots in the head, which I am sure you are familiar with. For example, in the summer of 1940, standing in the back garden, which had a scrap of grass in it, and looking up, and seeing vapor trails in the sky, which were the dogfights going on during the Battle of Britain. It was a powerful time.

About that time, too, I saw my first house destroyed, about one block away. A bomb fell on Downs Park Road [London].² It took out one four-story house—again, the same style, facing the park; a rather nice house, actually—that had,

¹ This was the first wave of evacuations that moved some 600,000 people out of London.
² The bomb fell on Downs Park Road, on September 24th, 1940, one of the few dates that I can verify.
I think, three families living in it. They were all Jewish, and it’s interesting that—so [Adolf] Hitler was successful there. What struck me, as I can see it, is—going over to see it, because everybody did; it was the thing to do—was how cleanly the bomb—they were good-sized bombs, but they were big enough—it just took down one house. You could actually see, through the walls, the living rooms, and the wallpapers, and the chairs and tables in the adjoining house, because the wall had fallen in on one side. So it was a pile of rubble. It’s a very sharp memory.

Hackney Downs also features in another memory. I was with my mother in the park one day when we were out there, and the government had dug bomb shelters in the park. Basically, they dug big trenches, put some concrete around the entranceway, put a framing, and then put a lot of dirt on top. So if you were not hit directly, you were pretty safe. They were good blast shelters. We were walking in the park, as I recall, and all of a sudden, my mother started running, and she’s hauling me along. A plane came along next to the park, actually rising and falling as it went, machine-gunning and knocking roof tiles off. And bits of stuff were flying around. And we ran like mad, and got into the shelter.

One other memory I think is worth recounting. We also had in the backyard—the “back garden,” in English terminology—an Anderson shelter. Now, an Anderson shelter was a wonderful English invention by somebody named [John] Anderson.\(^3\) What you did was you dug out a space probably about six by eight feet—if that much—to a depth of about two feet, or three feet, and into it you put a vertical but curved corrugated iron framework—just corrugated iron. You put a piece of corrugated iron at the front and the back, with an opening to get into it. And then you took all the dirt that you’d had from the digging it and put it on top. You had yourself a little personal shelter. It was a good blast shelter, actually.

I recall one afternoon—I think afternoon; it could have been morning, obviously—the sirens sounded. The sound of the sirens still chills me a bit—not so much, but—the sirens sounded, and we ran to the shelter. We got inside. I don’t know; my mother must have let go of me, and I went to the front of the shelter and was standing there at the entrance. I am down underground, with the corrugated iron sheet and then the doorway. I’m looking out, and this bomb with a screamer on it comes horizontally over the house, and I saw it. It hit a movie house—cinema—about forty yards away. It must have been released by a low-flying plane, because it was actually traveling almost

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\(^3\) The shelter was in fact not invented by, but rather named after Sir John Anderson, who was in charge of preparations for aerial assault on London.
horizontally at the time. I was much affected by it, needless to say. I was probably screaming my head off, actually.

There are other bits and pieces of experiences of that time, most of which I don’t remember. But that month or so in the late summer of 1940 was a powerful time for me, which ended when we were evacuated again. The evacuation this time took us to a village called Thorley [England] outside Bishop’s Stortford [England], which is about fifty miles north of London, on the road to Cambridge [England].

Thorley is actually an interesting village. It actually consisted of three parts, or three or four parts. That is, there was a main village street on the London road, which had a pub and a café, and some council houses, and a few other cottages, plus a big house, which was owned by the Wolfson family. That was along a north-south axis. A mile west from that village, which was known as “Thorley Street”—but it was all Thorley—a mile west was the school, and a couple of council houses. About a quarter of a mile beyond that, the church [Thorley Church], and the home farm near the church. The church had a pond, and was a rather nice, restored church, with an acclaimed—certainly a Norman doorway. It wasn’t a distinguished church in the pattern of the wonderful English churches of East Anglia, but, you know, this was in Hertfordshire [county], which is the home counties.

Beyond that, there was another hamlet, which was known as Butler’s Hall [England], which had several cottages, and a home farm called Butler’s Hall Farm. That was a mile from the school [Thorley School]. And then, beyond that, or next to that, about a half-mile away, was another farm called Moore Hall—Moore, M-O-O-R-E. About a half a mile or so further on, was the pub, called The Green Man, which was on the road out of Bishop’s Stortford going west, toward Much Hadham [England].

This was a very scattered, strange settlement. It had been around a long time. It appears in the Domesday Book, and it had gone through all the things that—historically, without being famous for anything. [laughs] When we arrived there, we went through the process—I can’t remember this, but I know it is the case—of sorting out—and this was one of the astonishing things about the evacuations: that the government organized it, but it was actually carried out, in very large part, on the ground, by volunteers. Those volunteers were typically English country ladies of typically middle- or lower-middle class, directed in some part by ladies of a higher class. It was here that I found out about the English class system, and became really aware of it for the first time.

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4 This was part of a second evacuation wave in September 1940 that moved some 250,000 people out of London. We apparently did not move immediately, but it might well have been in October.
The term was, you were “billeted.” You were put into a billet. Which meant
you went with a family. We did not have, to my knowledge, the terrible
experience that some people had, in which children were simply sort of put in
a church hall, and then people would come and look at them and say, “ooh,
I’ll have that one.” [laughs] Sometimes split up siblings, and so forth. I have
no memory of any of that, and I don’t think it actually happened. My sisters
were placed in a cottage in Thorley Street, my younger sister, at that time—
not younger than me, but younger; I was the youngest. My older sister was, at
that point, already going to grammar school, so she went where the school
was, somewhere in Bishop’s Strotford. My brother and I, and my mother,
actually, were placed, or lived for probably a month, or maybe a little more, in
the big house of the Wolfson family [Thorley House], which was the large
house in Thorley Street that I mentioned.

It was a rather wonderful house. It had things I had never seen. For example, I
had never seen a refrigerator. It had a fence on the London road, with a gate,
and next to the gate was a gatehouse, where lived the man who looked after
their garden. They probably had two acres of gardens, part of which was
growing vegetables, and part of which was lawn, part of which was a paddock
for a pony—but no pony at the time—a beautiful lawn, and a rose garden.

We lived in the house, and we were up in an upper-floor bedroom. We were
there probably for quite a while, because I can remember being in the house
during a snowfall, and the children of the family—Mr. and Mrs. Wolfson had
a daughter and a son, Pamela [Wolfson Finch] and Mark [Wolfson], and they
were with my brother out on the lawn rolling a giant snowball, and picking up
the snow and leaving a track in the grass. It was very visual.

I ran into other things there for the first time. My mother lived there, too, and
helped out in the house. They had one servant, named Ena, who was sort of
like a member of the family. Kind of a very small-scale Upstairs, Downstairs.
She did all the cooking, Tom did all the gardening, and he was a wonderful
man, Tom Hammond. He showed me around the garden; demonstrated to me
how to kill a rat, which was very interesting. The way you do it is it’s in a
cage where you’ve cornered it, and you take a sharp stick, and you [makes wet
stabbing noise]. Not nice. But to a small kid, age probably—at that point, I
suppose it’s the winter of 1940, so I’m four and a half.

It was a very comfortable household. I had never seen a household as
comfortable. In the roof of the garden shed, they had apples, and I helped him
put the apples out. You placed them in rows so that they would not touch each
other. If they didn’t touch each other, then if one went bad, it wouldn’t affect
all the others. You just had long rows of apples waiting for the winter, when
you would eat them. Rather nice. Obviously, they ate fairly well from the
garden, despite the rations. They had our rations, too, which was helpful. We ate well.

Mr. Wolfson at that time was Commander [R. V.] Wolfson. He was a commander on the battleship [HMS] *Warspite*, which was one of the battleships which was not sunk during World War II. Sadly, after the war, he died in one of the first crashes of the de Havilland Comet, the British jet airliner that was the first airliner to fly—the first jet airliner. But unfortunately, they made the windows square, and they cracked on the corner. He died in the Mediterranean [Sea].

Living there I think was a very powerful influence. I had a sense that it was possible to live very differently than we had lived, and I was quite aware of that, I think. I was still very nervous. I remember one time there was a tremendous thunderstorm, and I cried and ran and hid in the closet. Afterwards, Mrs. Cox—who was Dorothy Wolfson’s sister, who lived normally in Kensington [London], was living there at the time, escaping the Blitz, which was starting—she took me to walk in the rose garden, and I think that’s probably the first time that I was aware of beauty. It was just extraordinary in the sunlight, after the storm; a tremendous thunderstorm, but afterwards, with water dripping off the roses. I may have the roses wrong; it may be that it was the wrong time of year. I don’t know. But she was very kind, and walked me around.

So, that didn’t last; as happens in wartime, things move on. My brother and I were moved. I think it was the point when my mother and father—my father had come up and down a few times, and he actually got on extremely well with Commander Wolfson, who spoke Russian, and my father spoke Russian, so they chatted together quite nicely. That started a relationship with that family in which my father, who was a very skilled tailor, made clothes for the Wolfson family, for the women. He was a women’s tailor, and made beautiful suits—really, really beautiful. One of them once appeared, to his great pride, in a picture in the *Evening Standard*, the London evening paper, much later. But they exploited him. He didn’t ever charge enough for what he did, considering what they were. He was making them suits that would have cost them three times as much in London. But in return, they treated us incredibly nicely. At that moment, they did that long before he did anything for them, or we did.

So, my brother and I were then moved to Butler’s Hall, which is this hamlet part of Thorley, two miles from Thorley House. There, we were living with Mr. and Mrs. Clark, Albert [Clark] and Annie Clark—no E, I think. He was a farm laborer; she was a housewife. This was a house that was the dramatic opposite, and so it impressed itself on me. No running water. No electricity. No sewer. But very comfortable. Mrs. Clark was a genius at cooking on a coal
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stove. Her blackberry and apple pie was amazing—just taste you can—I can still remember.

Mr. Clark was a farm laborer who worked for a farmer who had land nearby, but wasn’t—had a farm near the public house. I have forgotten the name of the farm. Never mind. He didn’t actually work for Butler’s Hall Farm, which I always thought was slightly strange, but that’s the way it goes. A farm laborer was not paid much, but he had a garden, and we could live. They could live.

Mrs. Clark was welcoming, but I learned actually only fairly recently that the government gave them instructions that they should not get too close to the children. The reason—I think actually, it was psychologically sound in one sense—they did not want to alienate the children’s affection for their parents. They saw that as a serious issue which would make the parents extremely unhappy. They were never very warm, if you like. They were always incredibly kind. My sister Mil told me that Mrs. Clark once told her later, after the war, how painful it was not to be able to just gather me in when I was hurting.

I remember going there very clearly. It was in the evening; another one of those evenings in England. So, what time of year was it? I have no idea. It could have been the spring or the fall. But obviously, it was before I went to school, so it was probably sometime in 1940 still.\(^5\) We drove there, my brother and I; we were taken in a car. I don’t know if my mother was with me or not, but we were left there, and I cried bitterly, a lot. That was traumatic. Now, why that should have been traumatic, I don’t know. Perhaps because at all the other times, I’d always been with my mother, and I was her baby. I was the youngest, until my younger sister came along a bit later—a very late child. That first night was very hard. But amazingly, you know, the resilience of children, it’s astounding. I settled in, and the next few years were probably the happiest of my life. I was convinced I was going to be a farmer.

We lived in a large brick house that actually was called Butler’s Hall Cottages, and we lived in number three. It was divided into four pieces, the end ones slightly better, and the inner ones slightly less good. Number three, it had a front door, which led out onto a piece of land, onto a garden with some fruit trees. Beyond that was a field. There was no way to get to the front door unless you walked around, and in the field, and then back. The front door was never used; the back door was the entrance. The house had basically two rooms on two floors, and then an attic room—a good-sized attic room. A kind of an outhouse, which was next to the back door, in which there was a copper, in which you put water and built a fire under it and did your laundry, and you

\(^5\) Grade school started at age six at that time in England.
could do preparation and other things for vegetables. It had a little tiny alleyway—a little tiny space with a little fence and a gate.

Inside, the house was small but manageable. It had steps up into the living room, which had a kitchen table and a coal-burning or wood-burning stove, either—depending on which—which heated the house. The house got very cold in the winter. As I said, there was no electricity. Running water came from a pump, which was about fifteen yards away from the backdoor, and you would go out there. It was a tall pump, and I could just about haul down the thing and carry a bucket of water back to the house.

For sewage, there was an outhouse attached to the house, with a wooden plank—you know, a box with a hole in it. Mr. Clark cleaned that out every so often, and put it a little way away from the house, in what was known as the bungy hole. Presumably, everybody did that. Wastewater ran out through a drain, and it ran down the path which connected the back doors of all the cottages, to a ditch next to the road, and that ditch was always somewhat noisome. It didn’t contain sewage, but it wasn’t exactly nice. We would avoid it, you know, clambering around.

Next to the living room was a front room—a classic English front room. It had chairs, and probably—I don’t know if she had antimacassars, but she might have. No one ever went in there. I think I only went in there once or twice in all the years that I was at Thorley living with them. It was absolutely unused. Upstairs, there was a back bedroom and a front bedroom, which was Mr. and Mrs. Clark’s, and my brother and I had the back bedroom, which was comfortable. It had an etching of an English abbey [Tintern Abbey, Yorkshire] on the wall. Upstairs from that was this attic room, which later, I lived in. I loved that. It was really nice under the eaves. The stairs were about this wide—very narrow. And just ran up the side of the house. Steep.

I lived there I guess until 1945, until the end of the European war—V-E Day [Victory in Europe Day]. The first thing that I did was to go to school, which was a big event. My brother and I went together. We were a mile from the school. We walked down there to it along a lane, which was surfaced—you know, it was basically tar and gravel, but it was a firm surface—and it was a walk that I grew to know, obviously, intimately, every single day. I wore a red lumber jacket, so Mrs. Clark would say she could see me coming in the distance, running back to the house.

We would walk past Butler’s Hall Farm—not the farmhouse, but the farm itself, which was a place we played a lot. We played in the farmyard; that was our playground. We would walk to school, past the fields that led down to a little creek below, a brook that was called “the brook.” Strange. Past the dairy field, where we would go and pick mushrooms early in the morning, if there
were any, and never got enough of them. Past the dairy, which was where, if we were home, we would go to the dairy and get the milk, in a can. We would get there at milking time, and the dairy farmer would be there wearing a kind of a leather apron and a little round hat. He would lean against the cow and milk away like mad into the bucket. They had a milk cooler, which was sort of rumbling away, with water running down it, I guess. Exactly how it worked I didn’t know, but the milk was picked up every day. Occasionally, he would turn around and just squirt the nipple at us, and squirt us with milk, and we would run away laughing. He was a nice man.

We would walk on past another big house, called Thorley Hall, which was up a short hill lined with horse chestnut trees, which in fall produced horse chestnuts, which were called “conkers.” I don’t know if you know about conkers, but conkers was a game historically played by British schoolchildren. You got a horse chestnut, preferably a really good one. When you took them out of their shells, which you tried to get off the trees, they would be this incredible, rich, shining brown. You drilled a hole through the chestnut. You put a piece of string on it and tied a knot so you could hold your chestnut, or your conker. And then the object of the game was alternately, you used your conker to hit his conker, and he used his conker to hit your conker. If you could break his conker, you got one score. Somebody had a conker with three—had knocked off three conkers. But to make it more interesting, you also got to add yours to your score, that conker score. Some conkers had scores of ten or twenty, or more. It’s a wonderful game.

That led past what was the cricket field, now plowed up, of course. And then the football field, now plowed up, of course, and down to the school. The school was basically a two-room building. It was, if you can imagine almost like a church. Think of a little church hall, with lancet windows at each end, so with glass windows at each end, no windows on the side. Built out on one side was another room, called “the little room.” You had the big room and the little room. You had a schoolyard, and the schoolyard had a wall around it, and then iron railings at the entrance. Which were never closed; the doors were never closed.

The school was run by a woman named Edith Moorhouse, who was an extraordinary lady. She later became quite well known in English education circles for her advanced ideas. Among them was that she believed that you didn’t just sit children in straight rows. Now, my memory of those early years is that we were still in straight rows, and the way it worked was this: you

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6 Edith Moorhouse was a greatly respected educational innovator. She had a profound impact on my life, recognizing that I could be a scholar. One of my great regrets is that I did not know the correct spelling of her name. Despite trying, I did not succeed in meeting her later in life.
started school at six, so the youngest children, of six, were in the little room, with an elderly lady, Mrs. Smith. She bicycled something like seven miles or eight miles to school every day, and wore the most extraordinary button boots. She would wear these boots, and she had a buttonhook, and would go [makes noise suggesting rapid movement], opening each of the buttons, and then she would take off the boots and put on her slippers or whatever.

Her version of teaching was very minimal. We did what were called “pot hooks,” and you had a slate, with a slate pencil, and when you use a slate pencil—which is actually, I think, another piece of slate—and you write on it, it leaves marks. The slates had lines, and she would draw something like that, [gestures] and we would draw something like that. Then she would draw something like that—a U—and we would draw a U. You did your pot hooks, and then you did a row of them, and then you copied them over. I can remember very vividly.

The other thing we did, which was in aid of the war, was fraying. People gathered together rags, and we were told that this was for the wounded soldiers. What you did: you pulled apart—this was child labor, actually, and we didn’t exactly enjoy it, I can tell you that—we pulled it apart, until all you had was the fragments of thread, and then those became sort of bunches of thread. They would be pushed into a cotton sleeve, which somebody had stitched. They would push it in really hard, so that the thing was hard, and then stitched up at the end. Presumably, this was to be a thing that was put under wounded soldiers’ arms or limbs. Exactly how or why or where it was ever used, I have my doubts, but that was Mrs. Smith.

To move from Mrs. Smith to Ms. Moorhouse was like traveling a century, because Ms. Moorhouse had advanced ideas. She had children aged seven to fourteen, which was the school-leaving age, and we would be arrayed in rows. Think of this as a long, oblong space in which there is a fireplace on one wall, and a space in front of it, and the teacher sat at a desk a little way up from the fireplace—not too close, because in winter, this thing was incredibly hot. They burned coke. The children were arrayed in rows facing the teacher according to age. So the youngest were on the left, nearest to the boys’ entrance, and the oldest were to the right, nearest the girls’ entrance. The girls’ entrance and the boys’ entrance were separated because the girls’ and the boys’ toilets—which as I recall were pretty primitive; I think they had running water of some sort.

And we learned. Ms. Moorhouse, though, was not rigid about that. She believed that children should learn by doing, and she eventually became the education officer for Oxfordshire [county, England], and quite well known for innovations in clustering children. You know the standard circle? That was one of her innovations. We would do things like create a store. We would
bring all that we could find in the way of boxes and empty cans, and we would make a store with prices, and we would sell stuff. Arithmetic, right? Plus crafts. We did art, we did music. I played the triangle. My family has two branches: one is intensely musical, and the other one is not. [laughs] I am in the “not” category. I love music, but—.

Anyway, the school was a very powerful influence. I was a good student, I think, but it was also an experience in which I learned for the first time about other places. I discovered history and geography. We read books. Books figure big in my life history. We read about Bombo, the little African boy, and Tuktu, the little Eskimo boy—boys, in each case. I think very stereotypical, but at the same time, opening, a little. People gave me history stuff: books; sometimes there were paper things like magazines, with—whatever—it amounted to cartoon depictions of English history. I really liked those a lot. I was a late reader, but once I hit it, I was fast, in reading, that is. I think I got a very good primary school education there, although my math was not so good as I found when I went back to London.

Altogether, school was life in those years. We had a school garden, and a goat, or two. One time, my older sister Betty came to visit; she would come up and see us every so often. She was rather bossy, and very much in charge of the family; saw it as her responsibility. And was wonderful throughout my life that way. The goat got out, and we spent hours trying to get it back. We went to the fields around the farm, to a pond, and gathered up newts, and tadpoles. We had excitement. A bomb fell in a field, in the football field, not far from the school, and the school was closed, and we all went and did school in the basement of Thorley House, the Wolfsons’ house.

A pretty idyllic time in many ways. When we were not in school, we would wander the fields. We would play in the barnyard a lot. There was a Dutch barn, which is a tall structure—probably two or three stories tall—with simple steel verticals. No walls—just a curved, corrugated iron roof, in which you stacked hay, or straw, or wheat. We would play there and jump off the bales onto piles of straw and stuff like that. Whenever I could, if I was home from school, I would ride on the tractor with Pimp Hammond. I would ride on the tractor with him if he would let me. This is obviously very dangerous, but the tractors had big mudguards—fenders, you know? You would sit up there and ride up and down the field while he was plowing.

I did a lot of stuff on the farm, on various farms. During the various harvest seasons, we would pick potatoes, which were spun out by a potato spinner,

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7 There were many Hammonds in the village, notably Tom and Pimp, but also Benny, who seemed a bit dangerous, and old Granny Hammond, who terrified us.
and then we would pick them and put them in sacks. One-hundred-and-twelve-pound sack got you ten pence—ten cents. Ten pence was worth more then, obviously, than now—a lot more—but it wasn’t a lot. We’d pick peas, which were pulled up by what was called a “binder,” a piece of machinery—I knew them all. You picked the pea off the bine, put it in the sack, and for that, a fifty-six-pound sack got you one and sixpence. But filling a fifty-six-pound pack of peas one at a time—and God help you if you put pea bines in the—or if you put dirt in the potato sack. They didn’t like that at all.

The farm was part of our life. We wandered around the fields and woods. We played war a lot, with bows and arrows, and pieces of wood for guns, and we stalked each other up and down. We picked flowers. There were bluebells in the bluebell wood. It was an amazing place. In the spring, it was carpeted with bluebells, and we learned to pick them, breaking them rather than pulling them up so that they would grow again. If you were really lucky, you found violets, sometimes dandelions. I would bring them home for Mrs. Clark. In the evening, I would read. We had no electricity, so we had oil lamps. No pressure lamps with incandescent mantles, but regular lamps with a wick and a flame, and a big glass chimney that you put on it, and you sat next to the table and tried to see.

I was very interested in the war. We listened to the radio in the morning, for the nine o’clock news, and at night, for eight or nine o’clock news. Usually one radio show a week, because the radio required batteries, and you could never get batteries, so you had to be very careful of that.  

I stayed there really through that period from—it must have been either late 1940 or early 1941 to 1945, to, I guess, April. In many ways, obviously, I was hurting, but probably not as much as my mother was. At one point, my parents moved back to Bishop’s Stortford for a while, and then we would see them on the weekend. We would walk three miles to Bishop’s Stortford, and then walk back. And sometimes, at night, they would walk back with us. I can recall walking back in the moonlight—a very powerful image.

I have one other recollection that is very powerful from that time. Whenever it was—late 1944, I guess—I was walking to school one day by myself, for some reason. I had a friend who lived nearby. My best friend was Mick Marnes, but he wasn’t around. All of a sudden, I became aware that there was this immense air fleet flying over me, of [Douglas] DC-3s with stripes on

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8 Our favorite show was Music Hall, which featured comedians, singers, and even ventriloquists—a remarkable feat of inducing the audience to visualize. They were mostly veterans of actual music halls.

9 During this time, my youngest sister, Gil, was born in Bishops Stortford.
them, each towing two gliders. There were hundreds of them. It was amazing. It was the most astonishing thing I’ve ever seen, I think. It was actually the second day, I have figured out since, of the airborne assault at Arnhem [the Netherlands], in the attempt to capture the [Lower] Rhine [River] bridges, which failed. But I was standing there with my mouth open.\(^\text{10}\)

The war was like that. Strange things happened. We had chickens, obviously, at home, and rabbits. We ate the rabbits. It was a time of extraordinary events, and also of great calm, in a way. Saturday evening, we would walk with Mr. and Mrs. Clark a mile to the pub, and we would sit outside and drink ginger beer, and have a packet of crisps if there were any, which was wonderful—potato chips. Sometimes, we would walk further, to a hamlet called Perry Green [England], which was truly idyllic at that time. They had a pub called The Cock, which was just wonderful. It always seems to be evening, because that’s when we went. [laughs] But the light in England in the summer can be wonderful—really amazing.

I’ve probably said as much as I should about that. Although there is a lot more. I could move on, perhaps. Unless you have any questions?

01:01:11:45
Farrell: I do. During all this time, and during the war, were you feeling palpable tension? Was that something that you experienced?

01:01:11:58
Teitz: No.

01:01:11:59
Farrell: Just part of—

01:01:12:01
Teitz: Obviously, there were times of great terror, and there were times of loss, abandonment. There have been books written about that generation who were evacuated, and God knows that we are making new generations of them now. But especially at the time in Thorley, at Butler’s Hall, you know, I was ready to be a farmer. It was a very happy time, actually.

I can remember that at Christmastime, if I got the wishbone—if we had a chicken, which was usually possible because we raised hens—I would always wish for the war to be over. Which is an interesting thing in retrospect, because I see myself as happy, but that wish was always for the war to be over. I guess it was to be reunited with family, although it was never the same, obviously. That my mother always felt that the war destroyed our family, or damaged it, and she was quite right. War does terrible things. It’s a bad deal.

\(^{10}\) The event occurred on September 18\(^{\text{th}}\), 1944.
Farrell: What drew you to being a farmer when you were younger?

Teitz: Just being around, you know? I admired Mr. Clark. He was a lovely man. He had been in the First World War, and he had been mustard gassed. He was in the Machine Gun Corps, which is a strange outfit. But he had a picture of his battalion, of the thousand men all sitting there wearing their Machine Gun Corps badges. His nose was burned away by the mustard gas. He never talked about it, as is true in general of people who have been soldiers.

But he would answer questions. He was a very comforting man. He would show me how to do things. He taught me that in your pockets, you need three things: a knife; a shilling; and a piece of string. If you live on a farm, that’s not bad advice. The shilling is something else. He showed me how to chop wood, and how to dig, and how to double dig, how to raise rabbits. You know? I was very happy.

My brother, David, was moved in the latter part of the war, because the pattern was that kids went with their schools, and the grammar school that he went to was the local grammar school in London. How it was known, I don’t know. He was moved with the school in King’s Lynn when he turned eleven, so I was by myself after that. But I wasn’t unhappy about it. My brother had been a wonderful support—a real rock. In the early days of the school, we encountered some anti-Semitism. We had some fights. He had the fights; I cowered. [laughs] I was small, you know? But it disappeared. It was amazing. It really disappeared. I suppose we became part of the scenery.

Farrell: Were you eventually reunited with your family after Thorley?

Teitz: Excuse me?

Farrell: Were you eventually reunited with your family and you all lived together—at a certain point?

Teitz: Yes. I’ll come to that now, if you would like.

Farrell: Sure, yeah.

Teitz: Okay. In 1945, with the ending of the war, everybody was well aware of it. During the election of 1945, I was still in Thorley, and I remember walking around saying—what was I?—“I am a Liberal National.” What the hell is a
Liberal National? Well, there were the Conservatives, there was Labour, and there was the Liberal National party. There were the Liberals, and then the Liberal National party, which was a conservative Liberal party—the conservative wing of the Liberals. I didn’t know what I was talking about, obviously; I was, I guess, nine years old. But it was clear that as soon as V-E Day happened, everything changed, and I returned home to London.

Now, actually, I had been doing that in the last few months of the war. I guess I was eight? I would walk—no, I think somebody took me two miles to the railway station in Bishop’s Stortford. I would get on a train and go to Liverpool Street station in London, and my sister Mil would meet me there and pick me up. We would ride the bus to my house. We were now, at that point, living, I think, in Median Road. Some question there.

Anyway, so I would trek back and forth, and then she would take me back to the train very early on Monday morning. I would get the train, ride back to Bishop’s Stortford, and then walk to school. I must have been doing that in the winter of 1944-45, because I can remember walking the three miles to school through the snow, and seeing, as I went, a bus going the other way that was towing one of these contraptions that they had to create a form of gas that the bus could use. It was a very strange vehicle. But I would show up at school just in time for lunch—very happy to have an ironclad excuse—and eat the terrible food. School lunches were terrible. They were truly awful in World War II. I mean really awful. Semolina for dessert is one of the worst things you could ever have in your life.

So 1945 came eventually. I have no memory of actually packing and going back to London, but I was there. I went to school at two big primary schools, the first for a few months, and the second one for a year, during which I took the eleven-plus exam, and that made me eligible for grammar school. So at that point, my sister Betty was off at teachers college in Weston-super-Mare [England]. She was tremendously athletic. She could dive and swim like amazing. She was off to teachers college. My mother and father were home, obviously. My father was working in the West End [district, London] as a tailor, not paid very well, but they were getting by. My mother was keeping house. My sister Mil was still home, but she was very shortly thereafter beginning to go to the Royal College of Music, because some teacher—who was not doing her a big favor, as she told me—that convinced her to be a singer. She has a very wonderful voice, but she was also an absolutely brilliant woman. She was offered a scholarship to the most prestigious girls’ school in England at age eleven. My parents were too scared to let her go. I have no idea what she would have made of it. She could have been a really great scholar, I think. The war has its price.
For me, I came back. I went to these schools in London. Imagine the difference. I was in a one-room school, basically. I come to this thing; it has three floors, it’s gloomy, it’s Victorian, red brick, stone floors, cold. And they are London kids, and they see me coming. You know: who is this hick? I have a Hertfordshire accent. [pronounced with accent] “Are you going down the road?” [resumes normal tone] Not like London. But I was smart, and I read books and stuff like that. So in the playground, nobody bullied me. It was interesting. They were mostly interested in taking my money. There were various games that allowed them to do that. For example, there were things called “cigarette cards.” I don’t know if you have ever heard of them?

01:01:23:57 Farrell: No.

01:01:23:57 Teitz: Each pack of cigarettes had a little card in it, and the packs were quite small, because you didn’t have big packs. And each card was one of a series. For example, great railway engines, or—in America, it’s the equivalent of baseball cards. But cigarette cards were the currency of grade school in London.

You would put a card down next to the brick wall, at the bottom, and attempt to wedge it in. I’m sorry; I’ll come back. You would put your penny down next to the stone wall—a big, round penny—and that was a challenge. Some kid would come along with a bunch of cards, and he would stand a few feet away and flip the card toward the penny. If he knocked the penny over, he got the penny and you got the card. If he missed, you got the card. If he missed ten times, you got ten cards. It was a good deal, maybe, except my penny always went on the first card. [laughs] They knew I didn’t know how to stick a penny up on the wall. I don’t know what they used—chewing gum? Who knows? Gum was big currency.

I never mentioned the Americans in World War II. I should have, just to backtrack for one moment. One of the things that was amazing about the war was that we became aware of the Americans. We would sit outside the pub in the evening, and the trucks, in 1944, would go by with these GIs [soldiers] on them. We would all yell out, “Got any gum, chum?” Of course, the gum—if we were lucky—would come raining down. Wrigley’s was the best; we really wanted that. I loved the Americans. [laughs] I had a very positive view of America. But that’s a by the way.

So, back to London. Okay. I am in London; I am at grade school still, or primary school. The second year—or the year of 1946, I suppose—I was at a different school, and I learned some stuff there. It was okay. I had a teacher who was a man who was not a very good teacher, but I learned how to do some technical drawing, how to do angles with just a straight edge and a
triangle. You can do amazing things with that, and I understood perspective. I had painted a lot in grade school in Thorley. I really loved painting. I did watercolors, and I did more of that. That year just vanished, essentially. I read some books. I won a prize, which was another number from a London school. The prize, which would be for the best score in the class, was to be a paint box, but the teacher decided at the last minute to give it to the girl who came second, and gave me a book—a history novel by [Arthur Ignatius] Conan Doyle. Which was fine. I liked it. I wanted the paint box, but—.

Coming back to London was an education—not always good. I took the eleven-plus exam, which was a big filter. After eleven, the English education system at that time diverged into three paths. One was secondary modern, which was kind of the “exit at sixteen” path. The second was kind of a compromise. I have forgotten the name—“secondary central” or something [secondary technical]. The third was grammar. The grammar schools, some were state supported; some were state schools; some were private schools with state grants; there were many different kinds. I applied to—or I was applied for; I guess my mother did it—to a school called Hackney Downs School, which was situated right next to Hackney Downs, where I had been running with my mother six years earlier.

Hackney Downs School was a pretty amazing place. It was a grammar school that was originally started by the Grocers’ Company [Worshipful Company of Grocers]. The companies of the city of London were the relic from the guilds of the fourteenth to sixteenth century, and those companies still exist: the [Worshipful Company of] Mercers and the Grocers. The Grocers traveled in spices, so the badge of our school had a camel with a chevron and nine cloves. We were the Grocers. But the Grocers’ Company had founded this school for the middle-middle and upper-middle Hackney residents in the 1890s, and as they moved out, Hackney became a totally working-class area. The Grocers’ Company retained some sort of connection, but the school became a state school. It was run by the LCC [London County Council] in those days—the London County Council. Later, the schools were transferred to the boroughs, and that was doom for Hackney Downs.

It was an unusual school. I seem to fall into unusual schools. First, it was 50 percent Jewish. Very unusual, but Hackney in those days—and Lower Clapton [London], and Upper Clapton [London]—and Stamford Hill [London] is still the ground zero for Hassidic Jews in London. The school was half Jewish and half non-Jewish—usual mixture, but mostly Church of England. A few Catholics, I think—not many.

We had a headmaster, T. [Thomas] O. [Oscar] Balk—B-A-L-K—“Toby.” He was a small man, with a somewhat bald head, and a penetrating gaze, and he could freeze you in your tracks by looking at you. It was amazing! Ms.
Moorhouse totally controlled her school, but there was no fear. We didn’t actually fear Toby Balk—or “T. O.,” or “the Head”—if you were well behaved. He did have a cane, and people were sent to his office, and came back with their hands like this. [gestures] You’d get three or four across the palms. It was still going on, and wielded by Toby, by Mr. Balk, I think it did no real harm. The people I saw getting caned generally deserved it. [laughs] They were very disruptive and needed to be brought up short. I wouldn’t advocate it now, but it was another time. People don’t understand that very well, about the misogyny, and the cruelty, but if you live in that world, it’s a different thing.

Anyway, Hackney Downs School was run from—we would call “years,” not “classes”—first year through fifth—or “forms,” actually, not “years.” Forms. “Years” are university. So I entered the first form in room number 1-C, which is form one, group C. Thirty-two kids, I think, in each class, so there were a hundred in the year. On day one, he knew every single one of them. He had interviewed everybody, and talking to people later, I discovered that the interview was always the same. He had you read a piece of Robert Louis [Balfour] Stevenson’s Treasure Island, he asked you questions, none of which I can remember. But you read this piece from it, and in it, somebody is walking along with pipe smoke trailing in his wake. He would ask you “What is ‘the wake?’” You would say—if you actually knew—it is the area behind, in just the same way that a ship creates a wake as it passes along. I must have said something like that, probably mumbling a bit. Anyway, he accepted me. My brother was already there, so I had a good shot.

The school was run very much on lines of performance. You took five or six subjects during the week. We took math, English, French in the first year, history, geography, art, obviously, PE [physical education]. I guess that was it for the first year. From the second year on, you took a second language. I took Latin. Each class was graded by the teacher on a numerical basis, and then you were ranked. I was not very high. My math wasn’t that good, and I was still learning to be a Londoner. During the years that I was there, you could sort of track my scores moving up.

After the first year, everybody was streamed. You had 2-A, 2-B, and 2-C, with the top people in 2-A, and the next people in 2-B, and the third people in 2-C. And then each year, it was like the English Premier League: the top few would move up, and the bottom few would move down. You stayed with the same people if you were in the middle of your class, at the top of the top one, or at the bottom of the bottom one. It’s very strange.

I had a very bright class. A bunch of them became scientists and doctors and professors. The school was filled with brilliant kids—really bright. And we were lucky in teachers. We had marvelous teachers who, many had come from
the war, but they’d all grown up in the thirties, so they had been denied careers because of the [Great] Depression, and they had gone into teaching. Some of them were brilliant teachers, and some were terrible. I had a Latin teacher who was absolutely terrible. He had had a bad time in the war and he got drunk every lunchtime, and we just did nothing. Alternate years, I had a Latin teacher who was terrifying—another small man who could fix you with the eye—and I always got As in his class. But Latin was like, [laughs] it was {inaudible}.

It was a school very much of achievement. Harold Pinter was three years ahead of me. A guy a year ahead of me was predicted either to be a millionaire or go to prison, and did both. And the outcome was a string of people who did well.

You did this through the fifth form, and then you had two more years. Many people left after the fifth year; that was the standard thing to do if you wanted to leave. I met one of my classmates a few years ago who had done that, and he was very regretful. He actually did get a degree eventually, but he knew it was a mistake for him. He was a very good chemist. If you stayed on, you went to the sixth year, and you were called the “lower sixth form” and the “upper sixth form.” And then you were really specialized.

We divided into three clusters. There were sixth arts, who did literature, history, languages—people like Pinter, and brilliant teachers like Joe [Joseph] Brearley, who was Pinter’s mentor, and who is described in some of Pinter’s essays as rollicking through Hackney spouting poetry. Never did that, though I had Joe Brearley for my English teacher at one point. He was very good. The second was science—sixth science—and you did chemistry, physics, math maybe, if you wanted to be a mathematician, but mainly chemistry and physics. The third was very unusual for England: we had a sixth economics, in which you did economics, economic history, geography, politics. We had a wild and crazy teacher named [Leonard] Jim [James] Marr, who had also had a hard time in the war and was fond of expounding to us, but loved us, I think. I got to know him a bit after the war. He was a strange man.

The economics stream was very unusual at Hackney Downs. We funneled directly to the London School of Economics, so although the science and arts people went to Oxford [University] and [University of] Cambridge, we didn’t even bother to apply. For me, it wasn’t an issue at all. I went to LSE [London School of Economics].

Life in London was heavily school. Family: we were together, but my father was working very hard. I was going to school and not appreciating how we
were being supported. We lived simply. We had a flat. It had four rooms—no bathroom\(^\text{11}\). One room was the living room, or kitchen/living room with a gas stove, a sink and a cupboard in the corner. My mother cooked there. There were fireplaces for heating. We had a front room, which was quite large. This was, again, one of those houses in Hackney that had been a comfortable house. Upstairs, we had two rooms. One was my parents’ bedroom, and my youngest sister, Gil, slept in their room with them—not with them, but in a separate bed. My brother and I shared the other bedroom, and my sister, when she was home, slept on a couch in the—or, no—a divan, I guess—in the living room. It was crowded, but you did your homework on the front room table.

My sister Betty shortly thereafter graduated from teachers college and married her husband Jack, who was a street market trader. Probably the most astute trader I’ve ever met in my life. That guy was amazing! He could sell anything to anybody. Being a market trader means not the stock market—it means getting up at four in the morning, packing up all your stuff, going out, driving fifty miles on English roads in the fog or the rain. Your stall is set up, because the markets would do that. But you probably had to put your own tarpaulin up over it. Setting up all your goods, and then standing there in the cold all day, then driving back at night. He was, at that time, selling toys. So toys are very big, you know? Dolls and things. He had a van full of stuff, and we would unload it and set it all up, sell it all day. I would go with him quite often, especially around Christmas when he was busy, and I would make a little extra money.

So Betty and Jack got married, and shortly had a daughter named Cheryl—“Cheri.” Who, by the way, a year ago was given the OBE [Order of the British Empire] by the Queen. [Queen Elizabeth II].

\(^{11}\) We used the Hackney Public Baths, a wonderful Edwardian building in Lower Clapton Road. It’s still there, though now used for swimming and physical education. One would purchase a ticket, either first or second-class, then enter a large hall separated into cubicles with metal enclosures. The tops were open, so one could hear a cacophony of water, singing, shouts, and banging doors. An attendant would lead you to a vacant bath, swab out the tub, then run hot water that you could test. The controls were outside the cubicle, and were, operated with a handle carried by the attendant. If at some point, you wanted more hot water, you called loudly the number of your bath, hoping that the attendant would hear. My father took me there for the first time, but thereafter I mostly went alone. Perhaps, I remember it so well because it was the only occasion that I can recall when just the two of us did something together.
Teitz: “Order of the British Empire.” A very wonderful honor. She was a great—she is. She is not working now, but she ran essentially programs for deprived kids in East London and North London. Really amazing person.

Anyway, so Betty was gone, and then Mil took off for various pursuits,, though I guess she was still living there. And I was in school. Then my father died, which was a total disaster. He had been suffering from colorectal cancer. I guess all that sitting as a tailor probably exacerbated it. My mother, of course, was devastated. I think Betty contributed some. My brother and I were still in school, and my sister Mil went to work as a teacher—a music teacher—in the schools. That was sort of the end of her career. She supported us. I went on to college, left Hackney Downs, and—. But the family was—I wouldn’t say “shattered,” because next time I will bring a picture of the current family: it’s enormous. I mean, there is a flock of kids and grandkids and whatever.

But it was a very hard time, not least because it was very traumatic in the way it happened. My father was in hospital; being a British hospital, they didn’t tell you anything, of course. I was supposed to call the hospital and find out he was doing, and my sisters had persuaded my mother to go to the cinema. I was out with my friends riding our bikes, and I remembered, oh! I have to call! I called, and the nurse said—I put the money in the phone box—the nurse said, “You had better get here as soon as possible.” It was night. I cycled home about five miles, like crazy, and then had to go to the cinema, and they flashed a slide on the screen, which was what you did in those days. They would make up a slide saying, “Mrs. Teitz, please come to the front.” My mother came running out, and they went to the hospital right away. He died that night. The following morning, my sister Mill came home and said, “Well, get up boys. Dad’s dead. You’ve got to go to work.” I did not even know that he had cancer.

It was another watershed moment, but you know, everybody’s parents die. I always say to people that it’s something that happens to everyone, but it’s different for everyone. This was a bad moment in my life, I think. Yeah. But oddly, life does go on. At that point, I was still in high school. I may have gotten the dates wrong; I am not certain. But the specifics are very clear.

Anyway, I graduated from Hackney Downs. We didn’t have a graduation. They didn’t do that. We had a prize day each year when some notable would come and speak, usually a professor of something who had been an old boy. That brings us, I guess, to LSE, more or less.

Farrell: I think I have got some questions, some follow-up questions. I think probably next time, we will start with your time in college. But I am wondering: following the death of your father, did the resilience and the self-sufficiency—
and maybe even the dissonance of your family not being in the same place—
help bring you together to support each other? Or how much do you think that
your experiences going through sort of trauma at an early age with the war
help unify your family after your father passed?

Teitz: Not very much. No, I don’t think so. I think it was a very difficult time. I think
for my mother, who was an amazingly resilient woman, it was a profound
blow. After the mourning period, I don’t think people talked about it. In that
sense, we are Jewish, but we are also British. [laughs] The upper lip is
somewhat stiff. I am not; I am not very stiff upper-lipped, but I don’t think
that the wartime experience helped with that. For me, perhaps, it made me
perhaps even colder. I don’t know. I was pretty wrapped up in myself. I was a
teenager, you know? I can’t say.

Farrell: You had mentioned a couple times that you had early aspirations of being a
farmer. I’m wondering when those career aspirations started to change for you?

Teitz: Oh, about five minutes after I hit London.

Both: [laughs]

Teitz: No, I think it wasn’t an aspiration—it was an expectation. If you live on a
farm and you are around people who farm, farming is the thing to do. If you
are not on a farm and you are ten years old, other things. I had other
aspirations. I had an uncle who was a fireman during the war. He was also a
woodworker and lost a whole bunch of his fingertips. But at one point, I
clearly—like most kids—wanted to be a fireman. But I don’t think it was a
serious aspiration.

The farming, I think the idea of the farm, or of the countryside, or of the
village—and that village has a really powerful attraction. We go back there
every so often just to look. I took my sister last year. I said, you know,
“Would you like to go?” She said, “Yes. Yeah.” Just to see.

Other questions? Yeah?

Farrell: I think that might be it for me now. Todd, do you have any questions?

Holmes: The only question that we can’t fold into next time is maybe having you
expand a little bit on—you mentioned your mother said that the war ruined
your family, and I could see how for many youths who have to go through that
experience, how that could be true. But could you maybe expand a little bit on that? Like perhaps—

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Teitz: Yeah. I think what it did: before the war, my grandfather was alive; my grandmother had died—and there had actually been two of them, anyway. It was a very complicated business, and there were all these sisters and one brother. I think five or six sisters, and one brother. My mother was one of the younger ones; not the youngest, but close. It was an East London Jewish family. Now, my father was different, but he was there, and she loved him deeply, and there could be no question about the character of the family itself.

What the war did—I don’t know whether she ever articulated this, but I think she felt it—what it did was to change the belief structure and the relationships within the family. I can remember that we had one Seder after World War II, when my grandfather was still alive, but I don’t think we had one after that, almost ever. Certainly not a big family one. I may be wrong about that; I just don’t remember it. I think she felt that it had broken up what was, in her mind and for her, a cohesive family unit, and it had torn it up.

Now, her oldest daughter married a nice Jewish boy who was also a very successful salesman. Actually, he prospered mightily. He still has a Rolls-Royce, which was one of his big acquisitions, but he also used to buy a new car ever ten minutes. He was amazing. He would sell it at a profit. I have never seen anything like it. He went out to buy a car for his daughter and got two for the price of one. [laughs] You never want to try and sell or buy anything from this guy. He used to horrify me at times in the market, but—.

I think that it was actually the fragmentation of the larger family, and the loss of contact with the—we would, after World War II, still go to weddings, and weddings were still quite big—you know, they were dos, with a band and large numbers of people, and a cake, and all the rest of it. But I always felt very marginal to the family, and I think my mother sensed that what had happened was that we had become marginalized in that sense. And that’s a real consequence of the process. I’m sure it happened to many other families.

But also, with my father, once I found out I was half-Jewish, I never felt fully Jewish. Although I haven’t talked about my religious experience, which is very considerable—quite considerable. But I never felt that I was a fully-committed member of the religion. When I was in Thorley, actually, for a short time—until my mother found out about it, and I think stopped it—I went to Sunday school. I kind of liked the Church of England. I always had a soft spot for it, and I think a church where nobody really believes in God is a great idea. [laughs] Or at least, they don’t take it that seriously. It’s a very nice church. They don’t get all fired up about stuff. That’s part of it: the religious connection.
Holmes: Okay.

Farrell: Yeah. Well, thank you very much.
Farrell: Okay. This is Shanna Farrell with Mike [Michael B.] Teitz, on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 and this is our second session. We are in San Francisco, California. Mike, when we left off last time, we were talking about childhood and your upbringing. I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit more about what your life was like on the farm as a child?

Teitz: Living on the farm was actually a great experience, I think, for me. We were out there every day when we weren’t in school, and we would walk a mile each way to school, and then come back and play. We played largely in the farm barnyard when we weren’t out roaming the fields and woods around, usually playing soldiers. The war [World War II] figured substantially.

The farm itself was what’s called a “mixed farm.” The farmer was Mr. Newman—never anything but “Mr. Newman”—and he lived in the farmhouse next to the farm itself. The main part of the farm consisted of, first, a stable, a stable yard, which was walled, and had a very large wooden barn, and probably half a dozen or eight loose boxes for the farm horses. I think we probably had, at max, four. They were huge, wonderful Shire horses, particularly one—a black one. They had hooves that amazed me in their size. Occasionally, I would be put on one to walk around a little bit.

Next to the stable yard was sort of the barnyard, with a pig shed. We had horses, and we raised pigs. I would help to mix the pig slop, and to take it to the pigs, who would munch away. There were also, of course, chickens, and the main part of the barnyard had a series of sheds, including a very large Dutch barn, and which I think I’ve already said we would climb on the bales. That was the scene of very important times. Further down the yard, there were perhaps three more sheds, including one called the “tractor shed,” which wasn’t used for tractors anymore. It had old farm equipment, and we played in there on the dirt.

The barnyard was the location every fall for thrashing, which was a big event. I should add this farm was about 100 acres in size. It was rented; probably owned. I think, by the Streeter family, who owned the farm on which Mr. [Albert] Clark, who I lived with, actually worked. He did not work at Butler’s Hall Farm.

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12 His wife, a quiet lady, endeared herself to me by bringing a delicious meat pie to the Clarks every so often.
During the fall, we first had the harvest, which, we were growing wheat, oats, and barley, and the wheat was cut by a tractor pulling a reaper and binder. The reaper would cut the grain, and then it would be transferred onto the binder, which would wrap it into sheaves, and then toss them out on the stubble. It would be very dry, hopefully; otherwise, the grain would get ruined. Men would come behind and lift up the sheaves, and stack them into what we called “shocks”—which are more commonly known as “stooks”—of about perhaps six or usually eight sheaves stacked together, like fingers together, and with a sheaf at each end. [gestures] Of course, to kids that was wonderful because you could go in the field and there was a great hiding place to get inside and sit there. We would take the wheat out from a head and chew on it. You probably don’t know this, but if you chew raw wheat long enough, it becomes actually a kind of a gummy substance, so it’s kind of like chewing gum, locally made.

After the cutting and stacking, the wheat would stand in the field for a while. It would be picked up by cart—a horse and cart, a large two-wheeled cart, with a man standing on the back and men on each side pitchforking the sheaves onto the cart. The stack on the cart would then be built up until it was about six feet high on top of the cart, and the cart would have to be moved a few feet onto the next shock to put the next piece on. Somehow, someone had to hold the horse, and that was me, like this, with my arm up in the air, [gestures] because the horse was huge, and I was perhaps seven or eight. They would yell out, and I would [clucks tongue], and along we would go to the next one.

When the cart was filled, it would either be taken to a stack in the field, and then men would offload it, and the sheaves would be stacked very carefully, with the heads inward so if there were rain, it wouldn’t get to them. It would be built in the shape of a house, and then a thatcher would come and actually thatch that stack—fast thatching, but enough to keep the rain off. A thatcher’s art is quite remarkable. He would spike it in and tie it down with string, basically. If it didn’t go there, it went to the Dutch barn in the farmyard, where it would be stacked extremely high.

Later in the fall—actually, to backtrack slightly, the last summer I was there, we transferred from horses to a tractor to pull the carts when picking up the corn, and I drove the tractor instead of leading the horse. By then, I was probably nine. I had to be very careful about letting in the clutch, because the guys were not amused if they were tipped back off the top of a six-foot-high stack on top of a cart.

In the fall, then, would come the exciting time, because the steam thresher would come—a giant steam traction engine, as it was called, run by coal, actually. It had a large funnel, and a boiler, and a brass rim around the top, and
a giant flywheel. They had a small, I guess, two-stroke engine—that is, a steam engine—and it would pull behind it a thresher and a baler, and the thresher was a giant contraption on four wheels, and the baler behind that.

They would pull up next to the barn and arrange themselves. The traction engine would then be attached to the thresher by a huge belt that ran from a pulley on the thresher to the traction engine. It would make a great noise. The men on top of the stack in the barn—or out in the field, for that matter—would pitch the sheaves of corn onto the top of the thresher, and the thresher would whack away at them. It would spit out the straw. The grain itself would go into 112-pound bags that were lifted away and then stacked. The straw went to the—I guess it was the baler. Not a binder, a baler. Which would make straw bales with wire around them, and they would then be stacked in the barn for the winter, to be used for bedding for the horses, and to be put on top of the manure pile every day or so, or every few days, as it went on its way—matured, in a wonderfully aromatic way.

That cycle, I guess, was finalized—and I only did this once, when I rode in a cart with Pimp Hammond, who was the guy I liked best on the farm. He lived kind of in the same cluster of houses at Butler’s Hall [England] that we did. One day, he took me, with the sacks of grain, down to the water mill where the miller received our grain and I watched the mill wheel turning, and the grindstone grinding, and the flour emerging. That was the end of that cycle until it went to become bread. It was a wonderful way, I think, to learn about the way in which one got to eat. I feel very lucky to have had that.

I think that’s all I’ll say about the farm for now. But I would add one more thing about the war in the country, because that also impacted the farm. We had various things happen, and one event that was life threatening. I mentioned a couple more previously, but this one I was standing in a field—and tell me if I’ve already said this—when—outside our house—and a buzz bomb, which was a V-1 rocket driven—actually, what is called now a “cruise missile,” which is what it was. You could tell them because they had a particular sound—a kind of a “put-put-put-put-put” sound—as the rocket motor was running.

It was coming sort of at me, not very high; maybe 100 feet or less and went right over. I was waiting for the motor to cut out, which is the signal that it would then fall. It was being chased by a British fighter that was shooting at it, so things were pretty exciting. After it went by, it actually did crash, so it was probably 200 feet high, so it wasn’t really life threatening. It crashed maybe a half a mile away, in some woods. I ran back to the house. Mrs. [Annie] Clark said, “Oh, Michael! You are white as a sheet.” [laughs] And I guess I was. It was pretty scary. But Mrs. Clark was very nice about it.
I don’t know if I have actually mentioned this, but Albert and Annie Clark were—I know I’ve mentioned them, but they were really, truly wonderful people. I realized much later that I loved them. But they were enjoined by the rules from actually expressing much affection to the kids, for fear of alienating the parents’ affections. Nonetheless, they were very kind to us. I can recall Mr. Clark worked incredibly hard.

Just to illustrate, I recall one cold day when he came into the house for dinner—which we would now call “lunch,” which was the big meal. He would work in the morning, come home, and then go out again. Mrs. Clark said to him, “What have you been doing?” He said, “I have been knocking sugar beet.” What does that mean, “knocking sugar beat?” We grew sugar beet because imports of sugar were very scarce. There was a spinner—in, probably, the late fall, when the weather was getting nasty—that would spin out the sugar beet. A laborer would come along and pick up two of them, and knock them together to knock the mud off, and then throw them into a card. Imagine doing that for eight or ten hours at a time in the freezing cold. It was sometimes a really brutal life, only offset by the times, say, at harvest when they would stop picking up the sheaves, and I would bring out sandwiches and tea in a bottle, and sit with them under the shade of a hedge. That was the good side.

I’ll stop there on the farm, I think.

Farrell: How did your time on the farm, or even watching the Clarks work, influence—

Teitz: “Clarks.”

Farrell: “The Clarks?”

Teitz: Yeah.

Farrell: How did watching them work, or your experiences on the farm, influence your work ethic?

Teitz: That’s interesting. Obviously, I saw people who work very hard. I did my homework by oil lamp every night, or every night that Miss. [Edith] Moorhouse gave us homework, or I read books. I watched Mrs. Clark cooking on a coal stove, and washing everything in a coal-fired boiler. I learned to chop wood, with a hatchet, and to bring a bucket of water from the pump. I learned to raise rabbits. I think they were wonderful examples. My father
Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley

[Alexander Teitz] was an Estonian, who are famous for not talking a lot. I think Mr. Clark was like that, too. He didn’t talk much. But occasionally, I would just sit on his lap and look at the newspaper. He would tell me things about the war—not much about his war; he never really talked about that. But he did show me his picture.

It certainly was an experience that emphasized that you worked. You know, I was a kid, and not particularly fond of work. But I worked. Yeah.

Yeah. It’s a part of life. So then, moving into your college years and your undergraduate education, you mentioned last time that you were funneled into the London School of Economics. Can you tell us a little bit about your transition from grade school into the London School of Economics?

Well, it was high school, remember, not grade school.

Sorry. High school, yeah. I was thinking twelfth grade and numbers.

Well, the sixth form, that we had the lower and upper sixth. I was in high school at Hackney Downs School, as I mentioned, which was formerly the Grocers’ Company’s [Worshipful Company of Grocers] school. I had a pretty good time there. I was an athlete of sorts: I was quite a fast runner. Never as fast as my brother, David [Teitz]. He was a really fast runner. But I was a sprinter and jumper. We regularly won the North London athletic championship. In fact, we won it for seven years running.

As I said, I was in the sixth economics class for the last two years, which meant we studied economics, geography, economic history—I’ve forgotten what else—with Mr. [Leonard James] Marr—M-A-R-R, who was an extraordinary man. The question of how I got into sixth economics I guess is something I can’t answer, but it seemed natural, because I was very good at geography, very good at history, okay at mathematics, but the mathematics stopped at age sixteen for anybody who wasn’t in sixth science. Which wouldn’t be true now. It was a natural transition. Being in the sixth economics, it was a straightforward step. As you said, you were channeled. I don’t know who channeled me, but I was in a channel—that’s for sure.

But I was there because it was my interest. I had been interested in regional planning in high school. I read a very large book. I can recall, by [Erich] Zimmerman called World Resources and Industries [World Resources and Industries: A Functional Appraisal of the Availability of Agricultural and Industrial Resources]. It was at least two inches thick. I read about the works of the New Deal, the dam on the Columbia River [Grand Coulee Dam], about
the Tennessee Valley Authority [TVA]. I was very interested in that, and again, it sort of made it natural for me to move in that direction. I wasn’t going to apply to Oxford [University] or [University of] Cambridge, because my Latin wasn’t really good, and you had to have passed Latin at that time to get into Oxford or Cambridge, but I didn’t even apply. I was not interested. Also, by going to LSE [London School of Economics], I could live at home and get the bus. I was a commuter student. Which was not ideal, but it made it feasible, I think. [clears throat]

It’s no real mystery that I would go to LSE. When I got there, I can’t remember it being a revelation. It seemed like a natural transition. We studied eight subjects at a time, which was extremely unusual in that period in British university education. We were in something called the B.Sc. [bachelor of science]—a little “C”; B-S-little C—econ, in which you took six required subjects, and they included economics, applied economics, economic history, politics—or government; I have forgotten which it; it was probably called “government”—and at least one other, which I don’t remember. And then two optional subjects. I took geography and medieval economic history, believe it or not. I liked economic history a lot, and I liked the medieval period. But I had sort of figured out that in the exam process, you had to have—you took an exam in economic history, and there was always a medieval economic history question on it. I actually got a twofer: I could take the medieval economic history exam, and also do well on the medieval question. That all happened after two years.

In one sense, it wasn’t a revelation. Going into large lectures was a big change, but I was comfortable. I was really very good at taking notes. I had taken extensive notes in high school. I had stiff-backed notebooks, and on the various subjects that Jim Marr taught, and I would record his sayings. Those notebooks were handed down, I was told later, for years after I went there, after I had left. I gave them on to somebody, and people handed them on because they were nice compilations. I could take notes pretty well.

So listening to lectures and taking notes felt very natural. I liked the library; I read a lot. I traveled each day by trolley bus for about thirty minutes from my house. Luckily, there was one bus that went to Holborn [Central London, England], which is very close to the London School of Economics—H-O-L-B-O-R-N, Holborn. [pronouncing phonetically] “Hoborn.” It’s a major tube [London Underground] station in London. I would read on the bus, often upstairs. It was a double-decker trolley bus, and the upstairs would be a little quieter, but also smoky, because people could smoke upstairs in those days.

You heard many interesting things. I recall one evening being on the bus, it was very damp, and the windows were running with water on the inside. I guess it was cold. Two women were sitting in front of me, and one said to
other, [imitating woman’s voice], “Well, what are you doing, love?” “Oh, nothing. We are just making up rubbish for the sales.” [ends imitation, laughs] They were in the clothing industry. But one kind of picked stuff up.

I did that, I guess, for three years, and it flashed by. The lectures were great, or terrible, as the case may be, and the verdict of the students was—how shall I put it?—was merciless. I can recall a lecture in which the first day, there were 600 people in the Old Theatre at LSE; the second lecture there were maybe a hundred; the third lecture, there were thirty. That’s where it remained thereafter. Thereafter, the lecturer spoke from this stage to an auditorium of 600. I was in the thirty, because he was a geographer. But that happened to quite a few, and people would just dump them if they thought they were no good. The way it worked was we took the eight subjects for two years, and we had a series of lectures, but the lecturers were divided into chunks, like six weeks or eight weeks, or whatever. There were no exams. There was only one during the whole period, one economics test, which I think was a radical experiment. I did okay on that, to the surprise of other people who thought they had done better.

I mostly fraternized or socialized with my friends who had come from my neighborhood, so we were kind of a little clique. We would play cards in the junior common room, which was a place to sit, and we would play a game called “Klaberjass,” which is actually an East European two-handed game, which we reconfigured into a three-handed game. It was incomprehensible to anyone watching it, because the nine would take the Jack, and then the Jack would take the Ace, and people would say things like, “Jassmenallscht” when they were finishing a hand. We kind of liked that. It was actually a game my father played with Jack, my sister Betty’s [Teitz] husband. They enjoyed it a lot.

I also had friends, especially among the geographers, because I went on a couple of field trips with them. Because I could draw rather well, I was handy in the field, because I could look at a landscape and just bring it out in a sketch quite fast. I loved to draw and paint. In high school, I had actually considered going to art school, but I obviously wasn’t good enough. I knew enough about art to know that.

So I had friends particularly among the geographers. Not much among people more interested in economics. I also ran for the school. I was a sprinter, and that was part of the social life. But living at home meant that I didn’t see people from school, other than people who lived near me, on weekends. Among those, Stanley Bloom was probably my closest friend. He had been in high school with me. I’ve often pondered that I didn’t keep up with my other high school friends for the most part. They went to work, like my friend Derrick Thurtle—T-H-U-R-T-L-E—went to work for a bank. I had seen him
almost every day for the last three years, and I barely saw him after that. I guess that is one of those divisions in life.

At LSE, the main influence on me intellectually was probably Doctor Michael [John] Wise, who was the reader in geography. He was a wonderful man. He was, I guess, called my tutor, and I would meet with him maybe once or twice a term, and we would sit and talk about geography, and planning, and stuff like that. He was an academic who was deeply involved in policy. He was on various public commissions, and at that time, I was reading a lot in planning. The other influence, although somewhat at a distance—I scarcely knew him—was Sir [Laurence] Dudley Stamp, who I think can be reasonably credited with having invented the land use map in its modern form. But also was a prolific author of school geography books. He just ground them out. He lectured briefly in the course of this flashing sequence. It’s like movies before your eyes. A lecturer would flash on, then, flash off.

There was a wonderful lecturer, a woman, rare at LSE, whose name I can’t recall, in medieval economic history who brought the whole thing alive, and I was absolutely fascinated by the fact that from a Flemish housewife’s shopping list, essentially, or account book, one could reconstruct an entire trade structure for Europe on into the east. [laughs] That kind of conjecture and connection struck me as interesting, and I read the classic books in the field at the time.

I enjoyed very much the lectures by R. G. D. [Roy George Douglas] Allen, who lectured to us on applied economics, and he talked about such things as cooking the books for the retail price index during World War II, which you did by—when something went up in price, you took it out of the index—a commodity—and put in something else. For example, woolen stockings would not go up in price because the wool was made in England, and grown, and you would give them a bit more weight. That way, you could hold the prices down, hold the index down, and that would hold wages down in the unionized industries, which the government at the time, given the stresses, couldn’t manage if inflation had taken off at any level.

He actually was way ahead of his time as a mathematical economist, and when I came to take up mathematics in economics later at Penn [University of Pennsylvania], I realized what I had missed there, and also what I had missed by not doing anything beyond the beginning of calculus in my high school. It was an intellectual—not my error, particularly; there wasn’t any provision for me, and at the time, I wasn’t particularly interested in doing it. But it turned out to be important.

So LSE really, in three years, it’s a set of recollections of brilliant and terrible lecturers. Some of them were very dull. Some of them were quite remarkable.
We had a lecturer in government who had replaced the famous Harold [Joseph] Laski. LSE was founded by a pair of socialists, whose name is flying by me at this moment [Sidney and Beatrice Webb] and Harold Laski was a key figure from the 1930s through the 1940s, and died. And he was replaced by Michael Oakeshott—O-A-K-E-S-H-O-T-T—who was actually—we called him “[Edmund] Burke in corduroy trousers,” because he was really conservative, and of course, we were not conservative. But I enjoyed his lectures nonetheless, and stayed for them. I actually was maybe excessively purist about that. I thought they were there for a purpose, and I should listen to them.

It was an experience that, in terms of a British education, was much broader, for somebody to have done medieval economic history, and applied economics, and government, and politics, and geography over two years. At the end of two years—I think I mentioned this, but maybe I haven’t—our exams consisted of eight three-hour written papers, with four questions per paper in three hours. I think they were three hours—one in the morning, one in the afternoon; one in the morning, one in the afternoon; one in the morning, one in the afternoon—on three successive days. Before the exam period, you kind of knocked off new work about four weeks or six weeks ahead, and started what was called “revision.” I would sit in the Hackney Public Library, and actually, it was so boring that I had to force myself to do it. The way I did it was I recorded every hour that I put in doing this, and I wrote it down in a notebook to keep me going, as it were. Because I really didn’t want to do it, but I knew I had to.

One of the beauties of LSE at that time was all of the previous papers for these exams were bound and put in a special library, which I rather liked—it had comfortable armchairs. I went up there and looked at all of the exams, and in an hour or two, I had figured out which questions were coming, with what probability. I didn’t actually put a numerical probability on them, but I was pretty good at scoring it. So I kind of figured out, well, there will be a question on this, and a question on that, a question on that, and the result was that in the exams after that two years, I was the top student. I’m embarrassed to say that I fixed it, but I was strategic about it. I think it was the only way to actually survive that process. It was brutal. At least one student took a break during the lunch period, fell asleep on the embankment, woke up after the afternoon exam was finished, and was sunk. I believe there was no provision. It was tough on people. I got a nice prize for it—I think £40 worth of books, and an interview with the Director of the LSE.

The third year, I just took geography; four papers, I think, or five. I have forgotten. They were a mixture of economic geography, and other things. It was okay. Not intellectually as interesting, I think, as the first two years. I think that reflects my tendency to want to know everything. Bad. But I enjoyed it, and I got to know Michael Wise a lot better, and appreciated his
skills. At the end of it, we took a set of papers again, and I did well on that, and got a first-class honours degree. I wasn’t the top student in that second round, largely because I think I didn’t bother. I was kind of tired of that process. Every time I kind of applied myself, I could do very well. Not an uncommon thing, and I sympathize with students working their way through and coming up from somewhat disadv—we were poor but didn’t know it—or we knew it, but we didn’t regard ourselves as poor.

At the end of it, or approaching the end, the question came up of what to do next. And I went to see the so-called guidance counselor, who was somebody I had never met. He was a former military officer. I sat down and chatted with him, and his suggestion was that I become a solicitor. Now, to become a solicitor is an attorney in England who does not have the right to plead in the high courts. In fact, in those days, he had not the right to plead in any court. To plead in court, you needed a barrister, and a barrister was trained in the Inns of Court in London [England], in a kind of elaborate apprenticeship, which is familiar to anyone who has read *Rumpole of the Bailey*, or watched the TV [television] shows. One of my close friends, Michael Rabin, took law as his main third-year subject at LSE, and you could do that, and that tracked you directly into becoming a solicitor. You would go into a solicitor’s office, and there, you would do what amounted to a form of apprenticeship, with some advantage to having a law degree.

But that did not appeal to me at all. I was interested in ideas and a wide variety of things. Somebody said to me—well, backtracking slightly, Michael Wise and a man whose name escapes me for the moment—was also a tutor—suggested that I apply for the Ph.D. [doctor of philosophy] at LSE, which was a very natural progression. It would have meant that I did no coursework at all; that I would have simply sat down and written a dissertation. I had no idea how to write a dissertation. It undoubtedly would have been my fallback position. Perhaps to the good. I’ll never know. I could have easily, I think, moved into a position in one of the universities as a lecturer, or assistant lecturer to start with.

Somebody else suggested, well, why don’t you go to America? Why would I want to go to America? Well, you know, it’s something to do. [laughs] That’s kind of a casual way to think about your life, but perhaps that’s what one does; I don’t know. I looked at the notice board, where were posted because—no internet—everything was posted up there, and I noticed several American opportunities, and they all required you to write your life story in triplicate. That did not appeal to me, because I would have had to have written it by hand.

There was a very short notice on a blue piece of paper, and it said, University of Wisconsin, the something-or-other fellowship—just write a letter. So I
wrote them a letter, and said, here is who I am and what I have done. And they wrote back and said, oh, well, we’re very interested, but we gave this fellowship to a British person last year, and so we can’t offer it to you again. But we will offer you a teaching assistantship in geography at the University of Wisconsin. They named a number, and it seemed like a tremendous amount of money to me. So I thought, well, why not? Wisconsin beckons. I knew Wisconsin had a reputation as having probably the best reputation among geography departments in the United States, or in the world, for that matter, although Cambridge would have objected strongly. But it was my choice, yeah.

So, that last summer, with some friends, we bought together an old London taxi cab, painted it in garish colors, and drove it with great difficulty, including many adventures, to the south of France and back. This was a 1937 Austin. It had a flat-head engine, and we reground the valves by hand, because it was pretty much shot. It probably had 300,000 or 400,000 miles on it. It had been run through the war, and after the war, they finally kind of unloaded them. Of course it broke down on the way, and we had adventures here and there. But it was fun. It was kind of a good thing to do that summer. And then I went off to America.

02:00:53:27 Farrell:

Before—

02:00:53:27 Teitz:

In the end, I had to write my life story in triplicate anyway, because I applied for and got a Fulbright fellowship to get across the water. Which, I sat in the same library I had consulted the exam questions, and sat and wrote down three or four pages of who I was, and then copied it again, then copied it again. There were no Xerox machines in 1956. At least, there weren’t in anywhere I was—no, they didn’t come until after that.

Sorry—you were going to ask a question?

02:00:54:27 Farrell:

I have a few follow-up questions about LSE before we get into Wisconsin. You had mentioned a couple of times class, generally, but I’m wondering if when you were a student, if you had any sense of there being some sort of socioeconomic divide within the student body, population, at LSE? Or not really, if it wasn’t anything if you were aware of?

02:00:54:58 Teitz:

I was aware of differences. The group I hung around with, who largely came from my high school—because we had all this, you know, continuing stream of people before and after—were pretty much Jewish, pretty much non-practicing or non-interested. Interestingly, LSE was not Oxford or Cambridge, in that sense. If there were upper-class cliques, they didn’t impinge on
anybody else, because especially, we were non-residential, and those who were residential lived in pretty awful dormitories. There were a couple of upper class or upper middle-class, especially young women, who I liked, and who had pretty cut-glass accents. I was good at knowing accents. I could tell who was who. But when we went on field trips or anything like that, or in seminars, there was no sense—I had no feeling of that.

Now, it may be I was just oblivious, because I was so interested in whatever it was I was interested in at the time. I was doing a little bit of painting, not much—a little bit of watercolor. I don’t have any of them. I left the last one stuck on the wall at the house I lived in in London. I think it never survived the move. But I read a lot, either then or in high school, I would read big novels. I remember reading *The Magic Mountain* largely in a local park just north of where we lived in Hackney [borough, London, England]. I don’t know. Maybe I floated along, but I wasn’t deeply enmeshed in politics. I was worried when there were occasional fascist outbreaks. I remember my brother-in-law Jack going off to protest a fascist march in East London. They were back by 1950. It was amazing. They kind of disappeared again. Now they are back again, so it’s like a weed—you can’t get rid of it. [laughs]

Perhaps you could best describe it as “unaware.” I was probably late or slow developing socially. During that last year, I had a couple of girlfriends, one who I actually kept in touch with until a few years back, and I have lost touch with her now. A young French woman who I met at the promenade concerts—the proms—which I went to quite religiously. They were wonderful. For two and sixpence—which was half a crown, so how much would that be? Probably in current terms, it would be perhaps a dollar to go. You sat on the floor, or you stood. In theory, “promenade” meant you walked around, but everybody sat on the floor in the great bottom of the [Royal] Albert Hall, or else in the top gallery. They would go on seven nights a week for six weeks through the summer, with different orchestras. I loved music. I would go there a lot.

I always had a strong sense of class, but class was a powerful thing in English life. I had a strong sense that I was not part of the upper class—that’s for sure. But it didn’t gnaw on me. I found other things to do, and I was busy, always.

In terms of your fields of study, what was it about geography that you liked or you connected with that made you want to pursue that as a career? Or even in future studies?

I had no sense of career, I think, during most of my time at LSE. Probably, looking back, I think I was pretty sure I would be some kind of academic, but I could have been, in the tradition of my family, a teacher. Both my sisters
were teachers, and my older sister, Betty, was a very good physical education instructor, and Mil [Teitz] became a school music teacher to support the family when my father died, which was a big trauma in 1951, or '52.

Farrell: You knew that you were going to be an academic. You just didn’t know in what sense.

Teitz: I think at LSE, having made that transition out of high school and actually gone to the university, it was clear I was going to do something that would either be teaching at a university level, or else, in all likelihood, I would have been a high school teacher.

Why geography? It always fascinated me. I liked the idea. But I should add—and this is actually quite important, for me at least—that in my discussions with Michael Wise—I should have mentioned this before, because this is intellectually very important for me—we spent a lot of time discussing the nature of geography as a field. By the time I was in my second or third year at LSE, I was pretty much convinced that geography needed theory. I had studied economic theory since high school, since I was sixteen, and I liked the way in which theory could be used to analyze specific situations. It seemed to me geography was much too descriptive, which it was, and in fact, people who were strong in the field advocated that as the nature of the field, that the nature of the field was to describe the Earth in as much detail as you could get. And Wisconsin, when I get there, I will tell you about that a lot more.

But in fact, with Michael Wise, I argued that geography could have a stronger theoretical foundation. I was reading at the time the work—or reading around the work—of Walter Christaller, who was a German geographer who was quite famous for having constructed a kind of theoretical structure of the settlements in south Germany, which he represented as a network of centers of different sizes joined by lines. Which, then each center became the center of a hexagon, because the hexagon is the closest sort of regular solid that will actually fill a space. He had this hexagonal structure. I was reading about that in urban geography. Urban geographers had talked about it, and described it, and had not gotten very far with it. They hadn’t gone anywhere with it, in fact. It had been sitting there since the 1930s. Christaller himself didn’t take it anywhere, although he did get himself into, I think, deep waters—bad waters—when the Nazis [National Socialists] came, because he helped to organize the resettlement of the parts of the Poland in which the Germans occupied and kicked the Poles out.

There was also another German writer called [August] Lösch, L-O-S-C-H. Oh—“Christaller” is C-H-R-I-S-T-A-L-L-E-R. Lösch, whose book I read in
translation, was a very, very interesting writer, who had quite fascinating ideas. He figured greatly later on in what I did.

Even at that time, my take on geography was to ask why is this field not more theoretical, why does it not have a stronger intellectual foundation, and implicitly, then—although I certainly wasn’t thinking about it—what can you do about that? I think that geography offered a field in which one could do something like that. I could have had a very nice career in economics—I am sure of that—because I understood the field well. I would have been, probably, ill-trained, because I only caught the quantitative revolution in economics when I got to Penn. Had I gone ahead and done a PhD in economics at LSE, I would have been an old-fashioned economist. But that’s another path not trodden. A road not taken.

Farrell: Was your interest in providing some sort of theoretical framework to geography supported by Michael Wise?

Teitz: Gently challenged. Michael Wise never said, “You are blowing smoke here.” I think he felt sympathetic. He was a tweed jacket, pipe-puffing academic. He would puff his pipe, and say, “Well, you know, this is very interesting, but how do you get there? Is this really geography?” He challenged. But he would never put one down. He was really good that way. Maybe he should have challenged harder and said, okay, let’s see how we can do this. I think at my best as an advisor, that’s what I would have done. But he was a lovely man, and a wonderful person to have as an advisor at that time. He kind of steered me along, I think. He certainly must have written a wonderful letter for me to Wisconsin, because they seemed to buy the whole thing hook, line, and sinker. [laughs]

Farrell: And just to quickly clarify, you were at LSE from 1953 until 1956?

Teitz: Yes.

Farrell: Okay. Moving onto Wisconsin, what was that transition like for you, moving from London to the United States, particularly Wisconsin, which isn’t the cosmopolitan center of the country.

Teitz: Living away from home again. Now [that] I think about it, I had lived at home from the time I was ten until I was eighteen. That’s eight years. Before that, I had lived away from home for essentially five years. So now I was going to live away from home again.
I had the Fulbright, which actually made the transition very easy. The way it worked was the Fulbright organization took a block booking on the [RMS] Queen Elizabeth—that’s the first Queen Elizabeth ship—a big ship—and the lower levels of that ship—some of the cabins actually had portholes—was filled with Fulbright students in, I guess it would have been, late August, early September. I would have to look at my old passport and see the stamp. I should do that, because I don’t know when I landed in America. But I can remember it vividly, of course.

The trip itself was amazing. I got, I guess, a train to Southampton [England], and from the train, clomped on. I had two big suitcases, half filled with books. I took all the books [laughs] that I had gotten as my prize, very heavy ones. It’s hard to believe, but I did. I clomped onto the ship, and I shared a cabin with a very nice young Indian guy whose name I have forgotten. On the ship, I had a mild shipboard romance. I actually visited her [Naomi Finkelstein] later. We ran around the ship a lot. We were kind of naughty. We’d find ways—or those who were the more adventurous among us found ways—to go down to the engine rooms, go along a catwalk, and come up in the first class theater, which we filled up and had people looking askance at who were these ragamuffins who were creeping up from steerage? But they never threw us out. It was very interesting.

It was fun. I guess it took—what?—probably five-and-a-half days, if that. There was one mild storm, when a lot of people got sick. I felt a bit queasy, but lasted it out. We came, one morning—on a bright, shining day, as they have these things—we sailed up through New York Harbor, and there was the Statue of Liberty, there was the skyline. Up the Hudson River, and we pulled in in prime style at pier forty-something. I don’t know what pier it was. It was pretty amazing, obviously. I was, I guess, twenty-one.

In New York, I stayed, I guess for two nights, at a hotel, and was sort of amazed at how much money the bellman wanted for a tip. They made it very clear to us that you better pay it. I went out with people I had come with. Somebody said, “Oh, we are invited to a party,” and it must have been on the Upper East Side [New York City, New York]. We got there, somebody came to the door, and they said, “No, you are not invited.” That was my memory of Manhattan [New York City, New York]. Speaking of class structure. It was much more overt than anything I ever experienced in England. I must have run around New York a bit. Oh—I went to the UN [United Nations], because I was a great admirer of the UN.

The next day, I got on the train. I think it must have been the 20th Century Limited, running out of Grand Central [Terminal]. In the afternoon, you got on around three, and you ran up the Hudson. I had a roomette, which was a revelation: a whole space to myself, with a thing that came down, and a bed. I
must have eaten on the train, but I don’t remember that meal, although I remember another one later in China I’ll talk about. But we came up the Hudson in the evening with the sun setting over the west bank of the Hudson, gleaming on the water—that classic visual impression. As it got dark, we pulled into Albany [New York], at which point you turn left and go to Chicago [Illinois]. And I went to bed, and the following morning, I woke up to find myself looking at the steel mills of Gary, Indiana, which I had studied in great detail, of course. As an economic geographer, I loved steel mills a lot. I was really interested in why things located where, and I thought that—and there was some theory about that that I was aware of. Largely by a man called [Karl Emil Maximillian] Weber, W-E-B-E-R.

We pulled into Chicago, and there we were. I caught the Chicago Northwestern train to Madison [Wisconsin]. I have no memory of being in Chicago at all. I think maybe I didn’t even get out of—or I must have transferred stations, I suspect. But how, I don’t know. I got to Madison, and there was Madison, Wisconsin, in 1956. Absolutely beautiful place in the late summer. Madison—I don’t know if you have been there—it sits on an isthmus between two lakes, [Lake] Mendota and [Lake] Monona. The city itself is shaped like a dumbbell. It bulges out at each end of the isthmus, and now is beginning to wrap around the lakes. But the lakes are big—several miles across. There are actually three more lakes. [Waubesa, Kegonsa, and Wingra]

It was, in those days, quite a beautiful city in its own way. The capitol [Wisconsin Capital building] sits in the absolute center of the isthmus surrounded by a square, so there is a terrible traffic problem. They have no freeway—they resisted that, thank god—although there is a freeway kind of butting along one corner.

I guess I got off the bus and went to the YMCA [Young Men’s Christian Association]. I think I also stayed there in New York, but maybe not. Not that first time. The YMCA was a great resource. You could just go and get somewhere to sleep. And it was up near the capitol, so I left my bags there—and my suitcase, heavy—and walked down to the university and found an office. They steered me to the housing office first thing. I identified myself, and they kind of verified who I was. And they sent me to a rooming house run by—excuse me. The name will come back to me [Mrs. English]. It’s terrible, because—
room with an entering freshman engineering student [Monty Palmer]. Upstairs, there was a little apartment on the top floor, where two Englishmen lived. I got settled there and went to the geography department, which was in Science Hall, an old science building—how much science I will tell you later, maybe—and checked myself in, and was told what I would be doing for my teaching assistantship, which was to be a teaching assistant on an introductory geography class that included physical geography.

Now, actually, I was quite interested in physical geography. I hadn’t mentioned this, but at LSE, one of the subjects I really liked a lot was geomorphology, which is the study of the evolution of landscapes, and how physical processes work on them. In those days, it was taught more in the way of descriptive history. Now it’s highly mathematized, and much more scientific than it was. The study of landforms fascinated me, and one of the books I had chosen for my prize was a book on geomorphology by a—named Thornberg. [William David] Thornbury, sorry. One of the others was a book of poetry, and a third one was a dictionary of music. I was kind of covering the territory.

That gets me to Wisconsin. I will say just a little bit about the campus. In 1956, there were 15,000 students at the University of Wisconsin. I think there are upwards of 40,000 now—maybe 45,000—on the same campus, which has expanded a bit in one direction only. Remember, you are sitting on an isthmus. The campus is on the north side, abutting Lake Mendota, and it has a beautiful shoreline, and it rises up from the streets from the Capitol, which kind of dead-ends at the campus, the main street, State Street. And there is Bascom Hill, which contains on top of it the main administration building [Bascom Hall], with a statue of [Abraham] Lincoln, I guess, in front of it. Down toward the lake was the student union [Memorial Union], which was a place where we hung out a lot. Along the edge of the lake especially—obviously not in winter, but in summer—there was a pier, and a deck, and a great place for sitting out. Everyone would gather there, either there or in the Rathskeller, which was a kind of a beer joint in the student union basement where they sold 3.2 [percent] beer—very weak—because that was what was legally allowed. But being Wisconsin, they could sell beer on campus. Very unusual. When I first came to Berkeley [California], there was no liquor store permitted within one mile of the Berkeley limits.

That two years in Wisconsin was actually quite wonderful, both the summers, which were very hot and sticky—I didn’t like them much—and the winters, which were cold. The first time I experienced six below zero, at which your nose actually does freeze up. I made some good friends there. And in America, relationships were much easier. My friend Ray Brost, he was an undergraduate. A very thoughtful guy, very German. He actually emigrated
back to Germany a few years later. But it was a time of really, a lot of learning, a lot of experience.

It was the first time I really taught, and I enjoyed it quite a lot, although I was mystified by the way in which classes were taught. We had exams that consisted—and you are, I am sure, familiar with this, or maybe you are not; I don’t know—anyway, that were big sheets of paper with questions—sort of yes/no—and sometimes three answers, and you filled in the bubble. They were graded by putting a sheet over them, and you looked for the number of blanks and counted them up, and that was the score. The idea that ninety-seven was an “A” to me was astonishing. In England, seventy-five was as high a grade as you would ever see in a high school class. If you got more than seventy-five, you were doing something so exceptional that who knows what it was? And a strict curve, with the intervals laid out. That was all kind of alien. My view of grading was much more flexible, based on reading essays, though I had never done it in England. But I understood how it worked, because I had had my essays read.

I taught this class. I was a teaching assistant, so I was teaching a section—maybe thirty students—and I kind of liked it. I don’t know what they made of it; I am not sure. I know I was good at drawing, so at least one occasion I can recall, I drew a block diagram on the blackboard, in three dimensions on the blackboard, with layers of stratigraphy. I kind of erased it down as the streams would work through it, and drew in the hills, and showed had it had emerged. The students, I think, liked that a lot. I vaguely remember that they were pretty impressed by that. It was kind of an early version of moving pictures. [laughs] We didn’t have much in the way of graphic aids.

The teaching load was pretty light, and I can’t remember all the courses I took in that first year. I know I took at least one geography methods seminar with W. [William] A. V. Clark. Was it “W. A. V.?” Yeah. Anyway, Professor Clark, who was engaged in the old-style geography very deeply and believed it. His life work was the study of Prince Edward Island [Canada], in which he mapped every single farm, and traced the history of the farms, and attempted to understand the landscape in detail. The essence of geography was to understand the surface of the Earth, to study the Earth’s surface. If that was settlement, that was what you did.

The theory of geography, at that time at Wisconsin, the theorist was Richard Hartshorne—with an “E” on the end—who was very famous in his day. Wrote a small book called The Nature of Geography that I read several times, trying to make head or tail of it. It was very thin, but it was a bit mystical for me. Hartshorne really believed this. He was sort of the epitome of the view of geography as a descriptive science. That’s the way I’d describe it.
But there were other currents running afoot. My tutor at Wisconsin was Richard—I will give it to you later [John W. Alexander]—who had written a whole lot about what’s called the economic base theory, which is urban economics trying to understand how urban economies actually function, using a very simple model which has two sectors: a basic sector, which is exports; and a service sector, which lives off the exports. The pure model of this is a mining town. The mine is there; the gold comes up; the money flows; the saloons open. The size of the town depends on the size of the mine, the longevity of the town depends on the longevity of the mine, and at the end of it all, when the mine closes, you have a ghost town. The town disappears.

So extend this to a metropolitan area, and you have a few problems, as you might guess. It’s a little harder to measure, and a few other things. He wrote a series of very good articles explicating the idea, not super analytical, but okay. He was a very nice man. I don’t know how; I kind of lucked out in advisors. I never had an advisor who was not basically sympathetic. What John let me do, basically, was to spend the second year doing something other than geography.

But before I got there, I had been through the seminar with Clark, and the notable thing about it in recollection, apart from reading a bunch of stuff and writing an essay for him in French, in which, by then, I had bought a typewriter. I sat down with a book and taught myself how to touch type, because I figured there was no point having it unless I did it. I spent several days pounding away, going through the book, at first one, two, three, four, five, six, and finally ten fingers. And now I’m back again to two, because my tremor’s too bad on an Apple keyboard. [laughs] But I’m really up to three or four, but an Apple keyboard is so small.

Anyway, one of the exercises in the class was each student took a library, and we evaluated it for geography. And he gave me the main library. I had been in it, of course—I loved libraries; I couldn’t get enough of them. Still can’t. And I went there. Well, what shall I do? How do you do a library? I guess I could go and talk to the librarian. It never occurred to me. It never even occurred to me. I know what I’ll do: I’ll go to the stacks. I’ll start at the top floor and walk through the stacks, and work my way down to the bottom. I did it. It was a weird thing to do. I spent a couple of days, I guess—three? How many, I don’t know. I wrote an essay about it.

He was good in that sense. It was actually a useful seminar. I found the biggest dissertation in the library, I think, which was several volumes on an obscure Restoration playwright, and I think I found the smallest dissertation, which was two pages of mathematical proof. That’s not counting the title page and the sign-off sheet. But what was wonderful: they had all the dissertations filed in one place, so you could walk along and see which ones were geography, or just sample them at random and see how many you could come
up with. I went down to different levels, and I kind of evaluated the collection, which was good. Given the status of geography there, it would have been good.

But during that first year, I also became aware that there was something else going on in geography. I may have been aware of this at LSE, but I don’t think so. One of the students at Wisconsin was named Bill [William Wheeler] Bunge [Jr.—B-U-N-G-E—who was really a very remarkable man. He was probably crazy; in fact, later in his life, I think he really was crazy. He had a deep obsession that geography was running on the wrong track, and there was one author whose work he admired very greatly, and one author whose work he despised. That person he despised was Richard Hartshorne. Now, if you are in a PhD program where the leading intellectual figure is someone you really despise, what is the smart thing to do? Especially when you know there is another program at the University of Washington run by William [Louis] Garrison which is intent on remaking geography? But not Bill Bunge. Bill Bunge had to take Hartshorne on directly.

We became quite good friends, and we talked a lot about the nature of geography—not Hartshorne’s Nature, but an alternative geography. He was in touch with the folks at Washington, and I was, too. We started getting blue-covered mimeographed working papers, which was something I had never seen before. These things were being produced by the students of Bill Garrison, and they included Brian [Lobley] Berry, and Duane [F.] Marble, and Michael—oh, well, it’ll come [Dacey]. Anyway, a whole bunch of people. Richard [L. Morrill] and [John D.] Nystuen. It was a very lively group, and I was mopping up these papers. But I was also reading on my own at the same time, and particularly reading Walter Isard, who had just invented the field of regional science. The first meetings had occurred around that time, of the Regional Science Association. I will come back to Walter, but I read Walter’s work. I didn’t fully understand it because my mathematics was a lot worse than I thought it was. I thought I understood it, but I didn’t. But I got the message. I understood what it was about.

The second year at Wisconsin, I think I took one course in the geography department the whole year. I took statistics by an elderly professor who taught in the business school, and we did regressions by hand. So, four-variable regressions, inverting the matrices on a giant electrical calculator, with a big thing that traveled back and forth. It was kind of fun. I learned about statistics. I took a course in operations research. I sat in on a calculus class, trying to catch up on that.

What else did I do? Oh! I took a giant two-semester seminar with [Gordon] Coleman Woodbury, who had been a senior official at FHA [Federal Housing Administration], and had now retired to be a professor at Wisconsin. He was
right talking about the urban renewal program, looking at it from a positive perspective. Now, urban renewal since then has only had bad press, and deservedly so, because it resulted in very bad outcomes. But Coleman was an interesting guy. He had been around the Washington [District of Columbia] circuit. I learned a bit from him about the way things worked in Washington, and how policy was made. And I was becoming increasingly interested in policy, kind of continuing that progression of interest in American policy that I had started with my interest in the Tennessee Valley Authority.

At the end of the first year at Wisconsin, I took a trip, and I had met somebody who was driving. We drove north from Madison up through the Upper Peninsula [Michigan] to Ottawa [Canada], and then down to Syracuse [New York], where he left me—he was going somewhere else. I hitchhiked from Syracuse I think to Albany [New York]. I couldn’t get any further—the hitchhiking was terrible—so I took a bus to meet Naomi, the young lady I had met on the boat, whose family lived in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. Her father had a mill there. Yes, that’s right. Yeah. And I visited with her, and it was fun. Her father knew someone in Washington. I said, “Well, I am going to go on down.”

So largely by bus, I went down to Washington and went to Congress [United States Capitol], and looked at the—in those days, you could just walk in. I sat in the House [of Representatives Chamber], and the Senate [Chamber]. Of course, I was much beholden to Senator [James William] Fulbright, but I didn’t visit him. The man I visited was Senator [Cary Estes] Kefauver, who was pretty famous at the time, who had been known to the father of Naomi Finkelstein. I dropped in his office and said, “Here I am, Mr. Senator.” He said, “Great. We’ll chat.” He dragged me off to the men’s room. So we stood in the urinal and had a nice [laughs] chat. We walked back to his office, and he said, “Great. Nice to see you. Where are you going next?” I said, “Well, I’m off to Pittsburgh [Pennsylvania].”

So I went, and why? To see what had happened there. Pittsburgh was the first city to take smog on seriously, and they were famous at the time. It was a great public health achievement, and I had to see it. Besides being the heart of the steel industry, which I had been studying for however long. I went to Pittsburgh, and then I went from there to the TVA, and kind of wandered around the dams and met another person who I knew, whose name I have forgotten. I kind of did the student thing and stayed with friends. I visited the Norris Dam, and the great dams and the settlements of the TVA, which for me at the time was still a beacon of how to deal with river systems, even though dams are not fashionable now. I was really sold on the New Deal. I think to work in the New Deal, even though it was such a terrible time, must have been quite wonderful. Quite wonderful.
I went from there back to Madison. That was kind of a reification of my interests from a long time. Actually seeing them solidified, in a way, my interest in planning, even though I wasn’t doing anything with planning at that time. I went back to Madison and my second year, which I have already described.

Farrell: Can you tell us a little bit more about what it was when you saw that that connected to that made you want to go into planning?

Teitz: Excuse me?

Farrell: Can you tell us a little bit more about how that trip solidified your plans to go into planning? Or your desire to go into planning?

Teitz: I don’t think it did in the sense you mean, because I had no notion of going into planning at that time.

Farrell: Or, I guess, what you just said about—

Teitz: It solidified my interest in planning as related to geography, and the use of a more analytic geography as a tool in planning, particularly regional planning. Regional planning and regional geography are like that [gestures]. They are locked together. The notion of region itself, which I haven’t talked about, which has been a theme in my intellectual life for a long time, had been interesting to me for a long time. I had been trying to figure out what the hell one meant by it. I am still thinking about that. I’m not there yet. [laughs] In fact, I am just reviewing a book on regional planning—yet another one of the however-many I’ve read over my life.

I think what the trip did was to remind me of how much working in the world meant. You know, whenever I got a chance to work in the world, I did it, at many different ways.

Just backtracking one second, when I said I had never taught before, it wasn’t quite true, because in the long vacations at LSE, the school year was still in progress, so I used to be a supply teacher in London. I don’t know if I actually have talked about this before.

Farrell: I don’t think, yeah.
Teitz:

But a supply teacher is a substitute. I was very good teaching very small kids to read in small groups. I had a head teacher who really liked me for that. But I also got put in other schools. One day, I got put into a school in Hoxton [London, England], which in these days is very fashionable. It’s where artists have their headquarters, and famous chefs hang out. In those days, it was the toughest neighborhood in North London, and I was put into a tough school, and given, among other things, girls’ physical education, which meant standing in the playground while the girls were supposed to play net ball. Oy! No fun. I didn’t last very long there. I decided it wasn’t the right place for me. But I had a taste of teaching, I knew what it meant to teach, and I had been subject to it for a lot of years.

Anyway, so back to the trip. I think it reinforced that sense I had that planning was important, and that regional planning was something that was possible. How far have I gotten? Not far enough?

Farrell:

We’re almost there. But I do have a couple more questions. You were just talking about teaching, and I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about balancing your teaching with your school, with your studies? How did you balance your academics and the teaching?

Teitz:

At Wisconsin?

Farrell:

Yes.

Teitz:

Oh, it was no sweat. For one thing, by the second year, they gave me a fellowship, because as usual, a good student. They gave me some support. I didn’t have to teach the second year. In the first year, the teaching load was light enough that with a reasonable amount of solid effort, it was no great difficulty. I don’t remember anything really about teaching in the second semester, but I was doing it for sure. And it was—you know? But I was kind of enjoying life, I think. Ray and I would go and have a beer, and there is a lot of beer drunk in Wisconsin. It was a good thing to do.

I should mention, though, one very important thing on the planning front. Oh, I had just forgotten all about this! At the end of the second year in Wisconsin, during that second year, I had run into a guy called Charlie [Charles] Ball, B-A-L-L. And Charlie was an absolute phenomenon. He was a magnetic hustler guy, a student, and he had gotten himself appointed as technical director for the Metropolitan Study Commission of Milwaukee County [Wisconsin]. Now, what the Metropolitan Study Commission was is kind of an early version of a regional planning entity, with no power whatsoever. But Charlie had so much
energy and so much force that he convinced the commission that they should be doing research. One of the things they wanted to do was to make a map of land uses and zoning in Milwaukee County in order to look at the conflicts which occurred between cities in the way they zoned and the way, in which, land use had turned out.

I had taken a wonderful class—I don’t know if I mentioned it—with Arthur [H.] Robinson. Professor Arthur Robinson was the primo cartographer at Madison on the faculty. He actually invented what’s called the Robinson projection, and if you open almost any atlas published in the U.S. [United States] now, you will see a Robinson projection. Robinson was a truly great teacher. [imitates deep, croaking voice] He had a very sort of dark, low voice, [ends imitation] but every single class—in what was three times a week, a one-hour class—he would give a five-minute or eight-minute quiz, with very fast answers. It had, like, twelve questions, and the questions would be of the kind—“Using the XYZ projection, would a line drawn between Auckland [New Zealand] and Tokyo [Japan] be skewed to the north or to the south of a great circle line?” In order to answer that question, you had to be able to visualize that projection, see it on the world, or see the world on it, and then understand how it related to the surface of the Earth. Which is a great problem—I love cartography. I ate those questions up. I got every single test right except one. It’s really {inaudible}. You can cut this out of the thing, but it was actually a great learning experience—probably one of the best I ever had, and one I could never reproduce, because I never had a topic that was that neat to teach. You can sort of do economic theory that way, but with great difficulty.

Anyway, so I learned from Arthur Robinson. Actually, I became a cartographer in the first summer I was at Wisconsin, and worked on an atlas for Reid Bryson, who was a professor of climatology. We sat up in the attic of Science Hall. I was doing the drafting of isobar maps, and isobars are lines of equal barometric pressure. Hard to believe with this tremor, but I would draw them by hand with India ink, putting the pen down on the page and just tracing around an overlay, and make it join up exactly right. Do that first from the middle, and then the next one, then the next one. It was a lot of fun. A wonderful summer. I met my first wife there, Ruth [V. Groves], and she was a lovely young woman who was just graduating from high school, going to Sarah Lawrence College that summer.

How did I get there? Oh! It was because of the atlas. In the end of the second year, if I did cartography the first year, in the end of the second year, Charlie Ball came up with the idea of the atlas of land use and zoning [Milwaukee County Land Use and Zoning Atlas]. We assembled a little team of two people and me. We lived in an apartment on the waterfront of Milwaukee [Wisconsin], and worked in the Milwaukee [County] War Memorial, in a big
space they had there. We had a couple drafting tables. {Southard Modry?} was one of the people who was doing it. We actually created this atlas. We managed to snaffle air photos from the water company; I think, who had run the whole county very recently. We sat there with our stereoscopic glasses—not good for me, because I don’t see stereoscopically, I found out that summer, or whenever I first had an eye exam—I don’t remember which.

We made this atlas. It was quite an achievement. Charlie Ball also sponsored another guy, Charlie [Charles E.] Beveridge, to write the history of the Milwaukee Water Works [MWW]. It was kind of wonderful. Why are you doing that? Well, the Milwaukee Water Works were a great factor in Milwaukee being able to grow and take over other places. But then the state passed a law that forced it to sell water to places that did not want to be incorporated into Milwaukee, and that created what was called the “iron ring” of suburbs around Milwaukee.

Charlie Ball thought that was a good idea. Charlie Beveridge did it, and went on to become very famous. He actually is the editor of all the volumes of the collected works of—who designed Central Park?—[Frederick Law] Olmsted. Of Olmsted’s works [*The Papers of Frederick Olmsted*]. The last volume just came out this year, and we met up, actually. We hadn’t seen each other for probably thirty-plus years. We met up in the Olmsted-designed cemetery in Oakland [Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland, California] and walked around, because he was finishing up the last bits of that piece of his work. It was very touching. He came from Maine, and lived on an island off the coast, and I visited them there one time. Very beautiful.

So all these things, there was the planning element, and the geography element. The cartography actually spun on for a little bit, but not for too long. Within ten years, I was not doing any. At the same time, the interest in reconfiguring geography in some way, connecting that to planning, using mathematics as a way of understanding geographic systems. It was all part of a larger—I would call it a gestalt. Not correct. But certainly, it was what I was thinking and learning about at the time.

Farrell: Well, I think that’s probably a good place to leave it for today, and then we’ll pick back up on this again next time. Thank you.
This is Shanna Farrell back with Mike [Michael] Teitz on Thursday, March 23, 2017 and this is our third interview session. We are in San Francisco, California. Mike, when we left off, we were talking about your graduate education at the University of Wisconsin, and last time we talked, you had mentioned that you found friendships and relationships in the U.S. [United States] easier than in London [England]. I am wondering if you could talk a little bit more about that, or explain what you meant by that?

Well, you know, Americans have always had the reputation of being much more friendly, at least superficially. When the English are being snotty about it, they emphasize the superficiality, and when they are being nice about it, they emphasize the friendliness. I had found that people in Wisconsin were extraordinarily friendly. They were just very outgoing.

The students I met at the rooming house where I lived were very open. I shared a room with an entering freshman in engineering who was a very sweet man. And we commiserated a bit together because the engineering professor at one of the first lectures said to the class, "Well, look at the guy on your right and the guy on your left"—notice: only "guys"—"because one of you is not going to be here next term, or next year." I also met other people in the house, and I met other graduate students in geography who I liked very much. The professors, too, were very friendly.

It was generally kind of a bit of a revelation, along with the physical environment, which, in the fall in Madison [Wisconsin]—with the leaves beginning to turn, and football season emerging—was really rather wonderful, actually. I would go and drink beer with people, and eat spaghetti, and sit in the Rathskeller and drink beer, play chess. I found a group of people who were very nice. Among them are people I am still in touch with, a few—actually, really only one: Joe [Joseph E.] Schwartzberg, who is a professor at the University of Minnesota, and has been deeply involved in the United World Federalists for sixty years.

Teaching was not very burdensome, I found. As I said earlier, it was a bit strange, but was good. I found the classes reasonably interesting. I actually don't remember specific classes very well from that first year. I think it was in the first year that I did the research seminar that I talked about last time. But others were less memorable, although I did take a course with John Alexander on economic geography, and that was worthwhile. It was only in the second year that I rather went off the conventional geographic rails. I was already talking with Bill [William Wheeler] Bunge, though, and Bunge was, as I said before, in touch with the group at the University of Washington under Bill
[William Louis] Garrison. I was reading their blue-covered working papers, which seemed to flow across the mails about as easily as they do now on the internet. There were fewer of them, so we probably paid more attention to them, which is nice.

I also got to see a bit of Wisconsin. We took a field trip up to Spring Green [Wisconsin] to see Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's house and compound, which impressed me somewhat. I was very interested in architecture, and art in general, and I thought he was a very powerful architect. But when he came to visit in the department, for some reason—I don't know why, exactly; perhaps it was part of a human geography course—somebody got him down there, and he held forth, and asserted that there was enough land in the United States that everybody could have an acre, and we wouldn't even notice. Which technically is true, but socially is nonsense. And I, being a smartass, challenged him. Well, you didn't challenge Mr. Wright, and he snapped back rather sharply.

I didn't think as much of him as a thinker after that, although I've used his model of the city in my history class up to very recently. It's called Broadacre City, and the idea was, in fact, to spread everything out. One of his first really suburban houses was built in Madison. It's the only house he built in Madison, to my knowledge. He also built a church there, or designed the Unitarian church [First Unitarian Meeting House]. I remember years later, I went back to Madison to give a speech, and I went out and looked at it, and then structured the speech around Wright and the suburban revolution. Wright really invented the split-level house, and—although his version of it was very cramped, in the sense that doorways were low and windows were tight. He was a short man, and he didn't believe in height very much. Well, I will let that go for the moment.

The first summer in Madison, I took a trip, as I think I mentioned last time, and I won't deal with that, although it was revelatory.

    03-00:08:51
    Farrell:
    Yeah. You talked about that, and seeing the railroads.

    03-00:08:54
    Teitz:
    Yes, and it really reinforced my sense of the New Deal and of regional planning as an important subject for public policy, and for scholarship. In the latter part—or maybe the earlier part; I have forgotten which—of that summer, I worked for Reid Bryson as a cartographer. I think I mentioned that. I had taken Arthur [H.] Robinson's class, and I really liked cartography. It was good, and my hand didn't tremor at that point very much—barely at all, except if I was nervous.
It was while doing that that I met Ruth [V. Groves], Ruth Groves, who was my first wife. She was very young—just about to go off to college at Sarah Lawrence [College]—but we went out a bit. It was a nice romance, in a sense—very old fashioned. I think her parents were a bit skeptical, but we actually got on very well together. She was a lovely person. And very smart. She had won a scholarship to Sarah Lawrence College outside New York [City, New York], in Bronxville [New York].

That was the end of the first year, and in the second year, I took this array of courses, with very few geography courses. I think I described them last time, so I won't go into that again. But by the end of the second year, I took on this task for Charlie [Charles] Ball—who I talked about, I think, before—creating an atlas of land use and zoning for Milwaukee County [Milwaukee County Land Use and Zoning Atlas]. That actually went very well, all things considered. We finished the atlas. It wasn't printed until later in the fall. I think it's an okay job, considering the constraints under which we operated, which included doing the color separations by hand, which meant that we had blue line boards, and for each color, we cut out little bits of colored—I guess you could call it tape, [Zip-a-Tone} and stuck them on precisely within the blue lines for the land use map outline, which we had drawn by hand from air photos and other maps.

It was quite an enterprise, and our little crew, there were three of us: {Southard Modry?} and one other person whose name I have forgotten offhand. It'll come back, I hope. But we worked very hard that summer. We were working day and night, basically, in the intervals of going off to the basement of the Pabst brewery, where they had wonderful bratwurst, and beer that was allegedly piped in from the brewery right next to it. I don't know if that story was actually true.

One of the things, interestingly, about that summer: there was one person around who was a planner—whose name escapes me at the moment—who was very critical of what was going on. The city was in the middle of urban renewal, which was a bad period for planning, as recognized subsequently, but not necessarily recognized as such at the time. They were about the tear down the First Ward, which was an incredibly vibrant Italian neighborhood. I recall being in the [Milwaukee County] War Memorial and looking out and seeing the fireworks rising from some festival they were having. We would get food there.

That was the first instance I saw—or was aware of—of the questionability of urban renewal policy. Even though I had sat with [Gordon] Coleman Woodbury throughout the seminar for the second year at Wisconsin, and we had discussed urban policy in the U.S., and had gone in great detail over what had been done up to that point. And in general, I was in favor of the 1949
housing act [American Housing Act of 1949, Title V of P.L. 81-171], which had this wonderful introduction calling for a decent home and a suitable living environment for every person in the United States, a call that still hasn't been realized, and in fact is worse now. There were far fewer homeless people in Milwaukee [Wisconsin] in—excuse me—1958 than now.

During that second year, I had been in touch with [William] Garrison, and also with Walter Isard at Penn [University of Pennsylvania], whose work I had been reading. And I have talked about applying for that, for their programs, and I was accepted and offered support in both of them. Walter Isard offered me marginally more money. I was sending money home to my mother, which wasn't a useful exercise since she insisted on putting it away for me; I didn't know it at the time. At the end of the academic year, I decided to go to Penn.

I took off—I actually flew; I think it was the first time, I'm pretty sure—from Milwaukee to—or from Madison—no, probably from Milwaukee; I think I had moved by then—to Philadelphia [Pennsylvania]. Penn was a completely different proposition—another world. Philadelphia was a big city on the American model. I wasn't fazed by big cities very much, but it certainly was a huge contrast with Madison, with its shining lakes or its fantastically cold winters, with the lakes frozen over and people ice boating across them at enormous speeds.

When I got to Penn, there was another major transition, I think. I didn't much keep up with the people I had known at Wisconsin, other than Joe Schwartzberg and Bill Bunge. Bill was by then emmeshed in his war with Richard Hartshorne, which ended disastrously for him, and I'm very sad about that. I got to Penn, and checked in with the university, and I somehow hauled my two giant suitcases to a rooming house on, I think, Forty-second [Street] and Spruce [Street], a few blocks west of the university, where, interestingly, there were a bunch of other people. One of the people rooming there was Mimi, who became Mimi Herbert, the wife of my best friend at Penn [John Herbert]. I'm blanking on her name. Never mind. I'll get it back.

Obviously, the important thing was the program, and what I was going to do there. I walked in thinking, you know, I've been studying economics since high school, I've studied geography, I've read a lot of Walter's work—I will just do more advanced stuff. I found where regional science was located, which was in [Steinberg-]Dietrich Hall, which was the home of the Wharton School [of the University of Pennsylvania]. Regional science had the extreme, I guess, northwest corner of the building, just a few offices—maybe three or four offices—off one of the corridors. It was an uninteresting building. Rumor had it that it was planned before the Korean War and built afterwards, which
meant that they had no money to finish it, so it was all breezeblock painted green.

I went into Walter's office, and he—[imitating squeaky voice] "Oh, hi, Mike." He had a rather squeaky voice. He was an extraordinarily dynamic man. Very small and almost an irresistible force. I said, "Well, maybe I should do this and that," and he said [resumes imitation], "No! Take the economics."

He put me basically into the introductory Ph.D. [doctorate of philosophy] course for the economics department, which consisted of a micro and a macro sequence with Sidney Weintraub, who himself was an extraordinary man. He was not mathematical. Interestingly, he was in the older tradition of economics, but he was fascinated by and explaining the macroeconomics in his own way. He had a textbook that did it, too. He insisted that he had made all the discoveries that were standard, but he wasn't recognized that much. People knew he was a relatively important person in economics, but not that much.

I kind of suffered through his course, but midway through, I discovered an economic textbook [Microeconomic Theory: A Mathematical Approach], a new one, by [James Mitchell] Henderson and [Richard Emerson] Quandt—Q-U-A-N-D-T—which treated the whole subject mathematically. It was an absolute revelation. I used it in order to think through a lot of problems, and I more or less disguised it in Sidney's exams. It was really my introduction to mathematics in economics, properly speaking. I realized at that point that I didn't know much mathematics.

That was reinforced by the fact that my other courses were mathematical economics with Lawrence [Robert] Klein—maybe not that first year; perhaps in the second year. Lawrence Klein was, I think, the third Nobel Prize winner in economics [Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences]. An extraordinary man. One of the kindest—certainly, the kindest economist I ever met. He actually was very feeling. I took both mathematical economics and econometrics with Klein, and I liked them both.

I made it through in the usual way, doing well. I must have had some special touch with exams in those days. But I can remember Lawrence Klein—later, everybody called him "Larry"—standing in class in front of a blackboard covered with equations, in which we were trying to—he had laid out a general equilibrium picture of the economy in equations. If it's a system of equations, they have to balance. He is standing there scratching his head trying to find something missing, because the equations don't balance. It's lines and lines of equations on the board. The class was very bright. There was an Englishman in the class who had recently come from London whose math was better, and he was trying to help, but nobody seemed to solve it until finally, I guess
Klein managed to do it. But it was typical of him that he was not afraid to show that he didn't—he hadn't got something completely under control. He was always looking for something interesting and new.

In the latter part of my time at Penn, I did a big paper with him on some statistical problem, now somewhat forgotten. He actually wanted me to work with him on the PhD, but I learned—he never asked me, and he had asked Walter Isard, and Walter had said no. Klein was sufficiently polite, I think, to take that for the answer. If anybody had asked me, I would have done it. But that's the way things worked in that era. When you made decisions—or you thought you made decisions—perhaps nothing has changed. [laughs] I don't know.

Anyway, so Penn was a lot of hard work, and some very good friends and colleagues. The faculty was very small. It was Walter Isard, who had come down from MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], along with Ben [Benjamin Hazard] Stevens, who—it's a bee—who had been his student at MIT, an engineering student. A wonderful, rangy, tall guy with a great voice and a marvelous manner about him, who just kind of took me under his wing. It was very nice. Ben became a very good friend. He was quite a brilliant guy. He died very young, tragically. He had a heart problem, and was in hospital, and somebody put a stent into his heart, and it punctured something, and hours later he was dead. But he was very busily programming the big computer at Penn. They had one of the largest computers in the world at the time.

There were maybe four students, or possibly five in 1958; maybe four. But the notable one was William Alonso, with whom I shared an office. And Bill Alonzo was also an extraordinary mind. At the time, he was writing his dissertation, which became a book [Location and Land Use: Toward a General Theory of Land Rent] that became a standard model of how metropolitan economics worked—essentially, a model of land use and transportation integrated together. Not empirical—theoretical. But quite an extraordinary work for a dissertation.

I was mainly doing courses. The course array was very diverse. We had William Warntz come down from Princeton [University]. He was kind of a roving academic who had one of these minds that saw the world slightly differently, and he was interested in the transformations between time and space. He was especially interested, for example, in the fact that the early crossers of the Atlantic [Ocean] took extraordinarily long routes which were much quicker, because of the currents and the trade winds. You went sort of like that. [gestures] They'd learned that, and you could map that actually as a mathematical transformation, so that if you wanted, you could distort time and have space be straight, or you could have time continuous, and space then becomes distorted, as it were.
There were other faculty. The very young Charlie [Charles L.] Leven—L-E-V-E-N—was teaching a year-long course in regional social accounting, in which you constructed notional sets of equations to describe regional and multi-regional economies. How we managed to spend a year on it I don't know, but the social accounts are the basis of the idea of GNP [gross national product] and GDP [gross domestic product]. GDP is what is in the bottom right-hand corner, essentially. But they consist of equations with quantities in them that describe parts of the economy.

We were all intent there on regionalizing the national or the international economy. What Walter had in mind with regional science—and it started, I think, up at MIT, which wouldn't give him a department. Penn was always a very entrepreneurial—not "always," but at that time, quite an entrepreneurial institution. They gave people departments sort of like that. They invited him down from MIT, and he came with Ben, and Bill Alonso, I think, and they gave him the department of regional science. Well, nobody had ever heard of regional science. It didn't exist. It was in Walter's head. By the time I got there, they had been in existence for maybe two or three years. Maybe two, three years; I don't know exactly. But Walter, with his enormous energy and drive, had already created the Journal of Regional Science, which in due course I became the third editor of, while I was still a grad student. It is typical. Walter would say, "Do it," and I'd say, "Sure." You know? And so I was editing articles from senior professors and being, I think, maybe excessively editorial at times.

There was also the Regional Science Association which he had created along with a bunch of likeminded people, among whom was [Charles] Britton Harris, who was at Penn in the planning department. Britt Harris was another one of those extraordinary minds. People kind of emerged out of the New Deal. I don't know exactly what was going on there, but it was a time of such ferment, and with World War II following, I think people had extraordinary experiences, and they were very creative. Britt Harris was also mathematically very sophisticated, but he did almost nothing in equations. He wrote everything. It was very interesting. He could do the equations quite easily, but he wrote short papers. He never wrote anything tremendously dramatic, but he was an influence on everybody—a very powerful thinker.

Now, I should say a few words also at the same time, because Penn had the foremost department of city planning in the U.S. at the time, which had a number of people in it, including, I think, Jack Dyckman, who will come back later, and Martin Meyerson. A very vibrant group of students who were also interested in transforming the field. And people like Britt Harris and Meyerson were quite radical in their outlook on conventional city planning. Among the students were Tom [Thomas Andrew] Reiner, who later did a PhD in regional science, and John Herbert, who was a New Zealander who had
come to Penn to do a PhD. I got to know him, I don't know exactly how, but we talked a lot, and decided we would share an apartment together. At some time, perhaps during or at the end of the first year, we rented an apartment on Locust Street. It was a basement apartment, which was cool in the summer, except for the little fact that the walls would run with water, [laughs] because the atmosphere is so damp. But we enjoyed it.

John is still alive. He lives in [Washington] D.C. [District of Columbia], and I will come back to him more later, but I introduced him to Mimi, and I guess it was sort of love at first sight, and they are still married sixty years later.

John was also a very fertile thinker, and he and Ben were working together on the problem of modeling the city. This was a time in which several things were going on at once. Walter Isard was promoting the idea of theory as a basis for what de facto was geography, but he wanted to call "regional science." He wanted it, I think, because he wanted science. He believed in science. He believed in what he called "good research." That was his thing.

At the same time, the people in planning were being influenced by the fact that the Interstate Highway System [Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways] was being constructed, and when the interstate hit the city, the question of where and how highways should be built became an engineering problem, but it was also a social problem, although not really recognized as such. The engineering problem, which the engineers had their own way of dealing with, didn't take much account of the city, but people were inventing models that took into effect origins and destinations of travel, and were attempting to construct the urban freeways in ways that optimized the flow of cars between origins and destinations. When you put in a new link on a freeway, you would decide where it would go in part by estimating the origins and destinations that were reflected in the distribution of population and income, and car ownership, and home ownership, and commuting, and all the rest of it.

At the same time, urban areas were decentralizing like mad. Remember, this was the fifties and sixties, when the suburbs were being created. Levittown [New York] was still new. That had been a little earlier after the war, but the impact was fantastic. Everybody was buying cars. The country was extraordinarily prosperous, for everybody other than minorities. Even minorities were quite prosperous, in the sense that jobs were available, manufacturing was booming. Detroit [Michigan] was a vibrant city. The U.S. automobile industry employed large numbers of workers of all colors, and unionization was open to them in the auto industry under Walter [Philip] Reuther, but not in the construction industry, which was a very negative aspect of the time, I think.
There was a ferment of interest, and somehow, I had been picking that up—subliminally? Who knows?—from way back. I found myself at Penn in the midst of all these people who were mathematizing and building models, and programming, and whatever. I didn't do anything much in the way of programming there, but I set out to re-teach myself a lot of mathematics, especially what's called finite mathematics: matrix algebra and such like, which is the basis for much of statistics, and a lot of other applications in the world of mathematical economics. Economics at the time wasn't interested in cities and regions. Since then, there is a whole research on urban economics. But at the time, they weren't interested, and we were doing it.

The time at Penn, I think, was very powerful for me, and it passed rapidly. But I arrived there in [September] 1958, and I left in December of '62, so I guess that's three-and-a-half years. What was I doing? Coursework, a lot. In the course of that—personally important, obviously—was that Ruth and I got married. She was at Sarah Lawrence, and I had bought a car and used it—an old black Hillman, which Ben Stevens, who was a complete car fanatic—he was a super car engineer. He had three old Rolls-Royces that he was restoring. I think none of them were ever done in the end, but they were quite wonderful vehicles.

I used to drive up from time to time to New York, and drive up to Bronxville and see Ruth on the weekend, then drive back. For the last, I guess, two years at Penn, after we were married, we lived together in a carriage house on Lincoln Drive, near the park [Clifford Park]. It was a beautiful carriage house—freezing cold in the winter, because it had stone walls, and there was no internal insulation. We used a lot of oil. [laughs] I spent a lot of time there trying to think about what I was doing, and do coursework, and work on mathematics by myself.

In some ways, that wasn't the most productive time for me. I think I was stalled on what I would do for a dissertation, and my interaction with Walter was not good—not personally; we were always very polite and nice to each other. Walter had the habit, he would pick a student who he thought was suitable, and he would work with that person and produce a book. He picked me, and his idea we would work on: politics. He was going to mathematize politics. For Walter, what that meant was constructing systems of equations with variables. And I was a bit skeptical. He had come up with a book called *Area and Power* [*Area and Power: A Theory of Local Government*] by—the name escapes me [Arthur Maass]—and said, "Why don't you look at that? It's time. We can work together."

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13 Actually, four and one-third years.
But Walter's method of working was as unusual as everything else about him. He would start, I think, at five in the morning, in his secret office at school. He had probably two secret offices, because one secret office doesn't stay secret enough, and people would come and bang on the door. I was supposed to get there I think at six in the morning. Now, I was a night bird. I would stay awake at night, reading and working. At the time, I was also drafting the figures for his big textbook. I was a good draftsman then. He had these strange diagrams, which I translated into India ink on white paper. I used to do that all night. I would go to jazz clubs in Philadelphia, and come home at three in the morning. There was a very good jazz scene there, and Ben was a great jazz fan. He played the bass, and he and Walter and anybody else would do jazz. Walter was a great piano player at parties.

Walter said, "Let's work together," and the first morning, I got there I think at six. He started talking, and I'm sort of no good. That didn't work very well. The second morning, I got there at seven, and he had been going for an hour and a half. The third morning, I didn't show up at all. Interestingly, we never said anything about it. I just didn't go anymore, and one day, maybe in the following week, we passed each other in the hall, and he said, [imitating Walter's voice] "Well, Mike, I guess that's not working." I said, "Yeah." And that was that.\footnote{I greatly regret that I never properly apologized to Walter for my behavior. We were alike in not wanting to talk about personal relations. However, in my first or second year at U.C. Berkeley, I helped guide a young architecture graduate student, Tony Smith, to take a Ph.D. with Walter at Penn. They subsequently wrote several books together.}

At that point, I was kind of adrift for a dissertation topic, and Ben Stevens became my advisor. Ben was very good about it, but really was much too young to be a dissertation advisor. He wasn't very helpful. For the last half-year, I guess, or year, I was kind of thinking about a dissertation and trying to make notes, but I was very disorganized, and I didn't have a good sense of what it was I was going to do. Meanwhile, I was very busy. I always find myself being busy. I was editing the *Journal of Regional Science*, as I said. I had an office in the Regional Science Research Institute, which Walter had set up with an off-campus building, and I was paid reasonably well. Things were going fine. Ruth and I were pretty happy, I think.

I think marriage had been a shock for me, and the first months were difficult. But it was particularly hard because we got married in the summer of 1960, and we went off—I scraped up enough money and we flew to Mexico, to a wonderful place called Rancho San Felipe in Oaxaca [Mexico]. I don't know if you have ever been to Oaxaca, but the Rancho San Felipe I think is still there.
Farrell:

It is, yeah.

Teitz:

It is a marvelous place. In those days, I think it was probably a little less expensive than it is now, but it wasn't cheap.

We flew back, and then immediately took our car and drove to Seattle [Washington], because Bill Garrison had invited me for the summer to come and work with him. Now, this may seem strange—and it is strange, in fact—that—I am backtracking here, but Bill had asked me whether I wanted to come to Washington [for the Ph.D.], and I had decided the other way. But his offer to work for the summer was still there, so I took it, and he encouraged that. We drove there in our ancient Hillman, which, I had plotted a route so we were never more than 500 miles from a dealer. [laughs] There were still dealers in those days.

We got there, and I went in to talk to Bill Garrison. I think I had the problem. I wanted to simulate land use development around freeway interchanges. He said, "Great. We'll work on that. I'm leaving tomorrow for Sweden. I'll be gone all summer." Yeah? [laughs] Very strange. But apparently, that was his standard practice; I just didn't know it.

For the next six weeks, we lived in a little apartment. It was, I think, hard on Ruth. I was trying to figure out what to do, and what I did was actually a kind of simulation, called a Monte Carlo simulation, of interchange development. It wasn't very remarkable, but Bill Garrison and I got an article out of it, and I guess that was the first published article I had, maybe, in *Traffic Quarterly*.15

I was reverting back to that because it reflected on where I was at the end of the time in Philadelphia, because at that moment in Philadelphia, I was really not very far advanced on the idea of a dissertation at all. It was actually, on reflection, a serious problem for me. I am sitting in my office, probably working on the journal, and not paying much attention to dissertation issues, and Mel [Melvin M.] Webber called me from [University of California] Berkeley and said, "Are you interested in a job in the planning department at Berkeley?" I was kind of astounded. It turned out that John Herbert, who had been my roommate—I knew this, of course—he had taken a master's degree at Berkeley, knew Mel Webber very well, and Mel Webber had hired him back. John also hadn't finished his dissertation, and he was at Berkeley, and Mel Webber was hiring like mad. But this was a strange moment at Berkeley.

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15 The paper, “Expressway and Industrial Location,” *Traffic Quarterly*, 1958, was actually co-authored with Charles Ball.
when Mel Webber became acting chair for a year, and turned the department upside-down completely.

Mel called, and I must have said, "That's very attractive. I'll think about it." But it didn't take a lot of thinking about. I actually knew Berkeley, because, reverting to my time in Seattle, after Seattle, Ruth and I had driven down the coast and [U.S. Route] 101 and [California State Route] One to San Francisco, and loved it, obviously. In addition, I had been, while a student at Penn, teaching for National Science Foundation summer institutes that Walter was running on regional science, and they were at Berkeley. They went for a month or six weeks, and we flew out, and I lectured basically on mathematics for economics to people who were tenured professors. [laughs] It is a very upside-down world. Berkeley wasn't a total mystery to me. It was a very nice place. We did many nice things there.

Where am I? I guess I am sort of at the end of Penn.

03-01:00:31
Farrell: Before we move to Berkeley, I have quite a few questions for you. I am wondering if you can define "regional science?"

03-01:01:00
Teitz: Okay. "What is regional science?" was a question that was asked every day in the regional science department. Bill Alonso and Ben and I used to go out for lunch at a corner place and eat sandwiches and mull over the question, and then play pinball. [laughs] Nobody knew. Walter had some version of a definition, but basically, I always thought of it as a high-speed collision between mathematical economics and geography and planning. Walter was interested in policy. He was interested in rigorous, mathematically based systems for describing and understanding social phenomena. He was interested in the idea of "region." I haven't really discussed the idea of "region" itself. There will come a point when that becomes appropriate—maybe when I talk about my dissertation.

But regional science itself was defined by the Regional Science Association, by the Papers and Proceedings of the Regional Science Association, by the Journal of Regional Science, which Walter started, and Ben and Walter were the editors, and I joined them in my third and fourth years at Penn. It was defined extensively, not intensively. Nobody ever had a neat definition of what it was. In that, I think it reflects the idea of "region" itself, which is very resistant. I've been wrestling with it for seventy years, and it still resists, and I am still reading books about it. I am in the middle of reviewing a very nice book by a young scholar on regional governance.

I don't think there is an adequate definition of "regional science." In fact, it's a constructed field. The British never accepted it, and they formed something
called the Regional Studies Association, which Peter [Geoffrey] Hall cleverly engineered as a way of forestalling Walter's effort to create a British section of the Regional Science Association. The Regional Science Association still exists, even though there is no department anymore. There are sections of it in Asia, in Europe, in Latin America. They have meetings—world meetings and national and regional meetings—still. The Western Regional Science Association is noted for its meetings in places which are very pleasant to go to in the spring. [laughs] And at this point, I think it's become more or less what you might call urban and regional economics, with a taste of policy involved.

Since Walter died, I think nobody worries very much about what is regional science. Walter spent a good deal of time thinking about it, but he never managed to write a book that—he wrote a couple of very good books. One was a theoretical book about the structure of economic space, and another one was a brilliant textbook, *Methods in Regional Science* [*Methods of Regional Analysis: an Introduction to Regional Science*], which was used for decades by people all over the world.

I think it's undefinable. If I work hard, maybe by next time, I will come up with a definition of sorts.

03-01:06:12
Farrell: [clears throat] Pardon me. The relationship between geography and math allowed you to take some classes with Lawrence Klein. I am wondering what you learned from him, either academically or personally?

03-01:06:29
Teitz: Well, first, I learned that a great thinker could also be a really warm human being. He was a lovely man, as I said.

I think what I learned from him was a respect for econometrics, which is basically the mathematization of economic theory, or the merger between mathematical economics and statistics. In other words, it's the rigorous measurement of economic phenomena.

He certainly influenced me, but I didn't become an econometrician. I don't think he changed the way I thought very much. At that time, my sense is I hadn't figured out what I was thinking about regional science or that realm in general, and that's probably still true. [laughs] But it certainly was a privilege to know him.

03-01:08:09
Farrell: [clears throat] Pardon me. You had also mentioned that there were students at Penn in the city planning department who wanted to transform the field. How did they want to transform the field? Did you have any sense of that?
Teitz:

I think that it wasn't just students. There were faculty. People like [John] Dyckman, Britton Harris, and Martin Meyerson were all interested in changing the field, and making it more rigorous, and giving it a stronger intellectual foundation. The problem with planning is that it's basically an ideology, which you can trace back to the nineteenth century, to the people who were inventing ideal communities, or utopian communities, and especially to Ebenezer Howard, who invented the idea of the garden city. But in general, what it was was a reaction against the industrial city, and a belief that it was possible that the industrial city was disorganized and chaotic, and therefore, cities should be planned ahead of time, and designed.

The consequence of this was that although Ebenezer Howard was not an architect, most planners were architects, and planning was conceived of in architectural terms as a design problem: to go into an area or a city and look at it, and re-conceive it as a good city. Nobody has ever been able to fully define what a "good city" is, but actually, there has been quite a lot of progress in that direction, I would say—or movement, anyway. We have a lot of people now with pretty explicit definitions of what "goodness" in a city is, like walkability and urbanity, and all those things, which come later.

The sense in planning among some people—not a large number—was that the field was, if anything, was rather rusty; that it was locked into this design studio experience. I'll get to that; when we come to Berkeley, I will explain that a lot more carefully—that planners needed to have more rigorous analytic methods. They needed to be able to use data a lot better than they did. In general, they should be more analytical, along with everything else that they did—not as a replacement, although for some people, simply the study of the city or of the region became the driving force. In some ways, that was where I was.

But I think there were people in a number of places—at Cornell [University], even a little bit at North Carolina—not so much, although there was a different kind of change happening there—and at MIT. But Penn was probably the hotbed of it all at that time.

Farrell:

This is going back to something that you mentioned when you were talking about your time in Wisconsin, but in terms of urban renewal, you had mentioned that it was the first instance of questioning urban renewal that you had when you were seeing all this happen in the ‘50s. What about it were you questioning, and then how did that sort of influence what you were doing later?

Teitz:

What was being questioned or I was aware of—I'm not sure I was questioning it, but I became aware that there was an issue—was the notion that you would
go in and tear down "the slums"—what became called "urban blight," using this quasi-biological analogy, or else "cancer," to take it further and worse, and that you would replace it with a clean and healthy, livable city. I think where it was going wrong with the failure to recognize what, in fact, a healthy city was. People had become transfixed by Le Corbusier [Charles-Édouard Jeanneret], who was the polar opposite of—if Frank Lloyd Wright wanted the Broadacre City, with everybody on one acre, Le Corbusier, I think if he had been pushed to the limit, would have had everybody in one tower.

Both: [laughter]

Teitz:

But that wasn't his model. His model was a series of towers in parks, with grand, sweeping motorways around them, which is sort of what we got, except for the parks.

But what it implied was that one would tear down large chunks of cities, and this was the time of Robert Moses in New York. Under the legislation of the 1949 and '54 Housing Acts [Housing Act of 1954, Pub.L. 83-560, 68 Stat. 590], it became possible to do exactly that, and make money, courtesy essentially of federal funding. So cities were doing it, and under the stimulus of the Interstate Highway System, construction of the inner city component—the big pieces between cities were completed very fast, and with relatively little opposition. Obviously, local farmers were upset when, all of a sudden, things were divided and there was no way across. But there was no real opposition to the highway program, Eisenhower's highway program.

But when it came to the cities, it meant tearing down large chunks of cities, putting in—the favorite thing would be a ring freeway with some radials, right? Let's say four radials, if you did that. If you have a river, you always ran a freeway along the water. If you had a waterfront, you built the Embarcadero Freeway [State Route 480]. In fact, San Francisco had on the books a plan for the Embarcadero to run to the Golden Gate Bridge, which was fought to a standstill, leaving the Embarcadero as a stub until the [1989 Loma Prieta] earthquake took care of that.

Essentially, urban renewal was a mixture of slum clearance in order to improve housing conditions, theoretically, at least; in some cases, it was simply clearance out of minorities from neighborhoods where profitable development could occur, although it rarely did in the early years; and finally, clearance for purposes of building freeways, or in the case of New York, also parks and parkways. A nice kind of little footnote to all that is that there is serious discussion in New York now of tearing down the Sheridan freeway [Arthur V. Sheridan Expressway, Interstate 895], which runs along the southern edge of the Bronx [New York City, New York], which was one of
Robert Moses' creations. There was a piece in the *New York Times* yesterday about—you maybe saw it. Yeah. That's really the story there.

**Farrell:** You had also mentioned that you were in favor of the 1949 Housing Act.

**Teitz:** I was in favor of it, obviously, because my family had been on a list for public housing for my entire time in London. I think they must have gotten on the list shortly after 1945. My mother never made it. In the end, in line with changes in the times, her son-in-law—my brother-in-law, Jack—bought her a small house out on the outer edge of northwest London, out toward the outer edge, which she loved. She had a garden. She gardened and enjoyed it very much. But she never got an apartment. I used to walk through the projects—we didn't call them those. My friends lived in them. They were very habitable, though the rooms were very small, and I recognized that. But I was all in favor of public housing. Who wouldn't be, at the time? Even now?

**Farrell:** I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about the differences between the university of Wisconsin and Penn? If you could talk about the differences between the two universities?

**Teitz:** Yeah. Well, Wisconsin is the ultimate land grant university. I don't know whether it's the ultimate one, but it is an essential land grant university, built on the Wisconsin idea, which is essentially the university in service to the public—education and service. Always deeply involved with government. Wisconsin has this strange mixture in its history. It goes from quite radical and progressive administrations or representatives to very conservative, which partly reflects the mixture of Scandinavian and German, I think, in the state's population.

At Wisconsin, I always had a sense that the state was important; that extension, university extension [University of Wisconsin-Extension], the agriculture school. There was a dairy on campus that made the most splendid ice cream. Really wonderful. And that permeated, I think, into the faculty to a good extent. Some of our faculty worked for extension, the extension program, out doing whatever it is that one might do out in relation to agriculture or rural areas. Extension itself, of course, is really the process of disseminating the results of university research into the farming community, and that itself was quite a radical invention, and very impressive. When I first found out about it, I was tremendously impressed, not just by how brilliant the research had been—everything from condensed milk to rat poison, and Warfarin, which is a rat poison, but it's also the basis for a heart drug, because it thins the blood. Wisconsin, the university made millions off it, which is great, because
nowadays, some professor would probably go and set up a company and take the millions for himself.

Penn was not like that at all. Penn was a kind of a strange hybrid, in a way. It was an Ivy League school with Ivy League traditions, so that the college and the main central building and the little tiny green campus—which still had streetcar tracks running through it when I got there. The streetcars had been put underground, but the tracks were still there. It was not very prosperous. I think it was probably among the poorest of the Ivies.

It was hustling. It had very good engineering, very good computer science. It wasn't called that at the time. It looked for innovation. Certainly, in geography, Wisconsin was not looking for innovation. It was fighting innovation like mad. Hence the encouragement of Walter, the encouragement of the planning program, to diversify—not "diversify" in the modern sense, but at least to bring in people who were not just architects or architect planners.

At the same time, I should mention that Ian [L.] McHarg was there, kind of revolutionizing landscape architecture through the use of overlays, which I thought was a very simple-minded cartographic device, which turned out to have a lot more power than I gave it credit for.

Penn was partially supported by the state, to, at that time, quite a significant extent. But the state support has diminished much more since, and Penn became a much more entrepreneurial entity, with a giant medical school. Going after money is very, very important. It's very important at every university now, but I think for Penn, it became absolutely vital to its existence. But it was a fertile ground for anybody who had a different idea, and there were, scattered around the Wharton School and the sociology department, many really interesting minds at the time.

Farrell: At the point that you were at Penn, were you thinking that you wanted—I mean, I know that you had been married, but were you thinking at that point that you had been wanting to stay in the States?

Teitz: That—?

Farrell: That you had been wanting to—did you—

Teitz: To stay?
Yeah. Had you been wanting to stay in the States, or is that just something that kind of happened?

I never really thought about it. I never really contemplated going back. The issue never came up. It wasn't until I was actually at Berkeley that the issue arose, and it became a very serious issue. I was once again, I think, fortunate in my friends and colleagues. Also, I was a bit resourceful. I'll get to that when the time comes, unless you want to deal with it now?

We can talk about that when it comes.

Yeah. The right time probably is when all my student deferments ran out. At that time, I had been in the States since 1956, and I was at Berkeley in '64, or '63, and that was the end of my student—so long as I was still writing my dissertation, the issue didn't arise.

I see. Well, that's actually a good transition into talking about your dissertation. You had mentioned that you were kind of a little bit adrift before you started at Berkeley, and you were working on other things when you got the call from Mel Webber. And it didn't take a lot of—

Persuasion.

Yeah, exactly. Can you tell us a little bit about your transition from Penn to Berkeley? If it was supported? Then how your dissertation unfolded from there?

Right. Ruth and I talked about it. She was quite amenable to moving. It meant we were further away from her family, because we had gone every Christmas and at least one other time in the year. It was kind of a straight drive: 1,000 miles from Philadelphia to Madison, but there was freeway all the way.

We had a few adventures doing that. I remember one night coming back in the winter, I was asleep in the back seat of the car, and Ruth was driving with a friend of hers, and they were chitchatting away. All of a sudden, I realized the car had stopped. It's dead middle of the night, freezing cold. They had run out of gas. [laughs] I got out and hitched a ride to the next station, where there was a truck with a guy sleeping in it. I tapped on his boot and roused him, and we got back to the car with gas just at the same time that a truck from the
other station arrived. There was good service, I guess, in the middle of the night on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Anyway, never happened again.

But Ruth was amenable, and John and Mimi, who were our friends by then—close friends—and they were living in a small apartment right off campus. And there was an apartment in their building. Actually, it was more or less next door to them, which was very nice. That wasn't a critical factor, obviously, but we decided to come.

The main thing was what do you do about a car? I still had my ancient Hillman, which I thought wouldn't make it one more time across the country. And so I consulted with Ben, and he came up with a Singer, another English car, which was white with a red convertible top. A four-seater, actually. It wasn't a real Singer, which is a great classic sportscar. Rootes [Group] had taken over the company [Singer Motors Limited] and converted one of their models into a Singer. But it had a nice engine and it was in good shape.

So we packed it with all our stuff, and we took off to the West. We drove first to Madison, and stayed there for a little while. We did that trek again across the country, which was actually the third time I had done it in six months, I think, because of getting married, that back and forth. Anyway—.

We got to Berkeley, and the apartment was available on—what's the name of the street? [Le Conte Avenue] Never mind. It was a nice little apartment, and we moved in. Ruth set about finding a teaching job, which she got fairly rapidly, and I kind of moved into the department, which at that time was in a small wooden building [North Gate Hall] just to the east of the old architecture building, which is at the North Gate of the campus. You know North Gate? If you walk out of the North Gate, there is a wooden structure there, which is now, I think, the journalism school [University of California Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism].
department, which nobody quite knew what it was. Now I jumped back again into a very traditional planning department. But it was a planning department that was in transition.

It was in transition for two reasons. One was that the master plan for the University of California, which Clark Kerr had created, actually specified city planning as a field for expansion. It had a little line in there. I once looked it up, and Berkeley was the only place with city planning. The nine-campus system was barely coming into existence. Obviously, UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] and—sorry—[University of California] Davis were solidly established, although for UCLA, it was known as the southern branch until not that long before I arrived. It's amazing.

Kerr's conception was quite extraordinary. I thought it was a great piece of planning, and I think it still is. It's a wonderful example of the capacity to plan something and carry it off, which is to see an issue or problem, to conceive of or analyze it carefully enough to conceive of a way of addressing it, and then to implement the proposals that you come up. That's the essence of planning, essentially. The arguments are all about where is the emphasis? How do you do whatever the pieces are?

Berkeley [planning department] at that time had been founded in 1948 by [Thomas] Jack Kent [Jr.], who was the youngest city planning director ever of San Francisco. A brilliant man, I think, in his own right. He had more or less invented the idea of—his version of—I shouldn't say "invented," because it was around, what was called the "master plan." But Jack refined it into what he called the "general plan." The general plan is now a component of legislation in California, and every city of a certain size is required to have one. Every general plan is required to have elements in it, such as an environmental element, and a housing element, and a land use element. The idea of the general plan and the elements are all Jack Kent's. They were all laid out in his book *The [Urban] General Plan*.

The department was structured around that conception of planning. The essence of the program was a series of studios. Jack came out of architecture, as did Fran [Francis] Violich, the second person in the department. And Fran was a landscape architect, and had a joint appointment in the landscape architecture department. Along with Jack Kent and Fran Violich was Corwin [R.] Mocine, who had been this planning director I think in Oakland [California], and was a planning professional. He had a master's. None of them had PhDs.

There was one PhD in the department. A few years earlier, they had hired Don [Donald L.] Foley, who was a lovely man. He died this past year at the age of 100. Lived a very full life. He was a sociologist—the first time the department
had actually hired somebody with a PhD in an academic field, to my knowledge. He taught, essentially, how to deal with data, and a sort of social view of planning.

The key appointment that Jack had made was Mel Webber—Melvin Webber—who had been a student in the department not too many years earlier, had gone out into the field as a professional, and worked on the planning of BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit] a lot. Jack brought Mel back. Mel had been a student of economics—what was usually known at "institutional economics"—at [University of] Texas. Institutional economics was a stream within the field that was concerned about policy, and about economic institutions.

Interestingly, Wisconsin was one of the key places in which institutional economics was strong. There was a long tradition of institutional and welfare economics stemming from Richard T. [Theodore] Ely at Wisconsin. Harold [Martin] Groves, who was Ruth's great-uncle, was a distinguished professor of public finance and an institutional economist of the best kind at Wisconsin. He was an interesting man. I liked him.

Anyway, so the department was very traditional in that sense. They also had on the faculty, however—but only as a lecturer—Catherine [Krouse] Bauer Wurster, who was definitely the first woman to be appointed to the faculty. Catherine had a terrific reputation. She had written a book called *Modern Housing*, which was quite revolutionary in its time, arguing for public housing. She had come, like so many of them, out of the [Great] Depression and the New Deal. She was married to William [Wilson] Wurster, who would become the first dean of the [University of California Berkeley] College of Environmental Design, and I think was a professor of architecture at the time. Catherine came with him, but there were nepotism rules, it was my understanding. I asked why she wasn't a professor. I mean, it made no sense. They said, "No, the university rules don't permit husband and wife to serve." Who knows?

Anyway, so it was actually a strong faculty of gifted people, productive people. Also on the faculty, again as a lecturer, was—oh, this is terrible. Let's leave that blank, but I'll talk about him [Mellier G. Scott, Jr.], because he was a journalist, and he had written two very large histories, one of planning in general, and one of planning in the [San Francisco] Bay Area. He taught a course in the department, but my understanding is that they would not put him on the faculty because he was a journalist. Which seemed to me at the time also a kind of misplaced set of values, but—. His wife Gerry [Geraldine Knight Scott] was on the faculty of the landscape department. Now I am blanking on the name still. Anyway, he was really important, because he did a very famous slide presentation of photos of the Bay taken from the air, which
documented the filling of the bay, and was shown all over the Bay Area as part of the campaign for BCDC [San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission], and for the presentation of the bay shoreline, and the prevention of filling.

Let me return for a moment to Mel Webber, though. Mel had been appointed to the faculty as a—I guess he must have become associate professor by then. Jack Kent went on leave, and Mel Webber became acting chair. Mel arrived just at the moment when the money was flowing and positions were popping up out of the ground, like the grass in California recently. [laughs] Mel didn't hesitate a moment. He just went ahead and started recruiting. And the way recruitment was done was that the chair essentially searched out and found somebody, and brought that person to the faculty's attention and said, "Is this someone we want?" The faculty said yes, because the faculty was used to saying yes to the chair, because Jack was a very strong chair. And that happened.

Mel had appointed John Herbert, and John talked to him about me, and lo and behold, Mel called me up and I followed. Shortly thereafter came a stream of appointments, including Jack Dyckman from Penn; a bit later, Mike Meyerson from Penn; Roger Montgomery from St. Louis, from Washington University [in St. Louis]; Donald Appleyard—two appointments in what would now be called "urban design." Roger was an architect planner, and Appleyard was more of a mixed bag, but he was doing leading research following up in the behavior of people in the city. He was one of the earliest people to do that, and built a gigantic model eventually in the basement of Wurster Hall—literally a physical model with a camera that would circle down and work its way through the model making films of the streets so you could get a sense, and show people what the experience was like, and then ask them whether they like it or not. It's amazing what people did [laughs] before there was easy computing.

This string of appointments was largely after me. I think I was the first one after John, though Jack Dyckman may have come to visit earlier; I am not sure. I think he might have come for a semester earlier. There were more, and I will get to them in time. It was a time when the department was changing rapidly in its composition, and growing very fast. If you had an initial faculty essentially of five—or six, depending who got to vote—the faculty suddenly became twelve, or fourteen, or eighteen, or twenty-one, eventually. At its largest, it's something like that. It's less now. It was a very rapid growth for anywhere, and as we know with people, when you grow too fast, there are complications.

Farrell: Amidst all of this growth, did you feel like you fit into the department or you had a strong place?
It's interesting. I never felt that I didn't fit. I clearly was different, and I was a mystery to Jack Kent, I am sure. Jack was such a nice man. He was always so polite. He would never—I am sure this is true—he would never dream of acting in a way that went against academic principles, say, on promotion. Not for a moment. But I don't think he understood me, and in retrospect, I understand him now; I am old enough. But I had some growing up to do. I was pretty young. I was still, when I arrived—what? In '63. So I was still in my twenties.

I felt comfortable enough that I started out teaching location theory [clears throat] to planning students, who were somewhat mystified, but I got into it, and we evolved ways to get them to see that there was structure to the city. One exercise I came up with very early was to take the yellow pages, which still existed [laughs], and I would take the class, and everybody would take an activity, and I would ask them to make a map of that activity and bring it to class. Do it on a big sheet of paper, so it was quite in line with the planner's sense that the first thing you do is draw a line on a piece of paper. Put a background map on it so that we had the scale. I was a cartographer, so if they didn't have a scale on it, I would yell at them. I would show them these patterns. We did all sorts of things, like—I don't know if it was—somebody did pornographic bookstores at one point. We did groceries and whatever, and we showed where they were, and we were anticipating all the discourse about services and about access.

The courses I taught resonated well with the students, I think, on the whole. I taught at least one undergraduate course every year. One year, I know I taught a studio for undergraduates, and we took West Berkeley [California] and the proposal to essentially demolish the industrial district and convert it into a housing and thriving bayside community, which of course ran into enormous opposition in Berkeley when it was actually put forward. But we were quite enthusiastic about it. That was urban renewal, not at its best, although in some ways, the industrial district was already obsolete.

What else did I teach? I am not quite sure. I am sure I had a seminar. But a bit later, I taught a methods class. I was quite comfortable on the whole, I think. People were friendly, and I was very busy. For one thing, I had to write my dissertation, and that was still a big conundrum. At the same time, I was starting other lines of research, which were turning out to be very, very productive. And the two things kind of ran into each other and slowed me down.

I don't want to shortchange our discussion on your dissertation, because I think that there's probably a lot there, but we are running a little bit short on
time today, so I figure that's probably a good place to pick up next time. But I do have a couple of more questions.

03-01:54:54
Teitz:
The reason I wanted to talk about it is because it raises the subject of regionalism, and that's an important topic for me, and for my career.

03-01:55:06
Farrell:
We'll definitely—I don't—because I don't want to just breeze through that and not spend time on it. I figure if we start there next time, we have plenty of time to talk in depth about that. I have all those notes down to talk about that for next time. But I do have a couple more questions.

You were talking about how you went from a traditional to a more radical to a more traditional department, and I am wondering if you had a sense of what you liked better? Or maybe you didn't, and you were just sort of figuring it out at that point, but—?

03-01:55:41
Teitz:
That's an interesting question. I hate to say it, but I was probably oblivious. It didn't occur to me that I was happy or unhappy in the department, per se. I was quite happy at Wisconsin, mainly because I was doing whatever I wanted. I was quite happy at Penn, where I wasn't doing immediately whatever I wanted, but I recognized very rapidly that Walter was quite right. And from then on, I was doing pretty much what I wanted.

At Berkeley, it was a new world. I had taught before, and teaching wasn't alien to me. The responsibility, I guess, was important. I certainly wasn't uncomfortable. I had good friends in the department. Mel Webber was very supportive, and John Herbert was a close friend. Very rapidly, I made other friends. Bill Alonso showed up inevitably. It was amazing. It was kind of old home week at one point.

No, it was a friendly department, which is strange to say considering how much dissonance there was brewing at that moment, and shortly to burst out seriously. Yeah. But the dissonance was substantive, not personal. Indeed, Mel Webber to the end of his life maintained that there was no dissonance. [laughs] Which is wonderful. Yeah, he was a sweetheart. I don't know.

03-01:58:17
Farrell:
I am wondering if you can talk a little bit about how your experiences at both Wisconsin and Penn helped shape your early days at Berkeley?

03-01:58:39
Teitz:
They certainly made me what I was at that point, which was technically reasonably competent, a decent writer, somebody who was inclined to think theoretically but had real interest in practical application and in policy.
That seems to me about as far as I could probably take that. I'd need an external observer. It frames itself in my head as a question: how was I different as a result of that experience from what I had been, certainly when I stepped off the boat? I was different; there is no question. I had something approaching a bad English-American accent. But intellectually, it seemed to me that the line from LSE [London School of Economics], and even from high school, from [Leonard James] Jim Marr, is pretty consistent: interest in regions; interest in space and geography; interest in thinking analytically. It's a continuity rather than a transformation, I would argue. Others might see it differently; I am not sure.

An alternative version is that I just did whatever came along. Which was certainly true, and it's something that comes out of my childhood. When the world is deeply uncertain, you take nothing for granted. On the other hand, the present is always there, and you act within it, and you deal with it as it comes. I didn't have a life plan, if you like.

Farrell: Well, that was wonderfully said. I think that that's probably a good place to leave it today, and then we will pick up with your dissertation next time.

Teitz: Okay. All right.

Farrell: Thank you.

Teitz: Good.
Okay. This is Shanna Farrell back with Mike [Michael B.] Teitz on Tuesday, March 28, 2017. This is our fourth interview session, and we are in San Francisco, California. Mike, when we left off last time, we were talking about your dissertation. And I am wondering if you could tell us a little bit more about your dissertation, how you decided on the topic, and what that process was like?

Yes. I left Philadelphia [Pennsylvania] without a dissertation, really. I hadn’t discussed it very much with anybody. Walter [Isard] was no longer my advisor, and Ben [Benjamin Hazard Stevens] was, but Ben was a believer in letting you run loose. So, I was thinking about it, and what I had wanted to do was to construct a model of regional development that simultaneously would incorporate the economics and the creation of the region itself. This was an extremely ambitious idea that proved to be more ambitious than feasible.

I made relatively little progress, and was busy doing other things after my arrival in Berkeley [California]. Before I go further into that, I should perhaps talk about my arrival. Because it was an interesting time. We left Philadelphia in the summer of 1963 [December 1962], and traveled across the country in our red and white Singer, stopping first at Ruth’s [Ruth V. Groves] home in Madison [Wisconsin], where we saw her parents, Ted and—[coughs] excuse me—Dorothy Groves, who were interesting people. The Groves family had been settlers in Wisconsin. They had homesteaded in northern Wisconsin, tearing out tree stumps in that wasteland of post-foresting.

I’m sorry: we left in December, not September. It was the wintertime, and we decided the take the southern route, which was largely [United States] Route 66. On the way, we thought we would go to the Grand Canyon, which I had walked across the year before, in one day, which was one of my biggest physical efforts of all time, since I then walked back the other way in the next two days. Since I had nothing with me, I just walked down. Unfortunately, it snowed like mad as we were coming up toward the turnoff for the canyon, so we slipped and slid down the hill to Phoenix [Arizona] in the snow, then rain, and then arrived in Phoenix at night to an amazing smell of orange blossoms. Phoenix doesn’t smell like that anymore. Now, it smells of automobiles.

We drove on to Los Angeles [California], arriving there early in the morning. I’ve described that in the little paper I wrote about arriving in California that year. We visited with a friend in Los Angeles, and then drove up the coast to San Francisco and [University of California] Berkeley, and arrived there in
time for the beginning of the semester in January of 1963. It was ‘62 that we actually drove across; excuse me.

I was immediately faced with the prospect of simultaneously writing my dissertation—because I had an acting assistant professorship appointment—but I didn’t have much idea of what it was to be, other than that I had this notion that it was theory. In retrospect, the absence of good guidance, I think, was quite serious, but it was compounded by my own reluctance to take advice from anybody. I think I had been very independent for a long time. At the same time, I was starting in a new teaching job in a department that I didn’t know, in a field in which I think I had never taken a course, although I had been mixed up with planning one way and another for at least ten or fifteen years beforehand.

So, the problem of the dissertation tended to get put off. The pressure of the moment, as it always happens when you take a first real academic job, was to satisfy the teaching requirement, and I set to doing that. Luckily, we had an apartment next door to John [Herbert] and Mimi [Herbert], our friends, and that was a big help. And the department, as I’ve said, was very friendly.

I taught my initial classes. I think one of them was location theory. I am not sure what the students made of that. I think the other one was probably a workshop class, but I’m not certain. [Thomas] Jack Kent [Jr.] was very friendly. The faculty was very friendly. But he was mystified about who I was. We met in faculty meeting once a week in those days, which is terrifying to the thought of current faculty. I remember him asking in a meeting for me to explain myself, and I fear that I didn’t explain myself very well. I suppose I was very busy, but also perhaps a bit cowed by the experience, but reluctant to say so.

I started working on the dissertation and thinking about it during that spring, but I didn’t make much progress. At the same time, I started to tap into other research possibilities. At that time, I was also very interested in the problem of public facility location, and I am not sure how I became interested in the problem, but I wrote a paper called “The Theory of Public Facility Location” that I presented at a Regional Science [Association] meeting in November, probably—October, November—probably of 1963, but possibly 1964 or later, even. I was generally interested in applying theory and analytic methods to policy problems, so this seemed like an area in which there was something interesting to do. But some time during that year, a person whose name escapes me at the moment, who was involved in public health [Jerome W. Lubin] came into my office. It may have been a little bit later, but he said that I should address the problem of the location of health clinics, which they were at that time trying to set up in California. [clears throat] That seemed to coincide with the issue that I had been writing about theoretically.
To tell the truth, that early year at Berkeley is not very clear in my mind. It’s very different in some sense from my memory of even years quite close earlier. I suppose people have these gaps and lapses in memory, but I haven’t been able to really recover it very much. I suspect that what was going on was the stress of moving, of having a new department, having a relatively new marriage that was not working perfectly but was nonetheless good, and settling in, all at the same time, and trying to make sense of what it meant to be in a planning department.

In effect, I think that I more or less let the dissertation stand in favor of meeting my other obligations. But the semester rolled around to its end, and summer arrived. I was doing something that summer, but I am not sure what. It may have been another of the regional science workshops for the faculty at which I taught at Berkeley. I was trying to prepare for my first full year, 1963.

It so happened that I had, as I said, an acting assistant professor appointment that normally ran for one year, but it was extended—because I had arrived in the middle of the year—to December 1964. So, I had a firm deadline. This actually provided me with something of a problem, because if I didn’t finish, I would no longer have the job. But if I did finish, I would no longer have a visa. The issue arose of what I would do next, or what I would do in the event of not finishing—or finishing, as the case may be. Either way, I had a dilemma.

What actually transpired was very interesting. The department, which I’ll talk about in a moment, had been expanding very rapidly, as I said earlier. One of the people who had come was William L. C. Wheaton, who had been a senior administrator at, I think, HHFA, the Housing and Home Finance Administration, during the [Lyndon Baines] Johnson administration. He had gone to Penn [University of Pennsylvania] as a professor, and Mel [Melvin M.] Webber swept him up, along with everybody else, and had brought him to Berkeley.

Bill Wheaton had the answer, which was that because I had a Fulbright fellowship, I could not get resident status. Because Senator [James William] Fulbright personally reviewed every application for residency for any Fulbright scholar, and he was known for shipping nuclear science PhDs [doctors of philosophy] back to Turkey—at least, that was the legend. However, Bill Wheaton was well versed in the ways of Washington [DC], and HUD [United States Department of Housing and Urban Development], which had very recently been formed, included a number of his colleagues, whom he mobilized. He wrote a letter, and I wrote a letter. The whole thing went to Senator Fulbright, who had never seen an application from HUD, or indeed, I think, from probably any of the sort of more social agencies. I don’t know if that’s actually true, but certainly from HUD. The Senator approved it.
Actually, I was off the hook so far as a visa was concerned, but at the same
time, I was on the hook with Berkeley because at the end of December 1964,
the axe would fall, and my appointment would be terminated. And Berkeley in
those days was quite tough. Not very forgiving, I think. I think the academic
review was very, very rigorous, the budget committee was very tough, and in
general, rules were rules.

In the summer of 1964 and thereafter, I started really to work harder on the
dissertation. I sat up on the roof of the building on Le Conte Avenue, where
we lived, in the sunshine, and just wrote by hand everything. It was a kind of a
grab-bag of stuff. I had a chapter in which I attempted an algebraic version of
what I was talking about, and that didn’t really work very well, but it was a
chapter. I had a chapter in which I attacked the spatial side, and I modified
Walter Christaller’s diagrams to talk about the connectivity of places, and how
one could represent connectivity in that system. In effect, I ground out the
chapters and sent them to Ben, and Ben said, “Fine,” and Walter said, “Fine.”
I never found out who was
the third reader, if any. As December was
approaching, so I was scribbling away.

But at the same time, while I was writing, Berkeley was exploding. This was
the fall of 1964, and very shortly after the term began, the Free Speech
Movement crisis erupted. There were demonstrations every day—peaceful, but
nonetheless large. There was police presence. Students sat on top of a police
car in which a, quote, “off-campus demonstrator” had been arrested and
placed, prevented it from leaving. The administration got more and more
shaky about it. The chancellor, [Edward W.] Strong, was having, quite frankly,
a hard time dealing with it.

By December of 1964, things were really out of hand. The story is well known
that there was a huge demonstration in which the students occupied Sproul
Hall, and several hundred—I think 700—were arrested and taken by buses
down to a facility I guess east of Dublin [California]. Among those arrested
was my sister-in-law—I guess my wife’s brother’s wife, which I suppose, yes,
it’s correct—Ann Groves. Ted Groves was actually at Berkeley at the time, I
think doing a PhD, and that’s Ted Groves, Jr., Ruth’s sister—Ruth’s brother,
excuse me. In the middle of the night, we were all running around trying to
find ways to bail her out or get her out, and it was not the ideal time to be
sitting calmly writing. At the same time, I was teaching, and the students of
course were very excited, though nothing like as forthright as they became
later. I managed to keep the progress of the thing moving. It wasn’t really very
good, but it was sufficient.

The whole thing kind of climaxed when, after the police came on campus. The
idea of police on campus was very radical in those days, and the faculty was
much opposed to it. We had campus police, but should outside police come on
Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley

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campus? It was seen as something quite unacceptable. It’s hard to realize. Chancellor Strong’s action in bringing them on and having the arrests done rather than sitting it out or negotiating enraged a lot of the faculty. There was a huge faculty meeting in Wheeler Hall, in the only room on campus big enough for it, in which over a thousand faculty participated. And they voted approximately 900 to 100—or it could have been 800 to 100; maybe it was 900 participated. That’s checkable. [laughs]

The interesting thing was as an acting assistant professor, I was not technically eligible to go to the meeting, because I wasn’t a member of the [Berkeley Division of the] Academic Senate. But that afternoon, I was also picking up the completed typed version of my dissertation, typed on acid-free paper by a wonderful woman who was a great typist, who had handled all the equations and the diagrams and god knows what else. I put it in the express mail that afternoon, and then ran down to the meeting just at the end. [laughs] Everybody was streaming out. The students were clapping the faculty—I think the last time that ever—not quite the last time, but probably one of the last times it ever happened at Berkeley.

It was a moment of high drama, which—and this is something for reflection—of which I was an observer, not really a participant. Maybe in some ways, that had characterized my life up to that point. I tended to observe, and I acted in a sense, pushing life forward, but I didn’t deeply participate. I didn’t publicly express any views. I think partly, that is a classic immigrant behavior, and my visa status was shaky enough that I wasn’t about to rock any boats.

The thesis was accepted, and I graduated in time—that December—for Berkeley to normalize my appointment. At that point, I was really starting my academic career proper, having had this really year—I guess year and a half—of not-quite-limbo. Certainly, madly busy all the time, but not fully part of the academic program. So, I suppose one could say my real academic career started in January of 1965.

Frank [Folke] Furstenberg [Jr.] has written a wonderful book for students, particularly PhD students, about how to handle graduate school and an academic career [Behind the Academic Curtain: How to Find Success and Happiness with a PhD]. He spends a lot of chapters on the dissertation process, quite a few chapters—or a chapter or two—on getting to tenure, and then he says the rest is a time of relative calm. It’s when people become really productive. I always think of my time not as starting with tenure, but really starting at that moment in January of ’65, because after that, it was a steady, if occasionally interrupted career. It had the character of both occasionally interesting and often boring to anyone else, of an academic career.
However, I was in a department that was undergoing extraordinary change, and maybe I should talk about that now for a while.

Farrell: That’s fine. We can talk about that now.

Teitz: Pardon?

Farrell: We can talk about that now. We can talk about that now, the—

Teitz: Yes. Okay. Excuse me—I’ll start again. When Clark Kerr enunciated the academic plan for the University of California with the nine-campus structure, a very minor element of the plan was the expansion of city planning. Exactly how it got in there I have no idea, but it meant that Berkeley—the only city planning department in the UC [University of California] system—there were other departments in the state university system. So, Berkeley was set up for expansion.

The expansion really began when Mel Webber became chair temporarily at some time in the early sixties. He had hired back John Herbert, who I had been close to in Philadelphia, and then he hired me, and that was just the beginning of it. In rapid order, the department extended from its original five or six people—I guess Jack Kent, [Francis] Violich, [Corwin R.] Mocine, [Donald L.] Foley, Catherine [Krouse] Bauer [Wurster], and Mel [Mellier G.] Scott [Jr.]—to something like almost twenty people in very few years. Most years, we were hiring two or three people.

The way it worked was that there was a very, shall we say, minimal search process. Positions were not advertised, to my knowledge anyway. I think basically that Mel Webber—and some other people, but mainly Mel—scanned the landscape and came up with people that he thought were interesting and that were necessary for a transformation of the field. So, the idea of transforming fields was very current. In the beginning, Webber hired people who would be both policy oriented and analytic, but much more planning focused. Although he was not chair after that first year, I think he played a dominant role in bringing people forward. Exactly how and why that happened, I am not sure. We would meet in the faculty meeting, and Mel would bring in a couple of names, and we would look at their resumes and discuss the question.

A good example was Robert Montgomery and Donald Appleyard. We had decided that we needed to strengthen urban design. That pleased Jack Kent and Fran Violich because they conceived of urban design as closer to their form of traditional planning. But at the same time, the people that Mel brought
in—Donald Appleyard was quite revolutionary. He had been working at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. Roger Montgomery at Washington University, St. Louis, was really a combination of urban designer, architect, and housing specialist who studied housing policy quite explicitly. Similarly, the department hired Jack [John W.] Dyckman from Penn and William L. C. Wheaton from Penn, and Martin Meyerson, ultimately, from Penn, which more or less gutted the Penn planning department [Department of City and Regional Planning], but strengthened Berkeley immensely.

Dyckman was an extraordinary man, perhaps the most intellectually stimulating and knowledgeable person—among the most—I have ever met. He could talk about anything, read everything, knew everything. I recently wrote a piece about him for the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* [“ACSP Distinguished Educator, 1985: John W. Dyckman”]. He was also one of the new breed of the “flying professors.” My sense is that the professors began to fly in earnest around this time. Professors had traveled before: people would go to Italy or whatever for a year or whatever. Jack went for a week, or a couple of days, and he spanned the world. He was plugged in to the UN [United Nations], and development in the sense of economic development of countries was really beginning to take off, and Jack was part of that.

Similarly, the department and I and John [Herbert] were pushing for a more quantitative basis for planning, and we hired Andrei Rogers, who stayed for quite a few years and taught the first explicitly quantitative methods class in planning at Berkeley.16

There was a good deal of turmoil. Well, expansion is hard. It’s hard on organizations and it’s hard on people. The students, I think, were confused. They were getting very different messages. The structure of the program was still this four semesters—there’s two and two—of studio, which would take up several days a week, and in which the students would do—they would kind of move from a small plan for a small city to a plan for a neighborhood, to a bigger plan for a region, to something else. Whatever it might be; perhaps a project. There was a heavy emphasis on drawing, a heavy emphasis on presentation; not so much emphasis on analyzing the data behind it all. A lot of intuitive sense. But planning’s history always had that character. In fact, it started as an ideology, in a sense, in response to the difficult conditions in cities in the nineteenth century. It had evolved out of architecture, and that architectural tradition was firm. But this new push ran right up against it. There was enormous friction—denied by some people, as I said earlier.

16 Actually, John Herbert taught the first for one year.
The question was how to resolve that. By this point, probably in the mid-sixties, the faculty was effectively comprised of three groups. There were the traditionalist planners: the original core, who were still there, although Catherine Bauer had tragically died in the interim. We went out to search for her on the Marin hills [Marin County, California] on a beautiful, beautiful morning. And we walked down from the ridge road above Stinson [Beach, California] into the woods until someone found her. That was, in my mind, a great loss, because she was a very powerful and interesting woman.

The faculty essentially, as I said, was in three groups. The traditionalist group wanted to continue the way things were going. The analytic group wanted to teach more analysis, and was interested in policy, but analytic first, and trying to provide a more solid theoretical framework for planning. The third group were essentially policy people like Wheaton, to some extent—Dyckman spanned everything. The students were revolting. That was actually a tradition in the department. The students revolted under the old system, and I can recall a couple of times when the old system was still in place sitting around a green baize table—because we could all fit into one room, students and faculty—discussing it, discussing their dissatisfaction with the structure of the program, which they felt didn’t meet their needs. After the discussion, nothing much would happen.

Well, eventually, something did happen, and after a series of faculty meetings, we came up with a tripartite structure in which we had—one version was land use planning, “or physical planning,” which was Jack Kent’s term, because he believed that what planners did was to rearrange things on the landscape. The second was essentially analysis, and it was called “systems,” I think. The third was policy. It particularly featured housing, but it would later feature other things. The faculty kind of sorted themselves out, and the structure of the curriculum was rearranged, which is a wrenching process in any department, let me tell you. People invented new courses, and we restructured the curriculum. The students got to choose which option they wanted.

However, that left the question of what was common? That raised the issue of what’s called the “core.” Now, the “common core” has a different resonance, but we were arguing about the core of the curriculum throughout the sixties, seventies, and on into the eighties. The issue was, were there transcendent courses that students should take that would deal with planning as a whole, and somehow give them a foundation? The ultimate resolution was that was a common methods course and a common theory course. The issue of who taught what and what went into them, and who was exempted and who was not, just rattled around the department from then on. I don’t think it’s worth a lot of discourse.
That process continued, and the department essentially was reframed, and has continued to reframe itself since then, more or less on the same lines, but with variations from time to time. We also had a master’s thesis at that time, and that effectively was dropped in favor of either a paper or a professional report, although the option was retained for those students who wanted to do it. It was a classic case of curriculum reform.

Now I’m losing track. Let me stop for a second.

04-00:47:39 Farrell: With the schools that you were describing, were you in the second school, the analytic school?

04-00:47:47 Teitz: Yes.

04-00:47:48 Farrell: Okay. You were talking about how you were pushing for quantitative methods.

04-00:47:52 Teitz: Sorry?

04-00:47:53 Farrell: You were talking about how you were pushing for quantitative methods. Why was that important to you in planning?

04-00:48:01 Teitz: I think that we wanted to ground planning in a solid basis of empirical research. We thought that planning decisions ought to be based on, quote, “facts,” not just on your opinion about what is a good city. We thought that the way to get there was to teach people basic statistics, and if possible, expand that to be able to deal with the kinds of issues that planners were faced with every day, like population.

I should backtrack and say that Don Foley had taught a course for a few years before all this happened in which demography featured quite strongly. He was, in effect, teaching some demographic methods, and certainly the use of demographic data in planning, beforehand. Don Foley was always kind of in-between any of the groups or clusters or schools of thought. He was an exceptionally nice man, and he got on with everybody, taught his classes, and worked very hard at research. He did a lot of research on new towns. I should have mentioned him earlier; I am sorry. He was really a precursor of a more quantitative approach. He was not opposing it, but he also had been brought onboard by Jack Kent.

Don essentially was a person who believed in compromise. His favorite saying was—and he would say it over and over in faculty meetings—“It’s a puzzle.” It got to the point that Peter [H.] Marris—who came later—and I were
once walking across campus, and Peter said, “You know, in faculty meetings, we could have little signs that flip up and give our opinions, and we wouldn’t need to talk at all. Don’s would say, ‘It’s a puzzle.’” [laughs]

These issues were not entirely new in planning, and certainly at Penn, they had been raised a lot. They were in the air at the time. I think that was the nature of it, yes.

Farrell: You referred to it as a hard period of time. Was there—

Teitz: “As a—?”

Farrell: A hard period of time in the transitions that were happening. Was there resistance to these schools, these three kind of schools that were shaping up?

Teitz: I would refer to them as “groups” rather than “schools,” because they were fluid. There were new things happening all the time. For example, as I said before, around this time, historically, the idea of economic development in a Third-World country—what became “Third World.” Those were known as “undeveloped countries,” or “underdeveloped countries.” And the UN involvement, the UN Declaration of Human Rights [Universal Declaration of Human Rights], included economic development and welfare. A whole field was emerging, and Dyckman was involved in that.

When he arrived a bit later, William Alonso, who had been my roommate at Penn, also was recruited to the faculty. I tell you, it was an amazing process. I think Don Foley was chair during a good part of this time, and Don was interested in getting by and keeping the peace. The positions were there, so they got filled. Bill Alonso was naturally teaching theory; that is, sort of what you might call “metropolitan economics.” But he also was beginning at that time to be deeply involved in economic development in the Third World. That also became a part of the department’s program. Students were beginning to write dissertations in the area, and they were getting jobs in the World Bank [Group]. I would describe the department at this time as “cosmopolitan,” to almost extreme extent. Dyckman was running around the world; the rest of the faculty were doing likewise.

A key thing that happened at this time—for me certainly—was that John Herbert decided to go to what was called “the Calcutta project,” which was a UN project—actually, it was a Ford Foundation project, excuse me, with UN sponsorship—to work on Calcutta [Kolkata, India], the city, now called “Kolkata.” Alan Jacobs was involved. John took off for Calcutta, stayed for two years, and never came back. He went to work for the World Bank
eventually, but in the meantime set up a consulting firm that is still in existence, and does international consulting.

John was a big loss from my perspective, because he was a steadying influence, and I think would have been very helpful to resolving some of the differences in the department, since he had been Jack Kent’s student and Mel Webber’s student and understood the stresses, I think, rather well. Also, was completely unflappable. Amazing. He is one of the calmest people I have ever known.

The ’60s—that period from January ’65 to ’68—was two years for me of being quite busy. I had done with my dissertation. I think I published one paper out of it, but I preferred not to think about it—another trait that I have. [laughs] I guess everybody experiences that at some time or other. You have something that you put out of mind. During those two years, a lot of things happened. We had a child, Ruth and I, Alexandra [Teitz]. She was born in the old Kaiser hospital on Broadway. Ruth had been teaching, but stopped to raise the baby.

Exactly how we did it I have no idea, but we bought a house. I had been very frugal, and I must have saved some money, but we found a house up in the hills behind the Claremont Hotel. [1400 Grand View Drive] It was a very, very California house. It was one level, mostly made of plywood—very thin, no insulation to speak of—windows all the way along one side looking out at the Golden Gate [Bridge], two bedrooms, a big living room and kitchen and bath, with wood walls, so it—and exposed beams, a low roof, flat—not flat, but low pitched—and a garage off the street. You walked down to it, down the hill. I think we paid perhaps $27,500 for it. But I could look that up if it’s of interest. [laughs] Astoundingly cheap. It was the last time that a junior faculty member could buy a house. Even better, it had a Berkeley mailing address, but it was located in Oakland [California], so we paid Oakland taxes but had a Berkeley mailing address. The difference in those days was very substantial.

So, I drove up and down to school every day, and we were settling in. I had a little extra room built under the garage very cheaply that I could use as a study, because the baby had one of the bedrooms. I was an academic. Well, at some point during the spring of 1968, I was at a meeting, and I can’t remember what meeting it was, but afterwards, in the car, [Ira S.] Jack Lowry from the RAND Corporation and I shared a cab to the airport, I think. And Jack said to me, “We are doing something new. RAND has a huge contract in New York [City, New York]. What we are doing is we are doing policy planning analysis for the mayor’s office.” This was Mayor [John Vliet] Lindsay, who had quite recently been voted in, the first non-Democrat to be elected in New York since [Fiorello Henry] La Guardia.
This is an interesting insight into New York itself, because when New York elected Lindsay—who was actually, I think, the Liberal Party candidate, but had been a mild Republican—it precipitated a situation in which the Democrats had been in control for twenty-plus years, and that meant that everybody who was anybody in New York was actually a Democrat. Lindsay was stuck for assistance. What he did was he turned to consultants, big-time. He hired RAND, which at that time was really not known for doing much other than military research, but had a tremendous reputation as the place where systems analysis was more or less invented.

Jack Lowry was an interesting, rather reclusive man, with a very good mind, who had invented a very nice analytic model that was used in transportation studies. We knew each other through regional science, and he said, “Well, would you like to come to New York for a year to work with us?” Wow! You know? This is interesting. New York was a fascinating prospect. It wasn’t, perhaps, the wisest thing to contemplate when would be heading toward tenure, to put it mildly. But I said yes. I talked it over with Ruth, and RAND was willing to pay all our expenses. They moved everything, all our household goods, even our washer and dryer, which sat in the basement of an apartment house for two years afterwards, and then were shipped back to California. They paid the airfares, and they paid me a very good salary.

They had a large contract, which they used to set up something called the New York City RAND Institute that was led by Peter [L.] Szanton—S-Z-A-N-T-O-N. Who was a lovely man, and was busily pushing ahead on a set of study areas. RAND at that time had three major contracts with the city: one for housing studies, which Jack Lowry headed; one for police; and one for fire.  

The fire studies were generating some attention, particularly with the idea of using new technology. They had come up with something called “slippery water,” which was supposed to be injected into the fire hose and allowed the hose to deliver far more water than was previously possible. I don’t think it ever really took hold, but it certainly got a lot of attention. In housing, the agenda was to work on rent control and housing deterioration, and in fire, improving the response time, and in police, the problem was, in general, to improve police performance by using analysis. Many of the things that are routine in police work now were first or early developed by the RAND folks.

We went to New York. That creates a gap in my knowledge of the department from 1968 to 1970.

You have been looking up something. Have I verged off-track here?

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17 Actually, there was a fourth contract for welfare.
Farrell: No. It’s actually what you had written, which—

Teitz: Oh, I wrote about it?

Farrell: You’re fine. Yeah. So, I was just checking.

Teitz: Yeah. Yeah. I didn’t write much about RAND in there, but I could say a bit more if you like.

Farrell: Yeah. Please do.

Teitz: I must say, I’ve always been tempted by opportunity, and I’ve mostly taken it. That was true with coming to the US in the first place for sure. This was a big departure for me in several ways. One, it said I wouldn’t be thinking much about location theory or anything else while doing this. It wasn’t exactly clear what I was going to do in New York, and that became clearer in a few weeks when I got there. But I was intrigued by the idea of being able to apply quantitative and analytic methods to social problems. We were going to reinvent how things were done, I guess.

However, after I had been in New York for a few weeks, Jack decided that he did not want to stay in New York. He had been flying back and forth, and he’s very attached to his house in Pacific Palisades [California]. It might be in Santa Monica [California], actually. Yeah, Santa Monica. His wife even more so. He decided to head back to California and work on rent control reform, and he asked me to take over the management of the housing project within the New York City RAND Institute. And it was a challenge, so I decided to do it. In the process, [G. Thomas] Tom Kingsley, who had been at RAND and was in New York at the time, was disappointed that he was not asked, and he resigned and went to the—I think first back to RAND, and then to Urban Institute.

The tasks in New York were essentially to try to get the data and analyze it, and come up with the story that would result in a better version of either rent control or better management for housing that was deteriorating.

Farrell: Oh! Here, Mike.

Teitz: New York at this time was entering perhaps some of its worst years. Fires were rampant. Arson and other causes were devastating the Bronx [New York
City, New York] and Brooklyn [New York City, New York], and parts of Harlem [New York City, New York]. Public safety was weak, to put it mildly. Crime was rising. The mayor had come into office in part on the promise of trying to do something about what was going wrong. I think it was beyond him or perhaps anybody. Looking at New York today, it’s hard to realize or even recognize how bad things were. And they got worse.

Jack set about trying to analyze the data on rent control in order to formulate a way to try to ensure that rents could be raised sufficiently to ensure that maintenance would occur in the buildings. Maintenance was a major, major problem, and a cause of ultimate loss. If landlords were losing money, as many were, they would walk away from buildings, or they would hire “Arnie the Torch” and walk away with the insurance. It was a massive problem. At the same time, there was also a movement afoot within the city to extend rent control. We very rapidly got into a situation where there was old rent control—which had 100,000-plus units, including some that were still extraordinarily low rent. This was the time when there were the stories of the eight-room, sunken living room apartment on Riverside Drive [Manhattan, New York City] for $125 a month. Apocryphal, but not entirely without basis. People were paying far below anything like an economic rent. But of course, from a tenant’s perspective, rent control is—they are simply paying for the same old apartment; why should they have to pay more? They are not getting any more service. They tend not to recognize the costs of taxes and other things, and they tend to feel—and they are often right—that landlords can be exploitive and are pulling in large, large profits.

For maintenance, the issue was what was the city doing in response to the crisis in maintenance? The city’s main response was housing inspection. The city had two separate entities doing building inspection, which covers construction of all kinds, and then housing inspection, which primarily is responsive to complaints that buildings are either unsafe or that landlords are somehow violating the housing ordinances. What we were trying to see was how effective—[coughs] excuse me—the housing code response was. For that, we had to find data, which was very difficult. The city’s bureaucracy was very unwilling to give us data, and we had to squeeze it out wherever we could find it. I can remember going in to check some data I had found with a head of one of the departments in building inspection. I read out some numbers; he pulled out his desk drawer and looked down, said, “Yeah, that’s about right.” But he wouldn’t give me the numbers. It didn’t matter what the mayor or anybody said—those guys went their own way.

In part, that’s a classic response to a consultant. We weren’t the only consultants. At the same time as RAND, the city hired McKinsey [& Company] in large numbers—large financial numbers, and actually large numbers of people—to do studies of rent control and everything else. They
also hired a faculty member at Penn [Paul L. Niebanck] to do the same thing, and they hired George Sternlieb of Rutgers [University] to do essentially the same thing. We had four different studies of rent control running at the same time. It was really insane. I don’t know how that happened, but I think it was a huge error on the part of the city. Why they did it, I don’t—. Obviously, people had connections, and contracts were being let.

We worked with a guy named Art Spiegel, who was a man of extraordinary energy. He was running the housing studies downtown out of the mayor’s office, and I would run up and down there on the F train all the time. I can remember at one time Art saying, in response to a problem, when somebody said, “Well, where is the money for that?”, and he said, “Take it out of the capital budget!” That’s exactly what was going on. The city was being financed by debt, and that led to the crisis in 1970, which was quite predictable, but apparently unstoppable. I didn’t know about that at the time, but it probably wouldn’t have made much difference to me.

Being in New York was a tremendously challenging and stimulating experience. We had an office at Fifty-Fifth [Street] and Madison [Avenue]. Ruth and I lived in an apartment at Eighty-Seventh [Street] and York [Avenue]. Quite expensive. In order to rent it, I had to be interviewed by the owner. He had an office in a very, very sleek new building on Fifty-Seventh Street, and he was rather hostile. You know: “Who are you? What is this?” Here is a guy, obviously owned many buildings—and a kind of slightly [Donald John] Trump-like guy, I think [laughs]—but a real estate guy in New York. But he finally approved when he saw what my salary was.

We lived there for the next two years. We liked it. We were a block from the park [Carl Schurz Park] where the mayor’s house [Archibald Gracie Mansion] is on the riverfront. We could actually see two bridges from our apartment, which equated to what we could see from our house in Berkeley, [laughs] the [San Francisco-Oakland] Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate. But we weren’t very happy. It was a hard time in our marriage. Alexandra was going to nursery school, and Ruth, I think, probably was a bit at loose ends, and I was completely taken up by work. I was working late, starting early, and riding the [IRT] Lexington [Avenue] Line down to Fifty-Fifth.

We didn’t take much advantage of New York. But the city fascinated me. As part of the studies, I did things like I took random samples of buildings and went out to look at them across the boroughs, sometimes getting yelled at, because when a guy gets out of a car and starts taking a picture of a house somewhere deep in Brooklyn, the neighbors get very upset, for fear that Robert Moses is on the march again, and they are going to get pushed out. But we did our analysis and wrote reports, and delivered them. When the first year rolled around, they asked me to stay for a second year, and Berkeley agreed to
allow me to stay for a second year, so I did. But at the end of the second year, it was up or out, so I was facing the same situation again.

But it was also the moment when I was coming up for tenure. I decided, after a lot of thought, to go back to Berkeley. I did get tenure, largely on the strength of two papers: the paper on public facility location theory, which I had given at a Regional Science meeting, and then was published; and also—oh, no. That was a bit later, I think. A bit later. Now I’m blanking out. No. Also, I think the paper on the algorithm for solving the p-median problem [“Heuristic Methods for Estimating the Generalized Vertex Median of a Weighted Graph”].

New York was kind of an interlude: two years, somewhat dreamlike. Incredibly difficult, in many ways, and I think very hard on Ruth. And I was restless, and not very happy in the marriage. But we came back to Berkeley—or Oakland, as the case may be—and settled back in, and all our stuff was moved back, and there we were, the same as we had been two years earlier. Except we were somewhat different people. Ruth was not teaching, and she began to get interested in kind of alternative lifestyles. We came back in 1970, and she was looking for other things, and I think the marriage wasn’t working very well.

Back in the department, things had changed, too. After a fairly short time, they asked me to be the chair, which, I had already had some experience. I’m trying to recall—yeah, yeah. When I came back, I think Jack Dyckman was the chair of the department, and they asked me to be the deputy. I may have the timing wrong here. Jack was never there, so I found myself in this odd position of making decisions, and remember that the chair had a lot of power. I didn’t regard it as “power” particularly; I didn’t think of myself as powerful. But I pushed ahead and tried to do things.

One of the things I was determined on was that we would get a woman in the department. I thought it was not right. The way I did it was I gave the faculty three choices. Sometimes we may have had a committee, but I came up with three choices. Let’s see. Yes. Judith [E.] Innes, who later joined the department, and—oh, now I’m blanking out. Janice [E.] Perlman, who was actually the choice for the first woman after Catherine Bauer. The faculty wasn’t exactly happy about that, but somehow, they went along with it. I don’t exactly know why. I think they were embarrassed to insist, but I was really afraid of what I had seen earlier, which is that when the faculty thought that there was superior academic talent, they would go for it every time. That’s not a bad thing. I mean, it’s a good thing. But it’s a good thing that sometimes leads to bad outcomes. If there were never any women in the pool or in the choices, they would choose the best male, and that was that. I can’t say I was particularly incensed by it earlier; I wasn’t. I was probably as misogynistic as
any other person around. That was something that needed to be done at the time.

When I came back, Berkeley had changed far more dramatically than it had in the years following 1964. In the aftermath of 1964, Martin Meyerson had become acting chancellor. He had been the dean of the new College of Environmental Design, which merged landscape architecture, architecture, and planning, in the ’60s. The first dean was William Wilson Wurster, who was a great architect, and the husband of Catherine Bauer. He contracted—that shaking disease?

04-01:32:23
Holmes: Parkinson’s?

04-01:32:24
Farrell: Parkinson’s?

04-01:32:24
Teitz: Parkinson’s. Very severely; was in a wheelchair most of the time I knew him. He stepped down, and Martin became the dean. During the crisis when Chancellor Strong essentially had what amounted to a nervous breakdown, Martin was drafted in as the acting chancellor, and steered the place through the first of the FSM [Free Speech Movement] crisis. I think he did a very good job. Martin was a strong but amazingly diplomatic person, and a very good manager on the whole, as he proved later in life. I think he pulled Berkeley out of the fire, but his reward for that, with the election of Ronald [Wilson] Reagan, was that he was fired, and replaced by a very good man [Roger W. Heyns]. But he then left, because it was not something to go back to.

In the department, things had changed very substantially. During that two-year period, Mel Webber had secured a huge grant—multi-million grant—from NIMH, the National Institute for Mental Health. The purpose of this grant was to promote something called “social policies planning,” which was to integrate social policy, especially public health, with planning, both in the city and in other ways. It resulted in another surge of appointments, including [Frederick C.] Fred Collignon, Stephen [S.] Cohen, and Richard Meier. Richard Meyer maybe had come earlier; he had been part of a group which Mel had going in Washington that called themselves “the space cadets,” and they were kind of systems analysts for social policy. Among the group was Leonard [J.] Duhl, a psychiatrist, who also came on the faculty. So now our faculty had Richard Meier, who was, I guess, kind of a physicist, and hanging around was also a real physicist, part-time.[Martin Krieger] Now we had a psychiatrist, and we had economists, and we had political scientists, and we had sociologists. Interestingly, we had gotten rid of the only planning PhD that we had.[Andrei Rogers] [laughs] It was a huge mélange.
The social policies grant allowed the department to recruit PhD students and pay them approximately $30,000 a year, which was a huge amount in 1970. Among the people we recruited was Peter Marcuse, who was the son of Herbert Marcuse, and who was at that time a lawyer in New Haven [Connecticut]. He kept his practice up the whole time he came through the program at Berkeley. He used to fly back and forth. He is now retired from the Columbia [University] faculty, I think.

Those students were extremely active. This was a time when, on top of all the other changes, planning and the field rediscovered Marxism. Now, if you had asked Jack Kent probably in the forties was he a socialist, he probably would have said yes, because an awful lot of people coming out of the New Deal believed in what they called “socialism.” But they weren’t Marxists. Of course, the [Joseph Raymond] McCarthy era had made “Marx” a very dirty word. Berkeley had been deeply mixed up in it with the loyalty oath controversy, which happened before I got there.

But now, students and faculty across departments—not just planning, but particularly sociology, some in economics—were rediscovering Marxism, and putting it forward as a basis for academic thought and work. In due course, of course, the department had to respond, so we recruited Ann [R.] Markusen, who was an avowed Marxist scholar. A tremendous woman. Very good scholar. But at that time, quite fiery, coming in pushing hard. The students were quite convinced they were right, very firmly so, and were not averse to taking on anybody.

The department had a series of quite confrontational events, I think. Nothing that I can point to as being a particular example, but essentially, the students would mobilize at every turn. Of course, at this time, civil rights was beginning to be relevant in the sense of entering into the discourse. Racism, sexism, all those terms became part of the dialogue. In due course, we recruited Chester [C.] McGuire [Jr.], who was black.

But the students were pushing very hard, essentially for the ability to do anything they want and call it a dissertation. In that period, I must say we got some very strange products coming out. At least one student, who was at that time actually over in public policy, wrote his dissertation in the form of an autobiography. He had been working in New York during the RAND period, so I showed up in his dissertation. [laughs] I think I was his outside person. Very weird. Another one—in the department—wrote a dissertation on “the hero’s journey.” Obviously, with Lenny Duhl there, psychology and psychoanalytic psychology was playing a good-size role, so everybody was interpreting everything. I think the seventies must have been one of the strangest eras in academic life ever recorded. It’s certainly not the only strange era, but it was extraordinary, the stuff that was going on.
During this period, I was chair for some time, as I said. I don’t remember much about it, other than that we continued to recruit new people. We saw the first of the retirements, as Jack Kent and, I think, Corwin Mocine retired.

Farrell: How did—

Teitz: There was something I just had on my mind that was relevant to this period. Oh!

One thing I should say—I won’t talk much about it, I think—is that it was also a period of quite—I wouldn’t say “extreme,” but a period in which sex became part of the discourse. That was partly, I think, related just to the times, you know? Already, the San Francisco [Summer of Love] and all that nice stuff had disappeared, but there was a lot of—I think, perhaps, probably more than historically—sexual interaction between students and faculty. I think it was not good, but it was what was happening at the time. In today’s terms, it would undoubtedly be called “harassment.” I think such harassment, regular harassment, had existed in universities probably ever since women were admitted—or for that matter, men. But I think that the seventies were a particularly loose period in that respect, and not one that was entirely positive. For me personally, it was a time in which my marriage broke up, and I was seeing people. But not very together about it. I’ll just say that.

Sorry—you had a question?

Farrell: I was wondering how the discipline diversity of that second wave of hiring in the department, how that impacted the department?

Teitz: Well, every time we got a person with a new realm, they put in a course. I never did figure out exactly what Len Duhl taught, but he was very popular with the students. He had a bunch of PhDs who worked with him. The same applied to everybody else. When Ann came, she injected a Marxist strain into whatever she was teaching. I think she was teaching the regional planning course at the time. I will say this: that to my knowledge, there were no poisonous hatreds among the faculty. There may have been, unknown to me; maybe I was oblivious. But I certainly wasn’t aware of them.

I think that the program itself had gone through its big shift in the early seventies, and the master’s program retained that sort of tripartite character for a long time. It’s kind of quietly evolved into a situation now in which I think they have some requirements, and then people put together individualized programs. But there are requirements. There are certainly clusters. There are people who see themselves as land use planners, people who see themselves
as urban designers, people who see themselves as Third World or development people, people who see themselves as social planners. Those kind of realms exist, and they are the outcome of that period.

The social policies planning program *per se* didn’t last, because the money ran out, as these things tend to. We hired Peter Marris for a while, who was a brilliant sociologist. A wonderful man. And we lost some people. Bill Alonso went back to Harvard [University], where his father [Amado Alonso] had been a professor. I think it was a disastrous decision for him, but that’s the way it went. Departments and programs have a kind of immense resilience, so long as they are not totally cut to ribbons budgetarily. Berkeley came close to that more recently with the budget crises over the last few years, and we were at that time experiencing the worst of the budget crises—the early budget crises.

But I think that we kind of continued along on our way, as it were. There wasn’t a great existential crisis at any moment there comparable to what had happened early in the sixties, when we went to the three-part curriculum. It was that breaking up and recognition that the field of planning is actually very diverse; that despite the desire to see it as a discipline, that, in fact, it’s an applied field. One of the products of this period, interestingly, was that there were real advances in planning theory itself, and its emergence as a subfield in its own right. Mel Webber contributed to that at the outset, and later, Judy Innes. I think that the result of the diversity in faculty was the creation of a sort of melding, and that still goes on.

04:01:53:34
Farrell: Well, I think that’s probably a good place to leave it for today. We’ll pick back up next time.

04:01:53:39
Teitz: All right.

04:01:53:40
Farrell: Thank you.
Holmes: This is Todd Holmes with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. We are sitting down once again with Mike Teitz. Today’s date is April 4, 2017. This is our fifth session, and we are here at his office in the Public Policy Institute of California, in the beautiful city of San Francisco. Mike, thanks for sitting down with us again.

Teitz: A pleasure.

Holmes: I wanted to go back to some of the areas that we covered in our last session, of looking at Berkeley in the 1960s and early 1970s, as well as your experience at RAND [Corporation], moving forward then to touch a bit on your groundbreaking publication in 1968 on public facilities location. So to start, I wanted to get some further thoughts on Berkeley in that long sixties era when you were there, that you were able to experience. We talked a little bit about the student body and the kind of political culture on campus, and I wanted to get your thoughts—which started, actually, in 1967 with Governor Ronald Reagan of California instituting tuition for the first time in the UC system.

Teitz: So, I must say personally, I didn’t realize the extent of the revolution at the time. I knew it was very important. I think everybody was much more affected by the removal of Clark Kerr, which was a devastating blow for the university, I think. Tuition was still relatively low, and of course, students had been paying fees, so it wasn’t as though they weren’t paying anything at all. Although it generated some student opposition, it wasn’t an object of mass revolt at all.

The issues in the mid-sixties were much more about governance, about the way in which the campus handled political speech, and a student attempt, through FSM [Free Speech Movement], to ensure that political speech was protected on campus. Mario Savio was a remarkable and dynamic speaker, and he was backed up by a very clever bunch of students who worked more behind—

Holmes: Did you have any interaction with Mario and the other students who were involved in that at that time?

Teitz: Relatively little. I think that our students were not as radicalized at that moment as they were after 1970, with the effect of the Vietnam War. And I think that for architecture and planning students, it was the war that radicalized them. I’m leaping ahead a little, but if you actually look at Wurster
Hall, at the top of the—not the tower, but the other—the attached building, you can see, on clear days, between the concrete supports at the very peak, the ghostly letters “Stop the War.” They are still there, and every so often, I walk out—I would walk out; I haven’t seen them recently, but within the last year, one could see those letters still shining out. I think that was the time for us of radicalization.

Holmes: I wanted to talk a little bit about the antiwar movement, because you are right that when we think of “the 1960s,” in quotes, usually there’s a misconception of what a lot of people think of as the sixties is usually the very late 1960s and early 1970s, as you were pointing out. You were obviously around some of the early activism against the draft and against the war that began to percolate at Berkeley.

Teitz: I was largely non-participant because of my visa status. If you recall, I had just received permanent resident status in—it’s in the chronology—thanks to Bill Wheaton and HUD [United States Department of Housing and Urban Development]. So I tended to behave like an immigrant politically—that is, to be quiet. It wasn’t that I wasn’t supportive. I had been a Labour [Party] supporter in Britain, and some version of socialist—certainly a democratic socialist, in the British sense. I had owed my whole career in many ways to the Labour government of 1945, and I was acutely aware of it. But I tended to stay away. People in my family were involved, as I said earlier. My sister-in-law was arrested during the great sweep of 700-plus students in 1964.

Holmes: And to clarify, so your visa status, you became a permanent citizen. Now, was that through sponsorship by the University?

Teitz: A permanent resident.

Holmes: Yes, a permanent resident through the university? Is that correct?

Teitz: Actually, the university applied for it, but the hard work was done by Bill Wheaton, who had joined the faculty, who had been a senior official in the Housing and Home Finance Agency. I think it was HHFA. It might have been FHA. And Bill Wheaton carried the ball and got HUD to petition Senator [James William] Fulbright, who personally reviewed every request for an exemption for a Fulbright scholar, which I was, in order to get my passage paid on the [RMS] Queen Elizabeth, one way. I never exercised the return. But I think that it was Bill Wheaton’s enterprise that got it done. At the same time, I was offered a job at the University of Toronto, and I visited there. So I was kind of covering my options, as it were.
Holmes: Sure. With the beginning of the Vietnam War, and the opposition and protest to that, I think it would be interesting to get your perspective on that as someone who lived through World War II. And lived through World War II not on, say, the American home front, but actually in Britain, which was considered a theater of war. How did that influence or come to shape your view of the US war in Vietnam?

Teitz: It’s actually interesting. When the war first started, I was—how shall I put it—uncommitted either way. I wasn’t absolutely convinced that it was a terrible idea to support the Vietnamese regime. Certainly, all the propaganda of the time and the news of the time was very supportive of it. People forget that. The population at large was supportive of it. I can’t say I was enthusiastic about it, for sure. I wasn’t very enthusiastic about foreign policy in general. As a survivor of the war, I was and remain acutely aware of the pain—the specific pain—that war inflicts on children, on women, on families. But I certainly didn’t do anything about it in particular.

And of course, Vietnam was just beginning to ramp up at the moment when I went to New York. And in New York, I was so busy—I think that’s been characteristic of my career, looking over the subsequent years: I was intensely busy the whole time, while also having some turmoil in my personal life. So in New York, I watched the news. I wasn’t pleased by it, but I was so engaged, working day and night, basically, on issues in New York City, that the world shrank for me at that moment.

Holmes: For academics, actually, that’s a really common story.

Teitz: Yeah, I bet.

Holmes: I had a number of professors who were in graduate school during that same time, and I would ask them about what was going on, and they would say, “I don’t know—I was in grad school.” So that type of academic bubble, right?

Teitz: I was aware of it. I always read the newspaper and watched the news. And I had been actually very energized by the Suez disaster [Suez Crisis] where Britain and France and Israel got themselves in very hot water, practically precipitated a war. I recall at the time, I still had friends at LSE [London School of Economics], and they sent me the student newspaper, which said, “LSE Condemns Government,” in big headlines.

Both: [laughter]
Holmes: Connected to the Vietnam War, what were your thoughts and perceptions on the Cold War in general? Because this is something that was, of course, rising and falling in various degrees of temperature, if we want to put it that way, and right during this time.

Teitz: It’s very interesting. I was a late arrival probably to recognizing [Joseph Vissarionovich] Stalin’s evil deeds. During World War II, as a child in school, we sang patriotic Russian songs: “Steppe land, oh steppe land.” And Russia was the great ally, and we were not really under any illusion that they were anything but carrying a huge part of the war. It turned out even more than anyone knew, in terms of deaths and destruction, and loss. And coming from the left, from a working-class family, I was naturally somewhat sympathetic. But I had read George Orwell; I had been recruited but resisted an effort to get me into the Communist Party.

And so I remained on the left, but not committed to any leftist party. The closest I got was that there was an organization—I think it was called the Student League for Industrial Democracy, which somebody at the University of Wisconsin actually talked me into joining. I’m sure it was either a CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] front or a party front; I’ve never been clear—or both. [laughs] Probably both. But I didn’t participate in any great degree. It was a friend who was pushing the ideas, and industrial democracy seemed to me a sensible thing to talk about.

Holmes: It’s interesting you mention that in England, how—

Teitz: [phone rings] Oh, excuse me.

Holmes: Oh, that’s okay.

Teitz: Sorry. I should have turned it off.

Holmes: Oh, that’s all right. It’s all right.

Teitz: “In England—?”

Holmes: So in England, you were just mentioning that you would sing patriotic songs. Is this during the war? Singing Russian patriotic songs?
Teitz: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Russia was our great, noble ally.

Holmes: Yeah. Taking most of the brunt of that Eastern Front.

Teitz: So, kind of deeply, I was a little skeptical of the great anti-communist drive. And of course, the Labour Party coming to power in England after 1945 was a socialist party. They promptly nationalized the railroads, the coal mines, the electricity industry, the gas industry, and a few other things. They got closer than anybody’s ever come to a really complete land use planning system in England. So they were quite revolutionary.

They didn’t succeed, largely, I think, because of the fact that the—that is, we didn’t transition to a Scandinavian-style democracy, largely, I think, because the war left Britain impoverished. Britain had liquidated all of their assets. I remember very clearly sometime in the 1940s, late 1940s, the debate in England over the sale of the Argentine railroads. British interests owned the Argentine railroads, and the government wanted to sell them in order to import beef. And people said that’s it, you know? We are selling off everything. In fact, the US supported Britain to a far lesser extent after the war than it did Germany or France. The Marshall Plan largely applied to Europe, not to Britain. And Britain was supposed to be a winner, but in fact, it was the loser of World War II, after Germany, and even Italy came out better because the Italians always come out better, you know? They have a way of living life.

Holmes: Yeah—making do.

Teitz: But Britain after World War II was a grim place. It really was.

Holmes: Well, it’s interesting, too, from your perspective, of when we think of selling the railroads in Argentina that you are also beginning to witness the start of decolonization, both of Britain and other imperial powers.

Teitz: Oh, more than the start. It was overriding. And it picked up steam under Labour, and was unstoppable, although we had two colonial wars, one in Malaya, now Malaysia, and the other in Kenya, which was especially brutal. A terrible, terrible war. And of course, the big thing in, I guess 1948, was the departure from India. There, the last viceroy, [viceroy and governor-general of India], Mountbatten [Louis Francis Albert Victor Nicholas Mountbatten], who was Prince Philip’s uncle, was the final viceroy.
So when you came here to the US, you said you were already skeptical of the anti-communism that was beginning to pick up steam after World War II.

I wouldn’t say “skeptical,” but rather, I was cautious about it. There was a residual sense that Russia had had a very hard time. I didn’t know to any real extent the extent of the Stalinist crimes. I knew that the regime was antithetical to any kind of democratic principles, and I was not sympathetic with that.

What were your thoughts of, say, the Labour Party in Britain, and then coming to the United States with just a two-party system that many would argue—especially during this time—that the parties were almost identical in some ways.

I never saw them as identical.

[laughs] Well, that’s interesting.

Not really.

What were your thoughts on just the two-party system?

On American politics in general? Coming to Wisconsin was actually a great education. Wisconsin had this wild tradition of Senator [Robert Marion] LaFollette [Sr.], one of the great progressives, and of the whole progressive tradition coming out of Minnesota and Wisconsin on the one hand, and then Senator [Joseph Raymond] McCarthy on the other. And the McCarthyite thing was going on.

Well, you are definitely dealing with two poles of politics right there.

And Wisconsin would swing back and forth between them. It seemed to me that the Democrats on the whole were a preferable group. But I wasn’t engaged in politics to any degree at all. So I was aware of it, and followed politics, but I didn’t participate very much.

Another issue, which is somewhat connected to the decolonization—or at least, to some of the arguments that you begin to see coming out of Europe,
and particularly England—was also civil rights. I know we talked a little bit about this last session, particularly in regard to diversifying the department and the faculty at Berkeley. And I want to discuss that again in our later sessions in a little more detail.

Did you see the impact of civil rights not just on campus, among the student body, but also how it began to even impact the field of regional science and planning?

Teitz:

I would say that it was invisible before probably 1968. We were well aware of it, if one followed the news, and of the traumas and travails. But it didn’t impact very heavily on academic life, I think, mainly until after I returned in 1970 from RAND. And the reason for that, I think, is that there was very little pressure for either diversifying the student body or the faculty. At that time, I was probably more interested in diversifying the faculty on a gender basis, although I recognized that we needed to recruit minorities. But it was very difficult to find minority faculty who could stand up to the scrutiny at Berkeley. The budget committee was very tough—.

So it wasn’t really until the 1970s, I think, that the civil rights revolution began to be fully visible, certainly in Wurster Hall and in the departments of architecture and planning. Architecture had at least one African-American faculty member [Russ Ellis]. People were beginning to debate the question of whether to use the term “black.” The term “negro” was disappearing. There was no hint of a Latino interest, although interestingly, my wife, Mary [C.] Comerio, was recruited into the architecture department in the 1980s having been working with the farm workers in the Central Valley as an architect, and she has a social work degree, too, and really is a community architect. Many of them actually thought she was Latino. She is actually Italian as can be. And Comerio, of course, is a town in Puerto Rico, so—. [laughs] Yeah.

Once we got going, things did get hot. I mean, the students became much, much more aware, and the pressure came on both to recruit faculty and to change the composition of the entering class. And I think that was a very interesting period. It was a time when, for example, we opened up the decision process to student involvement. We put students on the admissions committees, which was unheard of. And they campaigned hard for who they wanted, and they weren’t much worried about qualifications in the conventional sense. But that was really the 1970s.

Holmes:

Thinking also how civil rights began to impact, say, some of the issues in the field of urban planning. For example, thinking about the legacy of urban renewal, and then looking at planning and housing, lower-income housing. Even the beginning of suburbanization, or what could be looked at in some of
the cities as white flight. And freeways—thinking of San Francisco, the freeways revolts. Did you see some of those issues beginning to be talked about within the fields of planning and regional science? The issues of civil rights and social justice in the city?

Teitz:

I think social justice per se really only came to fruition in the 1990s or later as a subject of academic discourse. I think there was a strong awareness that things were wrong in the city. I was acutely aware. I had been studying deindustrialization as part of my work in economic development that came a bit later. But we were acutely aware of the first wave of deindustrialization and the loss of factory jobs in the cities, which was concomitant with the exit of the white middle class.

The result, which was what we saw at RAND in New York, was the city coming apart, and the vacating of large chunks of the city’s housing, resulting in arson and the burning out of essentially whole blocks, never on the scale of Detroit later, but certainly enough to be extraordinary—the South Bronx [New York City] was a big mess by 1968. There were terrible problems. We were still thinking of response in terms of code enforcement, and attempting to impel landlords to maintain their buildings. But in fact, that was a losing battle because the economic base for the buildings was disappearing along with the tenants. And at the same time, the wave of black southern migration northward was still continuing, and filling in those aging housing units with people who were really not economically able to pay to maintain them. We were seeing the process of urban decline in action early on.

Holmes:

I wanted to turn next to RAND, because one of my questions was the main focus of that project in New York. So was it initiated to look at civil rights and urban blight? Did it also aim to look at the changing economic foundations of cities?

Teitz:

That’s an interesting question. I think that housing was probably a self-evident issue for [Mayor John Vliet] Lindsay, because everybody was complaining about it: that it was deteriorating; that rents were rising; landlords were complaining bitterly that rents were not rising. What had happened in New York after the initial imposition of rent control—what was called “old rent control”—was that buildings built after the date of that legislation were exempt, so those buildings ironically in the 1960s had rising rents. It was a time of inflation, remember. Landlords were experiencing rising costs. I think quite a few of them were probably thinking strategically about how to get out of the business, and one way was to raise rents and try and cash out while you could. That’s a hypothesis, not a fact.
It’s interesting. The three areas that RAND worked on were housing, police, and fire. Those were the three critical areas of political debate in the city, police because of crime rising, fire because deterioration was leading to a plague of fires, and housing because there was either too much or too little, both at the same time. What there actually was was a deficit of demand in the sense of income; that income among the people occupying the lowest or lower strata of the housing market had fallen, or certainly not risen in line. Oh! There was a fourth area, which was welfare. I forgot to mention that. I didn’t have much to do with it, but they did a lot of studies on welfare, because welfare was the other great issue in New York City. Welfare rolls were rising very rapidly, and the welfare rolls were paying the rent, but the payments were insufficient, at least to meet the cost structure of the housing.

So the decision in the housing studies was to focus on rent control, and on housing maintenance. And Jack [Lowry] largely took charge of the rent control studies, which were very detailed. They basically were trying to measure the full cost of housing and the impact of rent control on the rental structure. As I said, it was only a portion of the housing stock, but it was still a 100,000-plus units, close to 200, I think. And rents under old rent control were very low, many of them, and the constraints were amazing. There were provisions for raising the rent with capital improvements, but tenants fought capital improvements like mad because they knew it would raise the rents. There were provisions for maintenance. For example, every time an apartment was re-rented, it had to be repainted. But the re-paint jobs that the landlords did were very, very poor. There was a tradition of painting everything. They painted light switches; some people claimed they painted light bulbs. Do it on the cheap was the order of the day.

So the tenant perception was that the housing was deteriorating. The landlord perception was that the housing was unprofitable. And that’s a disastrous combination. Yeah.

05-00:37:36 Holmes: So in your work, did you focus just on one of these four areas, or did your study multiple areas?

05-00:37:45 Teitz: My work was to manage the housing studies. After a few weeks there, Jack surprised me by going back to Santa Monica [California], and he much preferred to be there. He asked me to take over the housing studies, and I managed it from then on.

05-00:38:12 Holmes: Was there a bit of a bait and switch there? Wasn’t he the one who also brought you in and then after you were settled, he leaves? [laughs]
Did he really want that? I suspect possibly. But he had a candidate there who probably could have done it quite well. He didn’t really need to do that. I didn’t feel tricked in any way, shape, or form. In fact, I thought it was a huge challenge. I have never been one to turn down—look around you [laughs]—a challenge. And New York at the time was the most challenging place in the United States for urban policy. And Lindsay was a very progressive mayor.

Holmes: He was a Republican—in the Rockefeller mold

Teitz: He was a Republican—but of the Liberal party. And as I said, I think, previously, because the place had been run by the Democrats for twenty years or more, he had no infrastructure politically. So he brought in consultants left, right, and center, and RAND was one of the main ones. The RAND contracts must have totaled $2 million or $3 million a year, which in those days was very big money.

Holmes: And describe a little bit of your research techniques in doing these housing studies. Did you go out and do interviews, or was it more data analysis?

Teitz: It was mainly seeking out data. We did a series of studies trying to sort out the question of why the housing maintenance system wasn’t working. We gathered up as much data as we could on the housing courts, which was where people went to complain, and we discovered, among other things, that a landlord got a volume discount in the housing court. If you were convicted of a couple of violations, you paid a certain amount. If you were convicted of twenty, the amount did not go up proportionately; it went way down proportionately. So by the time you had forty or fifty violations, the cost per violation was probably $1.50 or something like that. In other words, the deterrent was trivial.

Holmes: Yeah. There was an economies of scale, it seems—. [laughs]

Teitz: From the landlord’s point of view, it was not worth dealing with tenant complaints. Let them complain, let it drag through the courts, the housing court, which was slow in any case. It was kind of not very effective.

So that was, on one hand, the response to housing code violations. The other response, of course, was positive programs to try to fix up housing that was deteriorating or deteriorated. There were a whole series of programs of that kind in New York at the time. And the third arm was a whole series of programs that were trying to support construction of new, effectively
subsidized housing. And all the housing programs had different initials that I can’t recall right this minute, but they were quite complicated. They still exist, many of them, and they are still widely used by builders and developers. New York has relied on tax exemptions to induce housing development for a very long time now, and it continues to go on. It really only works if you have inflation, at which point the value of the tax [exemption] decreases. If you don’t, then you are in some trouble.

Holmes: Was this your first experience of taking your academic expertise and studies into the policy arena?

Teitz: Well, as I said, at the very end of my time at Wisconsin, I had run the mapmaking exercise developing an atlas of land use and zoning [Milwaukee County Land Use and Zoning Atlas] for Milwaukee County for the Metropolitan Study Commission. And I worked alongside the team. We all did the same thing, pasting bits and pieces, but I managed it, too. And that actually worked out. We did complete the atlas, astoundingly. I don’t think it had any impact whatsoever, in fact, because Charlie [Charles] Ball, the presiding dynamo, then took off for other places, and the whole effort at improving the situation in Milwaukee County, in which the suburbs were effectively controlling the city, really didn’t go anywhere. It was the first of many, many exercises in attempts at regional governance, which I am still mixed up in today. I am just right now reviewing a book on regional governance for Journal of the American Planning Association. I have been involved in that for a long time.

Holmes: The RAND project seems like it was on a much larger and different scale—

Teitz: Oh, yes. The budget for the housing studies was probably a million-plus, a million and a half. So I was handling a lot of money. But RAND is such a smooth-running organization—or was; it still is, I think—that it didn’t require me to do a whole lot. I had to write a scope of work each year, and I had to keep track, more or less. But the accounting department did that. RAND’s standards on writing were very tough. So every single report and working document had to go through the editing process, and RAND still has a ferocious editing structure, which was imported to PPIC [Public Policy Institute of California], by the way.

Holmes: Oh, wow.

Teitz: And it’s still here, too.
Holmes: They would probably make you a better writer.

Teitz: It makes you a different writer.

Holmes: Yeah, that’s probably true.

Teitz: But I have never objected to editing, actually. I don’t feel that my prose is so deathless that I have to defend every word. I’ve known people who do that, and I think they just don’t understand the value of a good editor. Of course, every so often, you come across a bad editor, and then you are in deep trouble.

Holmes: Thinking about this, your New York experience at RAND, what were some of your thoughts of—again, it’s a much larger scale than what you dealt with in, say, Milwaukee—of that type of intersection of research, data, planning, and eventually, we hope, sound policy?

Teitz: I think it changed me—the roots were there before, but that experience changed me in a quite profound way. And in fact, my whole research direction shifted after RAND. I pretty much stopped the research on public facility location, having written two very important articles. One was the theory piece [“Toward a Theory of Urban Public Facility Location” PPRS, 1968], and the other was the algorithm for solving the p-median problem, or for giving you a solution, anyway [“Heuristic Methods for Estimating the Generalized Vertex Median of a Weighted Graph” Operations Research, 1968]. It’s actually a heuristic, not an algorithm, because there isn’t a solution. There is no analytic solution, I think.

Holmes: What new lines of research opened up after the RAND experience?

Teitz: Well, basically, I became a houser. I had never studied housing before, and actually, I came back to Berkeley filled up with housing stuff, hot to do housing. But of course, Berkeley by that time had two people in housing. One was Bill Wheaton, who I admired greatly, not least because he had saved my bacon. [laughs] And the other was Chet McGuire, who was our first African-American hire, who had come in as an assistant professor out of the Chicago business school. And they did housing and real estate. So I didn’t do that.

So the odd thing was coming back from RAND having all this housing stuff, most of which I didn't publish, or not publish very much of. I kind of dove back into Berkeley. I sat in my office for a semester looking out at the view of
Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley

the Golden Gate Bridge and wishing I was in New York. And then suddenly, one day I woke up and said, “Nah.” [laughs]

Holmes: So you developed a kind of nostalgia tie to New York?

Teitz: It wasn’t just nostalgia. I was so deeply engaged in New York City that I wanted to know everything that was going on, and to be part of it. But I had cut myself off from it.

Holmes: And was that difficult to deal with?

Teitz: Perhaps that’s a sort of theme of my life, isn’t it?

Holmes: It could be.

Teitz: Yeah. Was it hard to do? It was a hard choice. If I had stayed, I would have stayed with RAND, and when the RAND institute folded, I probably would have gone back to Santa Monica and became a RAND analyst. I would have done reasonably well there. Planners actually do well at RAND. I had two PhD students, both of them became vice presidents at RAND, one for controlling domestic research, which became a huge part of their agenda after the end of the Vietnam War. That was David [W.] Lyon, who was RAND’s director of domestic research, and became the first president of PPIC. And the other was Rae [W.] Archibald, who became RAND’s director of finance. How a planning PhD becomes the director of finance for a huge nonprofit research organization is not clear to me, except we trained people to be very adaptable, and to know a lot, and both of them had been in my famous class on the Oakland [Public] Library. Again, which never got written up, except by Aaron Wildavsky in his book.

Holmes: So following New York, you become a “houser,” as you say. I like that term. I’ve never heard it before.

Teitz: And I’ve been a houser since then. But there was no room for me to teach housing at Berkeley. So what would I do? I maintained an interest in rent control because I was asked on several occasions—and I am not sure I am on track here because I need the chronology flashing up in front of me. [laughs] But not long thereafter—I guess it was quite a bit thereafter—I was doing both small studies on rent control, and then I became the major consultant to the city of Los Angeles for several years overseeing a bunch of rent control
studies, and working with Barbara Zeidman, who was the presiding director of housing. Very political. A very interesting time. I will get to it when we get there. I think it’s the 1980s, right?

Yeah. What were some of the solutions that you began to put on the table, to discuss at least, in your reports there at RAND on rent control and housing?

On rent control, the main proposal was a reform of the old rent control law, to change the way in which rents were adjusted, and change the way in which capital improvements were dealt with. The idea was to allow for an upward adjustment of those rents that had been held at extremely low levels for a very long time, and to ratchet that up over time. That actually was passed, and old rent control, even though there are vestiges of it still around, believe it or not, was changed substantially.

At the same time, though, as I think I mentioned earlier, in New York, the buildings that had been built outside rent control were the subject of enormous tenant protest, as the leases—one-, two-, or three-year leases—were being renegotiated. This was in the late 1960s. And there was a huge push to create a new form of rent control [Rent Stabilization]. Some people called it “second-generation rent control”; some call it “new rent control.” Essentially, it put a cap on the permissible increase on a one- or two-year lease, slowing down the rate at which rents could increase, and bringing those units into the rent control system.

You have to understand that in order to actually manage rental regulation, you can’t simply enunciate the fact that rents should not rise. You have to have a database, as we would now call it, of every unit in the city to determine whether it is or is not a unit subject to rent control. You have to be able to manage that database and to update it. You require a bureaucracy to handle changes. You have now a structure for the management of proposed rent increases by the landlords, and challenges by the tenants to those rent increases, probably on the grounds that the units had not been maintained properly. You need a force of inspectors. You need a court to determine whether the proposed increases are or are not, in fact, valid. It’s a big structure.

Although it’s no more than a regulatory system, it has a kind of mythic aura about it. Particularly because for economists, it is absolutely a red flag to the bull. They hate it. At one point, there was some poll in which 99.6 percent of economists said rent control was a bad idea. My view of it was always that it was a regulation, and it could be good or bad depending on the circumstances. And that it had come into existence under conditions of stress. Every revolution just about, from St. Petersburg [Russia] in 1917 or Vienna [Austria] in 1918, to Havana [Cuba], has been followed by rent control. People are
generally dissatisfied; people who rent are not happy about it—for the most part. And yet, at the same time, we know that an enormous proportion of people who rent get on quite well with their owners. I never liked the term “landlord” very much. I thought it was dismissive and negative. But nobody has come up with a better one. [laughs]

Well, if we looked at a market kind of view of rising rents, costs, rent control, that there is usually a discussion of a housing shortage. And particularly on an island such as Manhattan and its boroughs, even by the late 1960s, we are not looking at much room to expand. Was that part of your analysis—looking at housing shortages?

Other people were looking at that question. I have never been a great fan of the study of housing shortage. Numbers fly around, and I’d sooner generally stay with discussions of cost levels, and rent, and price levels before declaring a housing shortage. As we’ll see, I got deeply into the question of economics of rental housing a bit later, during the [Richard Milhous] Nixon Administration. But the RAND housing studies were definitely market oriented. You can’t not be market oriented if you are dealing with rent control. But I also think that housing is a social phenomenon, and that you can’t understand the housing market without understanding the social forces that are driving the people who are engaged in it, and who they are, and what their outlook on life is, basically.

That’s a really key point I wanted to ask you about—to get your experience in these kind of studies of actually being there on the ground of what you are looking at. So it’s not just sitting in an office looking at data, but of looking actually throughout the city, of looking at those very kind of social dynamics that you were talking about. Could you discuss a little bit of the importance of that, and perhaps, at times in academia, if that’s lacking?

It certainly is.

We actually did try to get out and look at least at the physical condition of housing. We took samples across the city, and drove around, and tried to see what was going on in different neighborhoods. We didn’t write much of that up because I left. It was kind of the end of my time there.

There is a long tradition in housing of social concern. Catherine Bauer [Wurster], who was on the faculty at Berkeley when I first came there, wrote a
very famous book called Modern Housing that essentially made the case for public housing. And I had grown up with the belief that public housing was a good thing. It was also during this period that public housing began to get a very bad image, partly deserved, and partly not deserved. And the blame on the occupants was emphasized at the expense of the fact that it was being starved of resources, quite deliberately.

Now I lost that thread there.

Holmes:

Teitz:

The social dynamics—. I didn’t do any work on that. I was well aware of work by people, such as the sociologist [Herbert Gans] who wrote the famous book about Boston’s West End. I knew him quite well. There were several traditions within housing studies. One was the kind of political science tradition of Meyerson [Martin Meyerson] and Banfield [Edward C. Banfield], studying housing programs and housing politics. That still goes on. There was a social tradition, largely by sociologists such as Herbert Gans, who wrote a wonderful book about urban renewal that was followed by more books that were denouncing urban renewal. He was certainly very critical. I didn’t do any of that. I was not a sociologist. I was more interested in—it’s hard to describe exactly, but space, geography, theory, analytics, data, models—

Holmes:

Teitz:

Always. Yeah, yeah. I used to ride my bike through the middle of London as a kid, looking at the bomb sites around St. Paul’s [Cathedral] and seeing the flowers growing in the rubble. Yeah. I think you have to have some feel for the city. I loved to walk around and—. I was in Portland a week or so ago. It was raining, and I still walked around. It’s a great city. A great downtown.

Holmes:

Teitz:

From your experience there in New York, did you begin to notice if there was a type of divide? You already mentioned how it began to impact you academically and intellectually. But did you also begin to notice that there is a bit of a divide, perhaps, between regional studies and planning as an academic subject versus those fields put actually into practice, in policy, such as the studies of RAND?

Teitz:

There has always been a divide. It’s in the nature of the academic world. We cut ourselves off in order to study. And when you separate yourself, you become the other. Nonetheless, you try to bridge it as best you can. And the
students have a way of reminding you—and your colleagues—of reminding you that you damn well better pay attention. Otherwise, you will become irrelevant. And that’s always a great challenge, I think, in a field such as planning, or public policy, which is policy-relevant, but also aims toward academic quality and rigor; that somehow, you bridge that. It’s hard. It’s very hard.

Holmes: Did the experience at RAND help you, say, in the classroom?

Teitz: Oh, yeah.

Holmes: Help you began to bridge that divide?

Teitz: I used it a lot. Eventually, I did teach a housing class—not for very long—but especially when I taught my planning history class, it helped me a lot. I think that it permeated my thought throughout the 1970s and 1980s. It shaped the way I did research. That version of rigorous policy research was something that I hadn’t really previously experienced as closely. Regional science is always rather theoretical—although dealing with a lot of numbers—a very theoretical field. Geography has never been, although it always has had practical perspectives—mapmaking alone—it’s also somewhat detached. But when you get out into the field and you actually have to work on real problems, you have a different perspective. And I certainly came back with that, and was intent on helping students to understand. The irony was that the students at that point were not interested in understanding very much. They knew the answers. [laughs]

Holmes: How so?

Teitz: Well, it was Marxism, obviously. It was the power structure. It was the forces of capitalism. Although interestingly, they still took my classes, and they liked them, and I did well as a teacher. I mean, a large proportion of the students were very resistant to anything analytical after 1970.

Holmes: Last question on RAND—because I did want to talk about your very important papers and theories on public facilities. But I did want to ask: having that RAND experience, if you are in a department of planning, that deals with policy, that deals with not just an academic subject—say, history—but a very relevant academic subject that you are supposed to apply to the real world outside of campus—having that kind of policy experience, did that give you some chops in the field? Or an additional level of experience and respect?
Teitz: Yeah, I think so. I think if you look at that cluster of letters that I copied, you will find a lot of references to RAND. I think when Aaron Wildavsky founded the [Richard and Rhoda Goldman] School of Public Policy at Berkeley and invited me to join, I don’t think—well, he might have, because he had liked the research I did before I went to RAND. But I think going to RAND reinforced his belief that I’d be a good faculty member there. I didn’t do it, but that’s another story.

But I think it helped. It actually propelled me a bit, especially that RAND has a slightly mythic quality about it, both for good and evil. For many on the left, it’s a personification of military research. Ironically, for me, I thought that the systems analyses were brilliant and fascinating, and I thought we could do systems analyses for municipal production. And in a way, I tried to do that. I always viewed, for example, the housing maintenance processes as a system. As I just described to you, it has all these moving parts that need to work together, and it’s true of anything. If you look at homelessness now as a problem, there has evolved a system for addressing homelessness. It’s not very effective, at least judging by what one sees on the streets, or maybe it is very effective but the problem is much bigger than it used to be. Both are probably true, actually.

One can use a systems approach as enunciated by C. [Charles] West Churchman, who is another scholar at Berkeley who I respected a lot, and was one of the founders of that field. It seems to me it’s a very important way to approach the junction between policy, practice, and theory in specific situations.

Holmes: That’s well put.

I wanted to transition a bit, and actually take a step back to your pre-RAND years, and talk about your “urban public facility location theory” that you published—the first part, at least—in 1968. Walk us through a little bit of this theory, of its genesis and the ideas of research.

Teitz: It kind of emerged out of—well, I wouldn’t say out of nowhere. I had many discussions about geography, and policy, and particularly, I remember one with Bill [William Wheeler] Bunge, B-U-N-G-E, who was an amazing man, in which we talked about the kind of phenomena that geography should study. And it occurred to me that there were all these entities out there that were actually structured as spatially distributed—which is the key for a geographer: spatially-distributed systems. And that there was a whole realm which I had learned in regional science of location theory, which explained the locations
of oil refineries and steel mills very well, or the locations of shopping centers. But there was no literature, really, on the location of public facilities.

I don’t exactly know where the idea came from at all, but I am sure, given what happened afterwards, that somebody else would have thought about it at the time. And in fact, people had thought about it a little bit. People in operations research had talked about “facility location,” but they were talking about things like the component parts of a business, typically, or perhaps military. I hadn’t seen any of that literature. There was a man named [F. E.] Maranzana who wrote a paper, I think probably before mine, in which he talked about facilities.

So I was giving a paper at the Regional Science Association meeting somewhere—I don’t remember where it was—it must have been, probably, in 1967. And I sat down and simply wrote it, and then I stood up and said it, and everybody said, “Mmm. That’s a nice idea. Write it up.” And for once, my besetting sin, I actually did that, and it was published in the Papers and Proceedings of the Regional Science Association, which is a very obscure source, believe me. Especially now. But it’s actually available in at least four collected editions, including something called Classics in Regional Science. I think it’s in the second volume, so it kind of sneaks into the “classics” category. It was good for me, and certainly, what followed was very interesting. I followed it, but after 1970, I never worked on it again. I came back from RAND, and I was doing another thing. And perhaps that was a mistake.

But in the interim, I had also worked on a study before RAND of some health facilities. There was a guy named Jerry [Jerome W.] Lubin who was a health planner, who had kind of an expansive view of the world. He wasn’t very good at framing it, but he came into my office one day and said, “How would I actually locate a set of health facilities? We have a new program. We want to set up”—not offices, but I guess service centers. And I sort of sat down and said, “Well, I’ll think about that. And I had Polly Bart as, I guess, a research assistant at the time, working on some project or other.

So I went home one night and then sat down and actually—there was a solution. The p-median problem had been identified in the journal Operations Research. But the solution was wrong. We tested it, and it didn’t work. So I said, “Well, let’s think about this.” I went home one night and concocted my version, which was really very, very simple. I mean, it’s nothing. Polly programmed it. By then, I was still programming in Fortran, but I was slower than she was. And then we published it.

The two papers together resulted in a lot of stuff. The first paper generated a lot of response and reaction at the time, and later. And it particularly was
interesting because it became the object of critique by the radical geographers, because I didn’t take account of equity in the distribution process, or not explicitly, although the whole idea, of course, is to efficiently serve the population, and presumably, to my mind, serving a population treats everyone equally.

Holmes: Yeah, I wanted to get to the Marxist critique.

Teitz: And the critique said, “That ain’t so.” So, anyway—.

Holmes: But before we do, I did want to ask quickly: so from my reading, you wanted to create a model that put in kind of an efficient but also equitable location theory for public facilities. Is that kind of a boiled-down—?

Teitz: Yeah. I didn’t mention the word “equity,” I think, in the article. I haven’t read it recently.

Holmes: No. But of that kind of spatial distribution, though, right?

Teitz: Yes.

Holmes: To serve all?

Teitz: Yeah.

Holmes: And one of the problems that you were addressing was that there was a lot of talk of facilities, but we were largely looking at either business or—largely private facilities?

Teitz: Yes.

Holmes: Not public facilities?

Teitz: And we were profit maximizing. So I didn’t want to profit maximize; I wanted to maximize the efficiency of delivery, which meant that everybody was best served, in the sense of treating everybody more or less equally.
Holmes: And being able to serve everyone—

Teitz: And being able to serve everyone, yeah.

Holmes: —more or less equally? And one of the things that you were trying to emphasize was that one of the defaults was that most of our modeling was optimizing locations of private facilities, without taking public facilities into account.

Teitz: Absolutely. And when you optimize for private, you are profit maximizing. So that’s the legacy of growing up in the Labour government after World War II.

Holmes: That’s interesting. It’s an interesting context of how that kind of thinking comes around. And also by my reading, you had a mix here of both what we would term today “qualitative” and “quantitative methods.” Is that correct?

Teitz: In the paper itself, I had some theory. The theory was not very good. It’s a difficult problem to handle theoretically, and I was intent on using economic theory. So that part of the paper I don’t think is so great. I think really, the main contribution was to say this is a subject worth studying; here is a way to think about it. And of course, with the heuristic, here is a way to actually address the problem practically, in a given situation. And just how practical that is, I have to say, is amazing. I still get—do you know about Research Gate?

Holmes: Yes.

Teitz: Or whatever that is? I have never figured out what it is. But they send me messages about once a week saying that that 1968 method paper has been cited. It’s still being cited all over the world. It’s sort of amazing. Not a whole lot of them, but every time somebody kind of rediscovers the problem, they search around, and there is the paper.

And the reason people like the paper—not the paper, the method—is that it’s very fast, and gets to a good solution or a best solution most of the time. Almost all the time. So people use it as a test against new methods to solve the same problem, and people are coming up with new methods to solve the problem over and over and over again. It seems every young professor or graduate student in operations research discovers the p-median problem and off they go. It’s kind of fun.
Holmes: I think within the academy, the main goal is to initiate a new discussion, and that’s the best you can do and contribute to that.

Teitz: Yeah.

Holmes: Now, you published this in 1968. I had two questions on that. Later works that cite your article, they put in social justice and equity into your model. Was there a thought of that kind of civil rights—of serving all populations along class and racial lines—when you were thinking of this?

Teitz: No, I don’t think so. I tended to view the population as homogeneous, and everybody needed to be served. I wish I had thought more about that, but you can’t think of everything.

Holmes: No, no. Well, I guess on one hand, if we are looking to serve all the people, that is kind of a social justice lens. But yeah, I see what you’re saying.

Teitz: That’s weaseling out.

Holmes: Yeah, I know. [laughs]

And did your experience at RAND further shape your thinking about this public facilities location? Did that have any impact at all?

Teitz: No, it didn’t. In fact, what it did was to more or less cancel my interest for two years. I was too busy. It was ten-hour days. And it was before we had personal computers, so, you know, I was bashing at a typewriter a lot.

Holmes: So you did mention a bit about the response that the theory received from the larger planning and regional science community.

Teitz: The regional scientists liked it a lot. The geographers saw it as a wonderful target. But in so doing, they acknowledged that it was an interesting and important question.

Holmes: If we are thinking of critiques, you had the behavioral approaches who were trying—I think they used the model to further discuss complexities of human
action in the environment, which they say perhaps the quantitative methods
don’t always account for.

Teitz: Yes, of course.

Holmes: But as you were mentioning earlier, the Marxist critique seemed to really hone
in on this theory in some respects.

Teitz: Yeah, I think so. If you were addressing it in modern terms, I think they would
say that it’s neoliberal to the core. [laughs] And so naturally, it would be an
object of critique. I didn’t necessarily read all of the follow-up. I’ve read a
number of them, by Michael Dear and other people. I particularly liked the
one by the guy who is also a graduate of our program who is now the
president of the University of Toronto [Meric Gertler]. And I can’t remember
his name. Never mind. But most of them I didn’t read because they were
coming out in the two years afterwards, and I was busy.

Holmes: Speaking of the Marxist critique, of course, David [W.] Harvey’s Social
Justice and the City was published a few years after that—1973 or so?

Teitz: I knew David Harvey at that time quite well, and actually, I was quite
impressed by the book he wrote before he wrote Social Justice. What was the
first main book? I have forgotten the name of it, the title. His breakout Marxist
book. Before that, he wrote an immense tome on theoretical geography
[Explanation in Geography] that was couched in terms of the same language
that the folks that I and the folks at Seattle had been using. And he renounced
all claim to that book afterwards. But we talked a few times over the years. I
remember for some reason meeting—oh, I must have been on a visit to
Wisconsin, maybe I was doing a sabbatical at Wisconsin. We sat on the hill
there and chatted.

I read his first book. I haven’t read too many of the succeeding ones. He
writes too fast for me. But he’s had a huge impact on people, and much
admired.

Holmes: Some of the Marxist critiques were about your—I think they called it
“neoclassical” model.

Teitz: Yeah. The economics underlying it was neoclassical economics, yes.
Holmes: What was your view of say, well, David Harvey’s impact and the changing of the field that we see during this time—and this is illustrated in response to your theory—the rise of Marxism within geography? What was your response to seeing that in the field?

Teitz: I was not particularly concerned about the rise of Marxism in geography. In fact, my interest in the question really only emerged after 1970 at Berkeley in the planning department, when the social policies program, which Mel [Melvin M.] Webber had generated with this huge NIMH [National Institute of Mental Health] grant, funded a whole bunch of people, of PhDs in social policies planning. And many of them were Marxists. And we recruited Ann [R.] Markusen, a very dynamic woman who was the first explicit Marxist on the faculty. She kind of has tapered off, I think. She is not really a hardcore Marxist. I don’t know if there are any hardcore—oh, yes, there are some. David Harvey is still a hardcore Marxist.

But for me, encountering them back in the department in the form of students who were asking questions and saying, “This is no good” and “That’s no good,” that was a real challenge, especially because after that first semester back, I was chair of the department for the next three-and-a-half years. So I had a three-and-a-half-year term as chair. The management experience at RAND was helpful in that, but it was a challenge. We were recruiting like mad; we were expanding in all directions. The students revolted at least once a year. The leader of one of them is now the chair [John Landis] at Penn [University of Pennsylvania], but that’s a big tradition in the department, I guess.

I must say that it didn’t affect me that much. For one thing, my personal life was becoming chaotic. And the second was that just managing the department and doing the research I was doing was keeping me inordinately busy. So, I don’t know. I didn’t go home and worry about it, if you like. I had other things to worry about.

Holmes: But thinking of ideological shifts in the field, right, this is a time when, say—as you are even mentioning—your students think they have the answer because they are ascribing to this. And if we look at other academic disciplines, such as the rise of Marxist theory and influence in history, that’s one thing. I guess my question is was there a different type of sensitivity to it when you are working in a planning department and you are seeing this influence? That you are trying to craft social policy or urban policy to these tenets, did that raise some red flags?

Teitz: How did it manifest itself in planning?
Holmes: Yes.

Teitz: I think first, the students sensitized us a lot to issues of race. And it was during those years that race became an important factor in decisions. Secondly, I think that the students wanted to know more within courses, but many faculty simply ignored that. They taught what they taught, and you took it or left it. And you wanted to graduate, so you took it.

I think this was a time when the students started to generate student-taught classes in our department. It was very interesting. We kind of had a method for that. There weren’t very many, but I recall well that the first local economic development class taught in the department was taught by Phil Shapira, now a faculty member at Georgia Tech, I think. And he and I kind of collaborated on it. I guess I provided cover. And thereafter, I taught economic development for something like twenty years, local economic development. It led me to an interest in small business, and many other things related. So that was probably a good outcome.

Ann Markusen certainly introduced Marxist economics into her classes. She at this point was teaching the regional planning class, which I had taught. I basically taught everything and introduced a lot of new classes over the years. It was one of the things I did. I don’t know that it made that much difference to what she taught, actually. Maybe. I think she was more sensitive, and she made the students more sensitive to the distributive outcomes. And that was important. It kind of woke people up.

But that was happening at the same time in other classes without necessarily a very Marxist influence. For example, in housing, the treatment of urban renewal was changing. People were recognizing that urban renewal had been really a failure. In land use planning, the idea of urban redevelopment became very different. It was no longer slum clearance. The whole idea of “the slum” itself became a concept that was frowned upon.

I think interestingly, one of the things I remember about this period was that we all became much more sensitive to language. It was the beginning of real language sensitivity on the part of white males in the academic world. I don’t think it’s by any means completed. [laughs] But new words started popping up, and the whole “she/he” question was much raised and debated. What did you use?

Racial sensitivity became much more important. How much of it was window dressing? Who knows? I think people function within a real world that they actually inhabit, and they can only change so much at a given time, unless the world outside also changes absolutely dramatically.
The world at Berkeley was changing; to revert back to Reagan, that was the beginning of the era of the budget cuts. Berkeley had had kind of, I think, a very comfortable existence throughout the Clark Kerr years. It was kind of the *ancien régime*, without many of the bad features of an *ancien régime*—but also without many of the good features that revolution brings. It was probably time for a shakeup, but—. We were changed by it, without question. Yeah.

Holmes: Maybe one last question; I think we have time before we have to stop. Speaking of those broad changes that you see both at Berkeley and also in the field was a conception of—or being more cognizant about—the environment.

Teitz: Yes.

Holmes: And then speaking of Kerr, and the influence certainly of his wife [Catherine Spaulding Kerr] in helping to create the Save the Bay movement. Did the environment begin to be discussed in more consequential terms during this time in urban planning, and being incorporated?

Teitz: Absolutely. We actually established an environmental planning PhD, which was lodged in the landscape architecture department. There was a huge debate in planning about that, whether to let it go or not. And it probably was a mistake for the department in terms of politics, but that’s where it went.

I think everybody was becoming much more conscious of environmental considerations, but to nothing like the degree that climate change focused attention in the late 1990s and on into the 2000s. I think that we were all impressed, to put it mildly, by the legislation during the [Lyndon Baines] Johnson and Nixon era. Nixon comes out of this looking pretty damn good in many respects. He wasn’t so good in others, that’s for sure. But it was beginning to permeate.

But for me personally, it didn’t have a huge impact, because what I was doing was housing, economic development, and related subjects that were more concerned with addressing the immediate urban issues at the time. I was well aware of the troubles, and the burning river [Cuyahoga River fire], and the Cuyahoga [River]. My daughter went to Oberlin [College], so I used to fly into Cleveland all the time. Partly because I had a lot of different things on my mind, and although I was certainly an environmental supporter and contributor, I was not directly engaged. Remember, this was also coming up to the time when I was going to Saudi Arabia, which made me very aware of environmental issues, but it took me off in yet another direction, and took up a lot of time. Though it did pay for my daughter’s Oberlin education.
Holmes: Well, maybe this is a good time to stop, and we can pick up on that thread next time.

Teitz: Yeah.

Holmes: Thanks so much, Mike.

Teitz: Thank you.
Holmes: This is Todd Holmes with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. I am sitting down once again with Mike Teitz. Today is April 18, 2017, and we are here at his office at the Public Policy Institute of California in San Francisco, California. Mike, thanks for sitting down with us again.

Last session, we dug a little deeper into your time in New York City with the RAND Corporation, and the new lines of research and experiences that came after that. Today, I wanted to pick up on some other threads of your career during the 1970s and 1980s. And I'd like to start with your experience as department chair [City and Regional Planning Department] after coming back from New York. I know we talked about this a little bit, but I would like to maybe get some more thoughts on that, starting in 1970, after you returned.

One of the items you mentioned was a curriculum revision for the department.

Teitz: Yeah, yeah. Well, the department had been struggling with an appropriate curriculum, having originally had, as I said earlier, a kind of a single, unitary curriculum based on several studios. Students would take one or two major studios for several afternoons a week, replicating the tradition in architecture. But it mopped up all their time, and they didn’t like that. So there were pretty frequent revolts about it. Nothing much changed.

But after the arrival of a lot of new faculty—and really, the withdrawal of Jack Kent from a lot of active participation in the department; eventually, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s [disease], which was very tragic. He was an amazing guy. But after that happened, I think that the splits in the department became clear, and as I said, we had by the early 1970s already established a structure with three tracks: physical planning; housing; and urban systems. After I got back in 1970, the tensions in the department were exaggerated—or “exacerbated,” I should say—by the arrival both of the PhD in general, which had started earlier, and particularly by the so-called “social policies planning program,” funded by this huge NIMH [National Institute of Mental Health] grant. This brought in a bunch of very activist PhD students who merged seamlessly with the activist Master’s students, who were always up for a fight. And it’s around this time that the influence of Marxist thought became directly evident. [Karl] Marx was being quoted all over the place; people were reading David [W.] Harvey, and in general, it was a time of considerable turbulence.

We had kind of almost a continuous process of revamping the curriculum. I can’t point to a single revamping, but rather, a continuous set of debates and arguments about, particularly, what should be the core curriculum of a field in
planning. I think that has more or less been resolved, at least for the smaller schools in the field. But it continues to exercise some fascination for the field: what exactly are we, and what is our intellectual core, if any?

Holmes: You mentioned the social policies planning that was brought in by the grant. Can you explain a little bit of what that entailed?

Teitz: Yeah. Basically, I think that Mel [Melvin M.] Webber and the new faculty—Len [Leonard J.] Duhl, Richard Meier, and others—were interested in a notion of planning that transcended urban and physical, and would reach into social policy in a very broad way. They had been meeting in Washington [D.C.] during the earlier years, and I think that the intent of the PhD group was, in fact, to develop an intellectual basis for that idea. Exactly what it was, I think, always remained somewhat murky, at least to me. But it involved a great deal of critique, and at the same time, an engagement in social issues of the time.

Ironically, Mel Webber started it, but he was anything but a radical in that sense. He was very radical in the sense of transforming the environment in which he lived and worked, but he certainly was not an ideological radical. He was, if anything, what he had always been: an institutional economist.

Holmes: The social policies planning, was this also geared to address the racial tensions—and certainly the riots that we see occurring during this time in most urban settings—from '64 on?

Teitz: Yeah. Everybody was very much influenced by the Civil Rights Movement, and particularly the riots in Los Angeles. And for us, it mostly took the form of trying to recruit African-American students into the program, which was a difficult and not very successful enterprise. At the same time, Fred [Frederick C.] Collignon and I were working on disability, and bringing some students who were disabled into the program, and trying to support the efforts in Berkeley to build a disability movement. I would say, at least for me, that I was wrapped up in the department, and in trying to keep things on a reasonably even keel. And I didn’t have much going on that was directly related to that, other than searching for minority students.

Holmes: And did that recruitment also extend to faculty as well, trying to diversify the department?

Teitz: Yes. We recruited one African-American, Chet [Charles Bartlett?] McGuire, out of the University of Chicago business school, and he was a housing person.
He taught housing and real estate, he and Bill [William] Wheaton taught the housing policy classes.

Holmes: Interesting. Before we move on, we have mentioned this a few times—talking about studios. Could you explain a little bit for our readers what that entailed within the department’s curriculum?

Teitz: Well, basically, I shouldn’t keep using that word. We will edit it out. Consider it “edited.”

The studio is a great tradition in architecture and landscape architecture. It comprises typically a problem; in architecture or landscape, a problem of design. A group of students come together in a class with a teacher, and the studio addresses the problem. Traditionally, they met several afternoons a week. It comes out of the French tradition of design education. And the product typically was a design. So a planning studio might take a problem of a small town and attempt to do a general plan that is an arrangement for development or growth, or no growth. Not “no growth”—always growth. Or a neighborhood. And the students would do some research, usually of a modest quality. They didn’t know much about research; they didn’t have much training in it. And they would synthesize the product, which would then be presented on white board, and carefully done; in the design tradition, really well done.

It’s essentially not much different to what architects do today. It’s just that today, the substance is much more likely to include the words “sustainability” and “resilience,” and the buzzwords then were not that.

Holmes: Well, it’s interesting you mention that, because environment is one of the questions I also wanted to ask you about the curriculum. We have social policies planning addressing some of the urban issues of racial problems, and urban communities themselves. But at the same time, particularly coming out of Berkeley, you have the environmental movement. Especially here in California, if we think of Save the Bay, then BCDC [San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission], [California] Coastal Commission—a lot of movements addressing the environment. During your stretch here in the early 1970s, was there a discussion within the department that we needed to start addressing the environment as well?

Teitz: Oh, I think it had been there all along. Jack Kent had created a—excuse me; I have forgotten the name of it—a major exhibition early in the 1950s [Telesis. “A Space for Living” 1942] looking at the environment of the [San Francisco] Bay Area. Landscape architecture had always taught some courses, and
especially at Penn [University of Pennsylvania], Ian [L.] McHarg was
developing an approach to layering environmental maps in order to come up
with areas of high importance. The big question for the department was
whether we would have a PhD in environmental planning, and where it would
be. And I think I have previously alluded to this: the decision was taken to let
that PhD sit in the landscape architecture department. A lot of people in
planning did not like that, but that’s where it ended up. So much of the
impetus on environmental planning shifted to landscape architecture at that
time. Although the students in planning were deeply interested in
environmental issues.

06-00:15:36
Holmes:
You mentioned the student discontent that would arise at times over the
curriculum. What steps, as chair, did you take to address these?

06-00:15:55
Teitz:
Oh, we had meetings—endlessly, you know? I can’t remember all of them,
but every so often, a new issue would arise, and the students would mobilize,
and come in and present a set of either demands or requests. Certainly a list of
items. And we’d talk about it, and try to explain what could be done and
couldn’t be done, or what we agreed with or not. It certainly never came to
blows. [laughs]

But over this period, the students were steadily more engaged in the processes
of the department. For example, membership on admissions committees, some
role—although it was always furiously debated—in recruitment of new
faculty. They had people they wanted, but the faculty was not about to give
that up. And the university wouldn't have allowed it, anyway.

So there was a back and forth all the time, and I wouldn’t say every day, but
certainly every week there was another issue for the chair to deal with.

06-00:17:43
Holmes:
Yeah. That’s busy. [laughs]

06-00:17:45
Teitz:
The students were very bright, very engaged. And very vocal.

06-00:17:57
Holmes:
From when you first started at Berkeley to the time that you were chair, from
1970 to 1974, did you see that dramatic shift within the student body? Were
they as engaged or as—I guess maybe a better word is, were they as vocal and
as activist-minded when you started in 1964, as they were less than a decade
later?

06-00:18:23
Teitz:
No. I don’t think so. I think planning was a quieter field. And I think that in
the 1960s and 1970s it attracted particularly brilliant students, both in the PhD
and in the Master’s program. I found a Master’s thesis the other day that I had kept: an account by a young woman [Elizabeth O’Hara] who had worked at HUD [United States Department of Housing and Urban Development], and it was brilliant. It was publishable. And I looked through it, and I was thinking to myself, why didn’t this get published? It’s a marvelous account of life in a bureaucracy. Just incredible.

06-00:19:26
Holmes: Well, it’s never too late.

06-00:19:29
Teitz: Well, maybe so. I should get in touch with her. I think it would be great.

06-00:19:38
Holmes: Speaking of the environment, also in 1970, there was the fire in Oakland and Berkeley hills, which was a fairly devastating fire. I believe it was 400 acres; nearly forty homes were burned down. How did this impact your thinking of the environment as both a resident of the area, but also as a planner?

06-00:20:05
Teitz: Well, as a planner, not much. I mean, it was big. There was a lot of concern about the eucalyptus trees at the top of the hills, and how much of a fire danger they really were. Personally, it affected me in the sense—I think I described previously coming back to Berkeley. Sitting in a hotel room in Manhattan—my wife and daughter had already gone, and were in Wisconsin—and I saw a newsreel describing the fire, and it showed the sign of the road I lived on. Actually, some members of the faculty had come to the house prepared to defend it, which was very foolish if it had been a massive fire.

06-00:21:12
Holmes: Well, that shows some loyalty on their part.

06-00:21:13
Teitz: The fire got within about fifty yards down the hill. So when I came back, there was a lot of burned brush. But the houses were further up the hill in general.

So personally, it was close. I think that it reinforced, in some sense, the work I had been doing previously on location of facilities. People became very much aware of whether the fire trucks could get there or not. But of course, in fact, I had dropped that work pretty completely by the time I returned. So the combination of administration and of policy work became all-consuming, I think. Yeah. I thought of myself at that point much more as a policy analyst. Though the word had not been invented, or the term had not been invented.

06-00:22:38
Holmes: Well your work does vet that out, which I think we’ll get to. But I was also thinking of facilities as well, because I know one of the issues of that fire was
the gauge of the fire hydrants—like a two-and-a-half inch versus a three-inch. And even in the 1991 fire there in the Oakland hills, they still encountered—the same problem. And I was thinking, actually, of your facilities theory, of not just locations, but also the use of public facilities and making it universal.

Speaking of your work in policy, in 1972, you also helped found the Berkeley Planning Associates.

06-00:23:31 Teitz: Yeah. It was a consulting firm. There were five of us on the faculty. I was the first president, and Fred was the CEO [chief executive officer], Fred Collignon. And the other three [William Alonso, Stephen Cohen, and Chester Mcguire] didn’t do much. But it was a thriving firm for the next twenty years.

06-00:23:54 Holmes: And this was a private firm?

06-00:23:56 Teitz: Yes, yes.

06-00:23:57 Holmes: So it wasn’t associated with Berkeley?

06-00:23:58 Teitz: No. This was a consulting firm. It was outside. We employed students in great numbers, so we were supporting people both in planning and in public health quite a lot. And it wasn’t excessively profitable, but we did some interesting work. And I think that my experience at RAND led naturally to thinking about contracts, for HUD and others.

06-00:24:41 Holmes: Well, I wanted to touch on some of those. One of the first projects, I think, that the firm did was looking at wastewater disposal.

06-00:24:50 Teitz: Yeah. That was a truly crazy project. This actually was an outgrowth of the environmental movement. The idea was that even treated sewage contained heavy metals and other pollutants that were very damaging to the ocean. And the question was how to deal with that. Somebody—I never found out who—came up with the idea that instead of treating the water and throwing it into the ocean, an alternative was to spray it across open land and grow crops that would take up the heavy metals, and allow you to recover them, or to neutralize them in one way or another. What this would have required, basically, was to build a system of giant sewers that ran backwards: instead of downhill, they would run uphill. Nobody was much interested in energy at that moment, although ironically, of course, 1974 was the great energy crunch, and that was the end of that idea.
But in the meantime, the [US Army] Corps of Engineers spent $500,000 doing a feasibility study of what it would take to do this, and find areas out on the hills surrounding the Bay Area. And somebody came up with the notion that there should be a social impact study, and BPA [Berkeley Planning Associates] got the contract, I think it was for $28,000. So I hired a student and Fred’s wife [Joan Collignon], and we came up with the idea of a social impact study. I think it was probably the first one ever done, but I never published it, which was a big mistake. Not a big mistake. The idea was around anyway, probably.

Our strategy was to identify vulnerable groups. The underlying theory was a kind of cascade theory of impacts, which said that whatever impacts hit people who were better off would be displaced onto people worse off, and so on down the line. So if you really wanted to do, on thin resources, a social impact, look at the people at the bottom of the pile. And so we went out and looked for them. And we interviewed people like district nurses—which still existed at that time; I’m not even sure they exist anymore—and welfare folks, and particularly in the areas where this spraying would have gone on. And we discovered a whole hidden population of, I think, Basque shepherders, who were herding sheep on the hills beyond the Bay Area. And also, digging the holes for the pipes would have been the equivalent of another BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit], and BART had already wrecked the downtown Oakland small businesses, which never recovered properly. And it would have done it again. So we interviewed small business owners along the routes of these things.

It was actually a fun study. It was completely implausible, and the great energy crunch ended it.

06-00:29:33
Holmes:

Let’s see. And then in 1974, you also went back, as you would say, to your housing roots. You were a houser in some respects by the time you came back from New York with RAND. And so you led a project looking at HUD and the housing program reform of the [Richard Milhous] Nixon administration.

06-00:29:55
Teitz:

That was a very big, big thing at the time. Fundamentally, the Nixon administration was determined to move away from direct provision of housing—that is, public housing. The economists in general had been waging a long war arguing that pricing was the answer, and that the problem of housing was not one of the house, but of the effective demand, and that one could do everything that public housing did a lot more cheaply and more effectively. I suppose I believed that; I’m not sure I do anymore. But I don’t think it’s as clear cut. But the Nixon changes included a reform of HUD to bring in essentially some form of financial support for low-income people needing housing, rather than direct support of local housing authorities to build public housing.
Public housing was in very bad odor at the time. The towers at Pruitt-Igoe [St. Louis, Missouri] had been blown up, with giant pictures in *Life* magazine and elsewhere—very iconic. And of course, the story that was told wasn’t the real story. It really is that, in fact, the reason for the difficulty in that housing had nothing much to do with the physical design. It had everything to do with the lack of maintenance, and the withdrawal of maintenance money.

So there were two initiatives that were being studied: one on single-family housing, looking at the costs of single-family housing and support by government; and the other on multi-family. And part of that multi-family effort, to begin with, was a look at the costs of supporting multi-family housing programs. We had a small contract. I had a bunch of students out interviewing people around the Bay Area, digging up interesting stuff about non-profit housing.

The other contract was much larger, and was for an evaluation. And this was a time when, coming back from RAND, I was very much involved in the idea of program evaluation. It was very much in the air at the time. Everyone was talking about it. Somehow, you had to evaluate programs rigorously, and then justify them. There was a program called the Housing Assistance Program—the HAP—and we won the HUD contract to evaluate it. And that was a major study, which I had a whole bunch of students doing all kinds of stuff over a substantial period of time.

The outcome of all that: essentially, we were part of a much larger change that was going on at the time in moving away from traditional housing programs. And it seemed as though that was the way that the world would move. And indeed, it is the way the world moved, although with the caveat that, of course, the resources for housing in the process got less, not more. So the net result was probably negative. But it was a key study for BPA. I think it established the organization as a substantial player in the program evaluation world, which it already had in relation to human rehabilitation programs, which Fred was responsible for.

06:00:36:04
Holmes: This work seemed to signal that your focus really became more honed in on public policy during this time.

06:00:36:15
Teitz: Yes, absolutely.

06:00:36:15
Holmes: I had two questions in regards to these major studies. First of all, what was the scope? Were you looking at the national level, or was BPA focusing on the regional?
Teitz: No, we were looking at the national level?

Holmes: At the national level?

Teitz: Yeah. Offhand, I haven’t gotten any of the reports to hand. They are all in storage still, somewhere. We looked at places that had housing assistance plans, which were part of the law’s provision for the delivery of money in new ways. And we looked at them at different places around the country, as I recall. The whole thing is a bit hazy at this point.

Holmes: I imagine, too, that these studies included analysis on the impact of the economy? By this time, in the early 1970s, the downturn of the economy was having a big impact, and the economy would downturn even more by later in the decade.

Teitz: I think that they weren’t much affected by it. Certainly, there were issues in government funding.

Holmes: But in regards to looking at housing—

Teitz: But BPA survived, and there were other sources.

Holmes: Sure, no. But what I was also trying to get at, too, is looking at housing during the recession. Did that come across in your study as well, of looking at were people being priced out because of inflation of their homes?

Teitz: Oh, it was the era of Prop 13 [California Proposition 13].

Holmes: Prop 13 in 1978, right? Did you touch on that in the study?

Teitz: No. I didn’t. I was acutely aware of it, of course. But I think that to some extent, we were a bit insulated. You know: you are in the university; the university rolls on. There was a lot of pain. It was the first year of budget cuts sort of ever—or if not “ever,” for a long time. But we were intensely involved in what we were doing. You tend to put your head down.

Holmes: That’s understandable. I wanted to also discuss some further lines of research and public policy work that you were initiating outside of BPA. One of the
projects I was thinking of is—well, at least two projects: one on housing, for

Teitz: Yeah. Ken Phillips was a very interesting guy. He was a lawyer who was
associated with the [National] Housing Law Project at Berkeley. These
projects were established statutorily as part of, I guess, the War on Poverty.
And they had been doing all sorts of things. Ken and I got together because he
had been suing to force cities to enforce their housing codes, which was
exactly what I had been studying in New York. And his conclusion was that it
was a losing proposition because you pushed the city to enforce the code,
which meant that landlords had to spend money, which meant they had to
raise the rent, which meant that people were pushed out. So essentially, it was
a no-win situation, and we were looking for ways to do something else.

There is an obscure provision in the law—there was; I have no idea if it’s still
there—called 223(f) [National Housing Act Section 207/223(f)] that enabled
the support for multi-family housing. Right now, I don’t remember the exact
details of how the program worked, but essentially, we were trying very hard
to interest people in the idea of doing projects under 223(f). In effect, we were
trying to find developers who would take advantage of this, because Ken was
by this point convinced that you couldn’t just enforce building and housing
codes—you had to build new housing, which has always been the dilemma in
the housing world. If you open the New York Times on any given day of the
week, chances are in the last four pages, there will be a story about one or the
other of those in New York City.

So we actually spent a lot of time on it. And it was a kind of speculative
venture on our part. Ken was convinced that this was possible. And he was an
energetic and very decent guy. He died a few years ago. But in the end, I don’t
think we ever could get a 223(f) project built. It’s one of those things. If you
do policy research, you have to make choices, and you are just like a
developer: you invest your energy and time, and money, in an idea. And
sometimes, it doesn’t work. On the other hand, I was always ready to move on
to the next idea.

With Ken, it turned out to be a project on mortgage foreclosure—this time
more closely with the Housing Law Project—in which we studied the
foreclosure practices in different states: those having judicial foreclosure
versus those having administrative foreclosure, of which California is the
latter, and Illinois is the classic case of the former. Judicial foreclosure is
much slower, much more difficult. And the argument revolves around the
question of time and cost, and whether you are actually better off having a
shorter foreclosure process that maybe is harder on people, but actually allows
the market to work and doesn’t tie it up in knots, as opposed to a longer, more
difficult and complex process. We gathered a lot of data and analyzed it, and looked at the actual costs of foreclosure processes.

06-00:45:41
Holmes: What are some of the results that you remember from that study? I mean, seeing that that very study now seems to be—you know, if we look at back in this last decade—pretty relevant in some ways.

06-00:45:54
Teitz: I think it’s an example of the fact that I was often interested in things that were about a decade ahead of their time [laughs] more than anything else.

06-00:46:05
Holmes: [laughs] You’re a pioneer.

06-00:46:07
Teitz: Well, not really. I guess it’s still true, even if it takes a while for anybody else to come along.

But yes, it became a big issue, and still is a big issue, especially since the US is so wedded to the idea of single-family home ownership, which may not be the greatest idea in the world, but it attracts people a lot. And understandably so. I think that the Housing Law Project probably pursued it. Dave [David M.] Madway, who was a forceful presence in the project, in the Housing Law Project, certainly would have taken it wherever it could go. But I had moved on after we actually did the work.

06-00:46:26
Holmes: You were mentioning that if we look at states and how they pursue foreclosures, one of the arguments you were just making is that in, say, the Illinois case, if it’s a faster process—

06-00:47:45
Teitz: It’s slower. Much slower.

06-00:47:46
Holmes: It’s slower, and it’s faster, then, in California?

06-00:47:49
Teitz: It’s slower than California, because it’s a judicial process. Yeah.

06-00:47:55
Holmes: So, looking at the judicial aspect of foreclosures—in that process, you were saying that it was bad because it didn’t allow the market to recover and actually work. And when you are thinking of housing during this time and the rise of, say, Marxist thought, was that kind of neoclassical interpretation of looking at foreclosures and relying on the market? Was there also pushback within some sectors within the Marxist view of we need to stop relying on markets?
Well, people were arguing that all the time, yeah. It was a standard debate around the department. I didn’t take a whole lot of notice of it. I was aware that it was there. I respected people’s right to hold those views. Fundamentally, I’ve always been suspicious of single-factor theories, or of theories that have one single, simple explanation. They too often lead to big trouble when applied in the policy world. On the other hand, you have to have an idea in order to do anything, so you can’t just say nothing’s relevant. Markets have terrible aspects and consequences, and you see it all the time, even as they actually generate enormous wealth and raise people’s living standards. That’s certainly been true of the last 30 years, in astonishing degree, with China. An amazing transformation.

Indeed. And then—

So I’m not a market fanatic, but I am not a market skeptic.

Where would you position yourself? Somewhere in the middle, pragmatically?

Yeah. Yeah. I’m probably a bit more pragmatic. But I love theory—

You also initiated a project around this same time with the [New Jersey] Meadowlands development, and this seems to be—

Oh, that was a silly little thing.

Oh, was it?

Yeah. You know, when you have a consulting company, stuff comes up, and HUD at that moment—I think it must have been during the [James Earl] Carter regime—was very interested in doing good. And they had a provision—again, it was evaluation—whereby the impacts of public subsidy could be questioned. And certainly, I was very aware of the dangers of public subsidy. There is nothing like it for creating opportunities for sharp characters to do well, who shall be nameless. [laughs] And one of the ways in which public money was being used was essentially in the name of redevelopment, or economic development, which by this point had become a major interest of mine. Much of the housing work was sort of on the side. I wasn’t so deeply intellectually interested in housing at that point, but I had been teaching the first classes in economic development in planning. And under the rubric of
economic development, a lot of money was being pushed out that was being picked up by shopping center developers.

We did two pieces: one in Palm Desert [California]; and one in the Meadowlands, in New Jersey. One with an extremely bright student whose name escapes me for the moment, [Marc Weiss] and the other with David [E.] Dowall, who had joined our faculty as an economist, as a land economist. And what we were out to discover or to demonstrate—or to find out, I guess—is whether these things were justified in terms of their impact on employment and income in the area. And needless to say, subsidizing shopping centers is not a great way to do economic development. It doesn’t take any major analysis to show that. But we would fly in, interview a lot of people in a hurry, and then do a report saying, “Stop this nonsense,” and fly out.

06-00:54:31
Holmes: Was this also part of your studies of the Urban Development Action Grants at the same time?

06-00:54:36
Teitz: Yes. The so-called “UDAGs [Urban Development Action Grants].” Yeah. I’m sorry—I forgot. Yes. Essentially, every time there was a UDAG, HUD would—or could—send a team to see whether the expenditure was effectively justified.

06-00:55:02
Holmes: Or not? Yeah.

06-00:55:03
Teitz: Or what the impacts would be. And it was one of those programs, which are regrettably frequent, for which there is no rational justification whatsoever. Or it could be, if they found the right projects. But Oakland got a major hotel out of it that never did very well. It’s still there. It was used to build a lot of hotels, and shopping centers. In that era, I think things were tough enough that people were scratching around looking for anything they could get. And for local governments, the thought of the tax revenues, the real estate taxes, was very powerful. So they were very supportive of it.

But in fact, all of these things—perhaps not Oakland’s hotel, but certainly the shopping centers—would have been built whether or not the money was forthcoming. The private sector was perfectly capable of doing it, and it knew the developers—of whom I knew a few—were absolutely capable of figuring out whether they were going to make money or not on a shopping center. Which they were, and did. So public money was thrown away.

06-00:56:52
Holmes: Well, in that same sense, it seems—
Large wars.

[laughs] Well, speaking of economic development, your research also began to look at the growth of small business at the same time. And again, this in the context of the late 1970s, early 1980s, which was in the midst of a massive recession.

Yeah. And small business was being touted as a part of the response. For several years, I was a member of an advisory committee to the small business effort in the East Bay [San Francisco, California], and religiously attended all the meetings, and did some research on it.

Somewhere around that time—although I am not sure it’s anywhere in there—I was very interested in where jobs actually came from. And I had managed to get hold of a very big data set—the first time I think anyone actually used it—out of the Economic Development Department at the state level. And with one student, Amy [K.] Glasmeier—she was spinning tapes up at the Lawrence Lab [Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory], which was the only place with a computer where it would work. And we basically were trying to identify which businesses were generating employment.

And we wrote a working paper out of that—which, again, I never published—that showed that, basically, small business is all business. If you just count businesses, it’s like 90-plus percent of all businesses fall under the rubric of “small,” but that employment growth is generated by growers. And this is not rocket science. Obviously, it’s generated by growers—but who are the growers? Does throwing money at small businesses through things like enterprise zones—which were invented somewhere around that time by my friend and colleague Peter [Geoffrey] Hall, who became Sir Peter Hall, and became very popular with local governments. Basically, it was an attempt to provide for small businesses—or any businesses—within areas of economic deprivation enough support for them to be employing people locally. So it actually had a twofold intent: one, to increase the amount of businesses; and secondly, to have those businesses locate adjacent to populations that were in need of employment. It was a very attractive proposition, and like many attractive deals, it had a few flaws, I’m afraid.

Well, you also mentioned that you started teaching economic development, and I was interested, again, to see how your work—looking at studying small businesses, and analyzing your UDAG grants, and then also teaching classes on economic development—how your views and work contrasted or compared to Marxist thought in the field at that time.
Teitz: Well, I wrote one paper about urban economics at that time. It retains readership amazingly well, actually. But my view of the process was, as usual, a bit less draconian than the Marxist view. I regarded the urban realm, as it were, as a sphere in which, essentially, entrepreneurs and owners of capital were looking for investment possibilities. And they would scan across it, see what was possible, and do it. And the task of economic development within a capitalist society was to find ways in which that process would work more effectively, preferably without doing enormous damage to communities. That was the great failure of urban renewal, which essentially had the same intent, as well as its slum clearance roots that go way back in planning.

So long as we are operating in a capitalist society, it seemed to me that public policy would be well served by trying to improve or to accelerate the rate at which investment occurs, especially in cities where unemployment was severe, and you had to look for ways to do that—bearing in mind that this is coming up to 1980 and the [Paul Adolph] Volcker [Jr.] treatment, and the end of the inflationary period. People were casting around for whatever they could find. The irony, of course, is that they are still casting around in many of the same ways. People were promoting stadiums then, and they are promoting them now, and mayors then and now are equally transfixed by the idea of a football team as being vital to their community’s survival. Never been entirely clear to me that that’s the case, and of course, subsequently, there have been enough economics studies—well-done studies—to show that it isn’t.

So economic development is a realm that looks for nostrums—or “nostra,” I guess. [laughs] Not really, no. “Nostrums.” And the difficulty in it is to stay away from that, to avoid that, and to tell some sort of truth, but at the same time, to actually illuminate the world, and if possible, to find ways to enhance the development process. Insofar as that is the answer. And in a resolutely capitalist society, it’s hard to see many answers outside that. Although, God knows, Americans have been trying since, I guess, probably the late 18th century to find them, in the utopian movements, which is another interest of mine.

So economic development was an important thing to do at the time, but it was a field that had a fragile basis. And I was trying to improve it within the limits of my ability.

Holmes: It’s interesting if we think that right across the [San Francisco-Oakland Bay] bridge, right across the bay, we look at San Francisco during this same time and there is actually a very vibrant anti-growth movement going on. I wanted to get your thoughts on that, because here you are studying, in a very pragmatic way, avenues of growth, of economic development, and then here you have a vibrant center of California business in San Francisco—which I like
to call the center of the Corporate West, in many respects. What were your thoughts on that?

06-01:07:52

Teitz: I thought they were crazy. I certainly supported the Save the Bay movement. And just to revert for a second, our department was engaged in that. Mel [Mellier G.] Scott [Jr.] did this wonderful slideshow that was shown to people all over the Bay Area, including one slide I’ll never forget, which showed Emeryville [California] eating the bay. It was like a wolf’s head [laughs] in the fill.

06-01:08:32

Holmes: Were these the slides that were generated from the Corps of Army Engineers, in their study of what they predicted the bay would look like?

06-01:08:40

Teitz: No. They were air photos. I think Mel or others flew around the bay taking photographs of the fill. That’s by the way.

06-01:08:56

Holmes: Oh, I like the “by the way.” Thank you.

06-01:08:57

Teitz: But coming back to San Francisco, by then, that was all settled. It’s never all settled, but for the moment. The trouble with stopping things is that you stop them, but you never know when they’ll start again. And once they are gone, they are gone. Although the quixotic idea of recovering Hetch Hetchy Valley I think is certainly out there. Maybe in 150 years’ time.

But San Francisco was not in particularly great shape at the time. I wasn’t closely following what was going on. I was very much aware of the downtown limitation movement. And Allan [B.] Jacobs, I think—I have forgotten what years, but he was the city planning director. And when Jack Kent retired, I was very much in favor of bringing Allan Jacobs into the department as a professor. I think that was a very good move, actually. Mel Webber was not in favor of it, and I think Mel Webber would have liked to have gotten the department completely out of physical planning at that time, which would have been a very bad move.

So I wasn’t paying a whole lot of attention to San Francisco. I was much more focused on Oakland.

06-01:10:06

Holmes: Were there other discussions in the department about these different models that you see being taken up in Berkeley, in Oakland, and then San Francisco? Where the former two cities are looking at growth, and here San Francisco wants to really stop that type of development? Or at least proceed much more cautiously?
Teitz: Well, Oakland was stopping development relentlessly, mainly because of its own very peculiar politics. That Oakland had been so scarred by urban renewal, and so affected by the rise of black consciousness, and by the Model Cities Program, and by the whole community development movement of the [Lyndon Baines] Johnson era that effectively, development in Oakland was more or less impossible. And it still suffers from it. There are blocking coalitions in Oakland that are still, even now, quite powerful. They can cause tremendous trouble. In those years, they were basically holding out their hands and insisting on being paid off. It was the era of Black Power, of Huey Newton.

Holmes: Of the Black Panthers. Yeah.

Teitz: And the Black Panthers, and the whole thing. And that made Oakland an extremely difficult place to do business, and particularly to invest.

If you want to see what Oakland could have had, look at Emeryville. Emeryville in those years was an industrial city. It was like a small version of South San Francisco. It had the giant paint sign: “Sherwin Williams covers the world,” I think it was? [“We Cover the Earth.”] And the paint would drip down across the sign. I used to take my economic development class down there on a field trip to a plant where they made rebar. They melted steel and rolled it out, and we would stand there watching these giant gas furnaces. Yeah—it was real industry. There was the paint factory, the rebar steel—and it’s not much steel, but it’s steel. And the kids loved it. I loved it, too. I thought, this is great. I took them to the new NUMMI [New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc.] plant, and we got out there to see what actual economies looked like. I believed in that.

But Emeryville essentially turned itself around. And one of the reasons I would take the class down there was that we would be given a tour by their chief economic development officer. They fortunately had very few people, which was the intent in the first place, to ensure that property taxes would never go up on the businesses. So it was a business enclave. In fact, it was an enterprise zone, so to speak—private, municipal. But subsequently, Emeryville converted itself into a service-based economy with some high tech, particularly the graphics company—

Farrell: Pixar.

Teitz: Pardon?
Pixar. right. Which is where my wife used to take her classes. [laughs] To see what real design is all about.

So Emeryville could have been a wonderful model for West Oakland. But West Oakland had a population that was so traumatized and so distrustful that it would never permit anything much to happen at all. And to a substantial degree, it’s still the case. So next to the West Oakland BART station is this giant post office facility that actually produces or generates jobs for a lot of people, which is a good thing, but is located in probably the worst possible place you could put it in terms of economic development. West Oakland could have been the core of a truly wonderful development for Oakland, I think. Whether the African-American population would have benefited or not is very questionable. But indirectly, the tax base of the city would have been much better.

It’s interesting if we look at the cases you were describing, of West Oakland. What we have is almost a merger of economic development with social policies planning—both of those kind of problems colliding, it seems.

Yes. Absolutely. And we were well aware of it. But the people interested in community were very distrustful of anything to do with economics. So it was hard to make any real bridge there.

Speaking of economic development, we talked about different thoughts and the different hurdles to this. But also during this time of the 1970s we have the hurdle of environmental policy. That comes out of what some like to call the “environmental decade.”

Yeah. It was fantastic.

These were rolled out by the Nixon administration and others. How did you see this playing out with development? Because today, if you talk to planners in San Francisco, even though they are in favor of environmental policy, on the other hand, they also keenly identify some of the hurdles, or additional hurdles, that environmental policies can create for development.

Yeah. Well, simpler times. I think we were perfectly capable of holding contradictory ideas simultaneously. I was never convinced by much of the
arguments about the negative effects of environmental policy. And history suggests that they are certainly a lot less than anybody might have thought. At the same time, I was convinced that you couldn’t raise people’s incomes unless you had employment, and you couldn’t have employment in a capitalist society except with private sector growth. It’s not rocket science.

Holmes: Yeah. And if you even look at BCDC, the name itself has “conservation” “and development” both in the title, which was important.

Teitz: Yeah. It is interesting. I think they put the “development” in—I don’t know why. I have never talked to anybody about that. It would be interesting. I should have asked Mike [Ira Michael] Heyman\(^\text{18}\) a long time ago.

Holmes: Well, I know that both Mel [Melvin B.] Lane and Joe Bodovitz talk about that. They would point to both to remind both sides of a debate that, hey, we have to have some kind of compromise. You can’t ruin the bay, but on the other side, we have an economy here that without that, we are not going to be here anyway, so—

Teitz: You can’t shut everything out. Although for a while there was a pretty strong contingent in San Francisco that was willing to do just that. And actually, the cap on development still influences development in the city. The building of this colossal building has actually mopped up the floor space for a considerable part of the annual allocations for some years. So rather than building a lot of buildings, we just have one giant building. I guess ultimately, you could have one super building that take—

Holmes: Will house everything.

Teitz: House everything.

Holmes: Well, speaking of San Francisco, during this time, —I guess on a more personal level—you move from the East Bay to the city, I believe, in 1980.

Teitz: Yes.

\(^{18}\) Chancellor at the University of California, Berkeley.
Holmes: Can you talk a little bit about that? I think in one of your notes, you mentioned the purchase price was around $225,000, which I think most readers today may have to be sitting down to realize that you could buy a house in San Francisco for that.

Teitz: Right. Well, considering the purchase price of the house in Berkeley was, I think, $29,700—

Holmes: [laughs] It was probably staggering for you, then, right?

Teitz: Yeah. So it was a lot more. But I was a lot better off. I had saved some money at RAND. I was paid very well.

Holmes: What inspired you to make the move?

Teitz: Personal life. My marriage with Ruth [V. Groves] broke up, and she was deeply involved in the counterculture in Berkeley. She went off to India at one point with the—who were they? There was that particular guru who had all the Rolls-Royces, as I recall. I have forgotten his name.

Holmes: With the Rolls-Royces? Yeah. There was Allen Ginsberg and Timothy Leary, but—

Teitz: Anyway. And we had a daughter [Alexandra Teitz], so there was a lot of juggling going on. When we broke up, I insisted that she buy a house, which kind of pinned her down in Berkeley, anyway. And at that time, I was seeing people. It was the 1970s. Sexual mores were very different, I think, than now. Interesting. Although maybe not, depending on the age group. Well, I think AIDS [Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome] taught everybody something rather profound.

I actually got married again, to Anne Cohn, who is a very remarkable woman. She was a student doing her PhD in public health who took courses in planning. And we got married. We didn’t stay married very long, though. It was not a good idea. The break-up with Ruth, for me, was very traumatic, and I saw a psychiatrist for a while. He said, “Don’t do it,” and he was right. And then I was living with a brilliant woman who was actually teaching at Stanford [University]. We decided to live together, and since she was teaching at Stanford, it seemed like a good idea to live in San Francisco. So she
searched around and found this house in the Noe Valley area, and we just moved. And again, kind of a decision based on circumstances.

Holmes: So the move to San Francisco was—

Teitz: Her name was Lyna [Wiggins]. Yeah.

Holmes: Right. And it seems the move to San Francisco was part of a larger kind of transition in your own life.

Teitz: Oh, my life was in total turmoil. I was working like crazy and doing all this stuff, but at the same time, it was a mess. Somehow, the surprising thing is that, in retrospect, I was working just as hard, but, obviously, doing other things.

Holmes: You’ve mentioned in our earlier conversations of struggling to find balance, which is largely the case in a lot of professions, but certainly among academics—trying to strike that balance between personal life and work. And especially when your work consumes you—that it’s actually your passion and it’s not just a job that you clock in and out of—

Teitz: No. I’ve never had the concept of a “job.” Even as a kid, I didn’t have it.

Holmes: During this time of seeing a therapist and going through this kind of turmoil, did you find some kind of balance between the two? Did it help you also to maybe develop tools to strike that balance?

Teitz: I don’t know. I guess I did what I’ve always done, which is to keep going. We used to run the Bay to Breakers; for a while, we had a group in the department of students. We called ourselves the “DCRP [Department of City and Regional Planning] Striders,” and we had a motto, which was we just keep going, we never stop; no matter how slow we go, we just keep going.

Holmes: Just keep plowing forward?

Teitz: You keep going. Hopefully forward. These days, climbing the hills, I am not sure I am going forward.
Did living in the bay—and also making that move to San Francisco—did it help shape your thinking more about regionalism and place, as a planner?

That’s an interesting question. Not consciously. I’m not conscious of it. I’ve never given up my interest in regionalism. It kind of lurks, so that when the big effort at whatever bay vision it was going on, I was very much aware of it, although I didn’t participate in it. Mike Heyman was very much involved. Like all such efforts, it more or less collapsed—all such efforts so far, anyway.

Recently—I may have mentioned this; did I actually talk about the time when I was visited by a Russian professor?

No? Sometime probably in the early 1970s, I was visited by a Russian professor. It was just at the time when things were beginning to open up. And we went across the road to have coffee, as we always did—you know, it was the place to go. And she said, [imitating Russian accent] “Of course, there is no regional planning in America.” I’m like, oh? I said, “Well, when you came in from the airport, was the ride okay?” And she said, “Yes. The freeway is good.” Of course, in those days, it was good. “And did the electricity work in the hotel?” “Yeah.” “And the water ran?” “Yes, yes. Very good.” I said, “Well, all of those are regional, and the way that we do regional in America, for better or worse—it is often for worse—is through a series of silos, where the agencies and entities are set up that do their provision of services—and they may be private, like PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric Company], or public, like the state highway department—but it gets done. And that leaves local government free to control land use, and therefore, to protect their residents’ real estate values.” And she sort of acknowledged that.

But that’s the way I’ve thought about regional planning in America for a long time. And every so often, when something occurs that looks like it’s interesting, I get excited about it. Right now, there is only one city in America that has anything like what I would call regional planning, which is Portland [Oregon], which has an elected regional assembly and an urban growth boundary with teeth. Although the requirement for 20 years’ supply of land
within the growth boundary is an issue, because what it does is it locks things up and it raises the price of housing quite substantially. So Portland is a very expensive city, which is a shame. And I don’t know if there is really a way around that or not.

So I would say that moving to San Francisco, driving over the bridge that many times, I certainly always liked looking out at the view. [laughs] And I watched the high rises rising, although they were quiescent for a while. But it hasn’t really changed my interest in any profound way. It stays there, and comes and goes.

06-01:34:43
Holmes:
I wanted to talk a little bit more about your personal life during this era. After the move, you then met Mary [C. Comerio] in 1983.

06-01:34:56
Teitz:
Yes. Yeah.

06-01:34:57
Holmes:
Can you talk a little bit about that? How did you meet? Were you colleagues before, or—?

06-01:35:01
Teitz:
Well, I knew who she was. She was in the architecture department, and had come in order to do, quote, “community architecture.” She had this interesting mixture of a very considerable professional background, as she has designed many houses and other buildings. She had a firm of her own in St. Louis [Missouri]. So I knew about her. I didn’t really know her. She was very close friends with Janice [E.] Perlman, who was on our faculty; was the first woman hired who I had effectively hired, by coup de main.

And there was an event going on in Los Angeles that we were both going to. I guess we either flew down together—I mean, she was with Janice, but we sat together or something. We got to know each other, and everything kind of took off from there. We didn’t marry, but we lived together for a long time, until Catherine [Teitz] came along. And as she always says, I insisted on getting married. But there is nothing very dramatic about it. It was a weekend in Los Angeles at an official function. It may have been Harvey [S.] Perloff’s retirement. Perloff was a great planner. He had been a faculty member at the famous University of Chicago planning program after a career in the New Deal, and he was the first dean of the school of architecture and planning [Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning] at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles]. We used to have a lot of interaction. We would have joint meetings of the faculty between Berkeley and UCLA. For quite a few years, we would all troop up or down and sit around trying to talk to each other. And usually, it was a case of listening to whichever faculty member had the biggest ego holding court. And usually, that was John Friedmann. [laughs]
So I think it was Harvey’s retirement party, maybe. Or retirement event. It’s possible, anyway.

Holmes: And what year did you and Mary eventually get married?

Teitz: Sorry?

Holmes: What year did you and Mary eventually get married?

Teitz: Oh, I guess 1992. So we were living together, I think, for close to ten years. Yeah. But I had the house in San Francisco. And it was, you know, the way these things are. A rocky process.

Holmes: During the same time, you also were very much involved with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning [Inc.]. You were elected president in 1980, and served as president from 1981 to ’83.

Teitz: You actually had a four-year term. You were president-elect for a year, president for two years, and past-president for a year. So you were engaged in the process.

That was a very interesting thing. It came a bit out of the blue. Several faculty approached me asking me to run for the presidency of the organization. I had never actually been to one of the meetings. It had existed for quite a few years, but it was an adjunct to the American Planning Association—or in those days, it was called the AIP: the American Institute of Planners. The American Institute of Planners had its meeting in the fall, and ASPO—the American Society of Planning Officials, which was the organization of professional planners—met in the spring. ASPO and AIP decided to merge, and they decided that their meeting would be in the spring, and they would drop the fall meeting. And that actually provided a kind of opening and a rationale, although the whole thing had been building, I think.

So I had let my name be put up, and I was elected, I think, quite strongly. The previous president, or the sitting president at the time, was a terrific guy. Oh, I have him written down on a piece of paper that I don’t have with me. I’ll fill that in. [Ed McLure] And he and Jay [Jayanta] Chatterjee, who was the dean, I think, at the University of Cincinnati, had been talking about taking ACSP [Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning] separate. So ACSP was an existing organization, but a typical meeting consisted of maybe an afternoon or two at the AIP meeting, sparsely attended, and there had been presidents, but it was as an organization essentially powerless.
At the AIP meeting in the year I was elected, we decided we were going to go separate. So this was a major decision, and we had quite clearly in mind the idea that we wanted to reinforce the academic strength of planning schools in America. Essentially, planners, if they gave papers at AIP, they were ignored. And if they gave papers at Regional Science or at the economist meetings, which very few did, they were regarded as lesser beings. So our sense was that it was time for an academic organization to exist in a real sense, and that was what we did. It was a lot of work, and we held our first meeting, I think, the following year, at the University of DC [District of Columbia], an African-American, historically black— an HBCU [historically black college or university], right? Yes. Historically black campus. They had a hotel school, so we had it in their hotel, and we got a hundred people. We thought we had hit the jackpot. Unbelievable. We had a full program of papers, and it felt like a real meeting. Within five years, we had 700 people.

So I regard that as a very important thing to do in terms of the field of planning. It was a joint achievement. I think my being president carried the schools that might well have voted against it. Because the decision to hold a separate meeting came down to a ballot of the schools, and many of the top schools were very worried about the idea of sort of expanding the franchise. And that became doubly so when we decided that we would improve what was, at that point, a very minimal accreditation process, and go for a real accreditation process, with all the legal stuff that is entailed. So we set up the Planning Accreditation Board. Larry Susskind and Carl Goldschmidt were critical to that.

06-01:46:30
Holmes: Nice. That’s great.

06-01:46:35
Teitz: It was an amazingly good group of people who put it all together, I must say. Very collaborative. And it’s carried on. It’s still going. It gets 800 to 1,000 people now. People come from other parts of the world to go to the meetings. Young faculty give papers. Some are terrible. They still haven’t learned the fundamental lessons of giving papers, but that’s the way it goes. They read their slides. But all together, I think it probably helped the field a lot, in university terms. And particularly, what we wanted to do was to raise the bar at the lesser schools by having accreditation requirements that would get the attention of the college presidents.

So it’s a piece of institution building. I’ve always been an institutionalist, from a long way back. So I always believe that a good department requires people to participate, and they have to give something back to it. Not always true, but that’s life.
Holmes: Well, I think that’s probably a good place for us to stop today.

Teitz: Okay.

Holmes: All right. Thanks so much, Mike.
Holmes: All right. This is Todd Holmes with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. I’m sitting down once again with Mike Teitz. Today’s date is May 4, 2017. This is our seventh session, and we are here in the beautiful city of San Francisco in the office of the Public Policy Institute of California. Mike, thanks again for joining me. We were talking about, the last time we met, the early part of the 1980s as well as catching up on the 1970s, and I wanted to continue into the 1980s and 1990s today and maybe start with some of the lines of research in the mid- to late-1980s that you were undertaking. One of the projects was in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Arabia [Arriyadh] Development Authority, where you served as an advisor, not a contractor, for a senior official. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Teitz: Yeah. This was a rather strange—how shall I put it—a somewhat strange arrangement. I was part of a group of anywhere from four to six people, sometimes more, who were advisors to Mohammed al-Sheikh, who was the president of the Riyadh Development Authority, RDA. Actually, it’s the Arriyadh Development Authority, or ADA, depending on which spelling you use. Mohammed was a very interesting—is a very interesting man. I haven’t seen him for quite a while. He’s a descendent of the al-Sheikh family, which—the original al-Sheikh was the founder of Wahhabite Islam. So the al-Sheikh family is extremely prominent in Saudi Arabia. The family has always been involved in government. His father, his brother, his uncle were all ministers, and in due course Mohammed became a minister, too. He had taken a PhD at Berkeley in engineering, so he was a good engineer, and had worked with Adib Kanafani, who is on the faculty in engineering, largely in transportation. And Adib, who himself is a very interesting person—he’s a Palestinian by origin—had somehow, I don’t know exactly how, come to know Mohammed as his student, which is odd in a way, because they’re almost comparable in age.

Mohammed, when he’d gone back to Saudi Arabia and was appointed as president of the ADA, convened Adib and a group of people to be his advisors. The group was really a wonderful group. It included Mel Webber, who was on the planning faculty and then, I think, extremely important in planning; Ralph Gakenheimer, who did transportation at MIT; Gary Hack, who was at MIT and then became dean at Penn, dean of the School of Architecture and Planning; and Afif Kanafani, who was Adib’s brother, was an independent consultant. And what we would do, somewhat to my wife Mary’s consternation over the years, we would trip off to Saudi Arabia three or four times a year for up to ten days and simply be there with Muhammad discussing whatever he was doing and helping in a variety of ways. We used
to stay and meet in a kind of amazing building in the Diplomatic Quarter. The Diplomatic Quarter was a totally constructed entity built by the ADA under orders of the king, very expensive. The building we were in was designed as the diplomatic club. However, once the diplomats found that they couldn’t have alcohol in it, none would join, so they held their events in the various missions, which are all scattered around inside this thing, which was surrounded, actually, by a giant berm, what amounted to a wall. There had been a big fight about that. Mohammed had advocated not, but the power structure advocated for it. There were obviously gaps with roads running through it, but it was possible to seal it off quite carefully, and I think, interestingly, the diplomats themselves really wanted it sealed off because inside it they could wear shorts. Women could ride bicycles if it had been totally sealed.

Holmes: Oh, interesting.

Teitz: As it wasn’t totally sealed, there was a certain amount of uncertainty. We used to bike around the top of the berm regularly at night. Nights in Saudi Arabia are very hot, especially in summer, but cooler than the days. We met as a group, and the group there—Gary Hack was a rather later addition—we met as a group in the greenhouses of the Diplomatic Quarter, which had a large gardening staff because it was all beautifully landscaped and contained a number of little public parks, which Mohammed had insisted on, and over much debate, apparently, were opened to the public or certain people of the public, that is, of Saudis to come, and they used to come on beautiful evenings and sit in the parks in this very careful and sensitive arrangement. Saudi Arabia is an extraordinary country in almost every way, not least because it’s a classic example of what I would describe as a rentier economy. And what I mean by that, it’s a term, I think, not invented but used in this context by a writer whose name [Hossein Mahdavy] escapes me at this moment to describe a society in which, unlike most societies, where wealth is created at the bottom and flows up. People work. Then, people make money off that. They pay taxes. They support a government. In a rentier economy, it works the other way around. The government owns a resource, which in 19th-century economics made it a rentier, living off unearned income, and the resources, the money then trickles down through the rest of the population. And that creates a society that in most ways is so profoundly different from what we see in, quote, “normal” economies that all sorts of strange behaviors ensue.

Holmes: Can you give us some examples of that?

Teitz: Yeah. I think upwards of 60 percent of Saudis are employed by the government. Think about that. Not too many countries, maybe the Soviet
Union—they have a lot in common. There are many other examples I could think of. I recall going into a government office one day. We used to go in and talk to ministers and senior officials, and we walked in past the desk, and there was a rather distinguished-looking gentleman sitting there, wearing his thawb and his keffiyeh. And he sat there like this with his hands clasped on the table in front of him, looking ahead, and I thought, “Hmm.” And we sat waiting to go in a few minutes. We went in, and we had our conversation, whatever it was, meeting. We walked out, and he’s still sitting there exactly like that, the same. And I said to somebody, “Well, what does he do?” And they said, “He sits there, and he comes in at a certain hour, and he sits for so long, and then he leaves, and that's his job.” And I would be grossly unfair to Saudis if I claimed that that was the experience of most; in fact, not, although there are a lot of positions that are really sinecures.

In the ADA, under Mohammed’s influence, he had recruited a group of young engineers who were very lively, very competent, and mostly trained abroad, and they were working with engineers and planners from largely Australia, but also from Britain and the US, and they had essentially built the Diplomatic Quarter. They built the headquarters for the Gulf Cooperation Council, the GCC. They built the new, royal palace, but really a public palace for the king on the square in central Riyadh, where the king would come once or twice a year in order to hold some public event, largely which consisted of him sitting, and then notables sitting in the classic mode around. I remember being in that building before it was opened and sitting in the king’s chair—everybody sort of—

07-00:13:23
Holmes: Oh, really?

07-00:13:25
Teitz: Luckily, I don’t think anybody noticed that mattered. So that was a lively group, and they worked hard, and Mohammed pushed hard for many things. He was really a reformer but within the constraints of Saudi society and particularly of his status. As I said, we used to meet at night in the greenhouse. He had an office in the greenhouses, and we would drink tea and discuss what needed to be discussed. They were very lengthy conversations that went on quite late. And then, we would go out and have shawarmas at a local joint with—it was very nice to do in the hot nights. Part of his agenda in trying to improve things was twofold. One was to improve the planning of Riyadh, which was a very difficult task because the city government was difficult to move, and the state of the information and data on things like landholdings was pretty abysmal. Nonetheless, he worked hard at it. He also wanted ADA to be a source of progressive thinking, and one of the things that we would do is to go and actually look at the work that consultants were doing and talk with them. Also I tried to work with young Saudis, which was a very frustrating proposition. In all the time I was there, I never managed, I think, to
get a Saudi staffer to write anything. It was virtually impossible. The
interesting thing is, if we had had voice-activated, I might have been able to,
because this was a society—this still was a society that operated on
conversation.

We also supervised, in my case, one major project, which is probably the first
project looking at diversification in Saudi Arabia, trying to enhance the local
economy and to provide at least some offset in terms of employment to the
pervasive effect of oil and oil money. Another example of how this worked
was that one of those sources of lucrative income for princes was the giving of
rights to car dealerships, for example. So, once again, something you think of
as a part of normal commerce was, in fact, inverted. You got the right to
import Mercedes or the right to import anything, Fords, Chevys, whatever.
The ADA did a lot of public works, and we were acutely aware of the
problems of that. I think it was symbolized for me probably almost the first
time I arrived there. One always seemed to arrive in the middle of the night,
very comfortably. They always insisted that we fly first class. I often inquired
about trading it in for business and taking the difference, but no, and they paid
us, but not fabulously. They paid us well for the time. I always insisted that I
get my check before I left because I never wanted to be on the hoo
k for
anything to do with the Saudi government bureaucracy, and they were very
good about it. Sometimes, they would deliver it to the airport waiting lounge.

07-00:19:01
Holmes: Oh, wow. That’s nice.

07-00:19:02
Teitz: But it always came. It was a very interesting experience overall. It put my
daughter through college, which was important. I was a youngish—not young,
but middle—still a youngish professor. We weren’t paid that well, not as well
paid as senior professors are now, I think, and the great perk of the whole
thing was to travel with Mohammed, because every so often he would just
decide to get up and go somewhere. So one visit, “Oh, we’re going to go to—
” what is the little sheikdom next to Abu Dhabi [Qatar] or next—give me a—

07-00:20:15
Holmes: I wish I could.

07-00:20:17
Teitz: OK. It’ll come to me. I’ll fill it in. So we just drove there in his big Mercedes
at 100 miles an hour across from the center of Saudi Arabia to the east coast
and saw this—the place now is this incredible mass of skyscrapers,
constructed shorelines. When we went there, it was a beach with a few quaint
fishing boats and some low-rise buildings, and it had a government, and we
went and talked to them, and I don’t know about what. At other times, we
would go to the desert. We went to the southwest, to the mountains, to Abha,
which were very beautiful. We went to the birthplace of his progenitor, the
great al-Sheikh, and saw his house, which had sunk into the ground, seemingly. You had steps down to the front door.

Holmes: Perhaps it was designed that way to keep it cool?

Teitz: No. The reason was not that the house had sunk but the road had risen, because when you build cities out of mud-brick buildings you understand how, archeologically, historic cities got buried. When you build of mud-brick, it melts when the rains come, and then you build it again, but it’s a new layer. The house had absolutely no sign of any kind. There was nothing memorializing it. I wouldn’t be at all—I doubt that they would have torn it down because I doubt Mohammed would have let it happen, even since he left. And we went to the desert overnight. We stayed at a national park that they had helped create that the king liked, so the king had a special tent there and had built an airstrip capable of taking his, I guess, 747. But we sat out in the desert and camped out overnight and ate with a guy who made desert food for us.

Holmes: Oh, interesting.

Teitz: It was an amazing experience. Other times, we went and had barbecues in the desert at night with extraordinary stories from one particularly ancient warrior who claimed he had 17 great wounds from fighting in the great king’s [Abdulaziz Al-Saud] service. This was—the kings still are the sons of the great king himself.

Holmes: Yeah, that lineage.

Teitz: And his presence was very, very constant.

Holmes: Did you ever have a chance to meet the king?

Teitz: He was dead by the time I went there, but Abdul-Aziz’s presence was universal. His picture was everywhere.

Holmes: What impacted you the most, both professionally but also personally, about your trips and working on these projects in Saudi Arabia?
Teitz: It’s very interesting. I think it’s a curious thing for something that was a professional experience, but it really was a personal experience for me. I was never that convinced about Saudi Arabia as a country. I thought it was a society that had enormous problems. The position of women was awful, although with Mohammed, when we ate dinner at his house, we ate with his wife and his children, so he was very Westernized in that sense. But he would never have invited, I think, another senior official—he might have invited some of his followers to one of those things, but not otherwise. I think it was in many ways a personal experience. It was costly in some ways. It meant that for some years I didn’t have Christmas at home or New Year’s, or maybe we left right after. Mary always complains that I was not there for Christmas, but sometimes I think we left right after, and we traveled often. I didn’t go to all of the trips. I kind of resisted a bit, but the pressure was very strong. Ultimately, Mohammed was made minister for municipal and rural affairs, and he attempted to do some serious land reform. Now, land is a very interesting question, because essentially it’s all in the holding of the king. So when the king wants to please somebody and doesn’t have the cash, which is quite often the case even with the Saudi monarch, they would give them land, and they would give them land on the edge of the city, either of Jeddah or Ar-Riyadh. And that meant that Riyadh was spreading furiously with houses popping up and huge empty acreages marked only by rows of stones that demarcated the lots, and the unbuilt roads. Trying to get a grip on that was a major enterprise, but it was virtually impossible to create a map of landholdings at that time.

Things have advanced a lot since I was last there. I left at the moment of the First Iraq War. I was there at the beginning for the buildup when, in typical fashion, the Ar-Riyadh airport had, I think, three or four major terminals, not counting the king’s terminal, which is a separate building. One of those terminals was never occupied, so it was perfectly situated for bringing in the troops. And I remember seeing the troops around, and, of course, there was huge tension because American women as troops were marching around the streets. When one of the local guardians of the faith, these kind of, I guess, enforcers would try and do something, they would just beat them up, and they were quite unready for that. Then, of course, the women would get shipped out fast because of creating a big diplomatic incident, but was that in fact a real story or apocryphal? I never saw it.

Holmes: Yeah. Well, that’s true.

Teitz: But it traveled the rounds. I think that the Gulf War was a huge shock to the kingdom, actually.
Holmes: Well, even what you’re describing, too, is a vastly different society and culture than, of course, in the West.

07-00:29:40 Teitz: Yeah.

07-00:29:41 Holmes: And during your trips, were there ways that you had to modify, say, your dress or your behavior while you were there working?

07-00:29:49 Teitz: Well, no, I don’t think so. I wouldn’t say some things, so I would modify what I would say, but no, I was a fairly unexceptional academic in that sense. You know, I could fit in pretty well, and I had camped a lot and had done many things, so I felt comfortable doing the things that we did with Mohammed and the group. I grew to value the group a lot. They were extraordinarily bright and interesting people, and in many ways the evenings spent talking, although occasionally it got boring, were a wonderful thing to experience. So I would say professionally the main thing I did there was to supervise this project exploring the possibilities of economic development for Riyadh, and I wrote the RFP for a contractor, and we hired out of London one of what used to be the big eight, and then seven, six, five, four, three, however many there are, of the accounting consulting firms. I’ve forgotten which one. They’ve all merged together anyway. I used to meet with the head contractor in London because one of the virtues of the arrangement for me was that I could fly through London easily. I either flew through London or Frankfurt, which meant that I could see my family fairly frequently. It was very nice, but I also used the trip stops in London to meet with the contractor, who was an extremely polished Englishman who promised a lot of stuff that they didn’t quite deliver. But they did a report in the end, and it was OK, not great. But the remarkable thing was, at the very end of it, there was held a large conclave of Saudi officials and businessmen in Riyadh, and this guy came and talked to them about it. And I did not go to the conclave, which was interesting. It was understood that we would stay out of it, that he would be introduced by a Saudi, which was classic, maybe even by Mohammed. I’m not sure. But apparently, he gave a speech in absolutely perfect, classical Arabic, and people came out of there saying things like—and I heard this quoted—things like, “He speaks Arabic better than I do.” [laughter] He was trained as a classical Arabic scholar, probably worked at some point, I imagine, for the British—

07-00:33:58 Holmes: MI6.

07-00:33:59 Teitz: Yeah, I’m not sure. Either intelligence or the foreign office, is my guess, and then moved into business later on in life.
Holmes: Would you consider the projects, particularly the economic development projects you were working on there—did you see some success with those?

Teitz: No, I don’t think so. I often do things sort of before their time. Now is the time when Saudi Arabia is desperately trying to diversify. They have adopted it as government policy, whether they can do it, but at least they’ve adopted it at a substantial scale. It was obvious that that was what they needed to do, and I think we convinced Mohammed that it was something to try, but I don’t think that it had anything much in the way of a long-term impact other than perhaps there was some education value for the Saudis that worked on it. Disappointing in some ways, yes, but policy is often disappointing. My older daughter now actually has just lost her job. She was a political appointee, a late political appointee in the Obama administration and wrote the methane rule that is currently being disestablished in a big—and it’s still being debated, actually. It hasn’t happened yet, but disappointment is common, whether it’s for me, for her, or for Obama, or for Donald Trump.

Holmes: That’s how the policy world turns—

Teitz: You mess with policy, and it doesn’t always work. In fact, it almost always doesn’t work. This might be a more accurate description.

Holmes: Well, I wanted to get to some of that today.

Teitz: Yeah, sorry, I’m rambling on here.

Holmes: No, no, not at all. Well, that following year, once you were done in Saudi Arabia, you also did a similar type of advisor role in Los Angeles for the rent stabilization study. Could you talk a little bit about that? Who were you working with on that?

Teitz: I worked mainly with Barbara Zeidman, Z-E-I-D-M-A-N, who is a wonderful lady, a senior housing person in the housing department in LA, and she was intent on doing some major rent control studies. And I had maintained my interest in rent control since the days of RAND.

Holmes: As a houser.
Teitz: As a houser, wearing my housing hat, my various hats, so Barbara—I’ve forgotten exactly how she got in touch, but essentially she asked me to come and be in a way a very similar role. I wrote the RFP for a massive study, a large-scale study, I should say, that was done by Hamilton Rabinovitz, Ed Hamilton and Fran Rabinovitz. Fran Rabinovitz was a political scientist teaching at USC, I think, and Ed Hamilton is a major consultant and headhunter who had a lot to do with the start of PPIC. Everything interlocks. So I wrote a proposal, and they won the contract, and then I supervised it from some distance. It didn’t need much supervision because they’re a very competent firm, and they did a very good job. At the same time, people inside the city, inside the department were trying to do a study of housing support in various ways and housing supply, and I was trying to help them, which was not an easy task. We kind of produced a study, but I think it was difficult because of staffing and other things.

Holmes: And in that other housing study—were they looking at home ownership and helping with that but still within the same vein of rent?

Teitz: Not really, no, looking at the quality of housing and in some ways similar to the arrangement in New York, looking at housing enforcement. The rent control study actually had some impact. I think, essentially, we briefed the mayor. I remember meeting with him, Bradley, Tom Bradley, an interesting man, and the city council debated long and hard, and they made some changes in the law. I confess that I don’t exactly remember what. They were modest, but it refocused attention on the problems in the rent-controlled stock in Los Angeles, so it was a very worthwhile experience. And at that time, I was actually—I think may have actually been teaching a housing class finally, because Bill Wheaton had retired and Chet McGuire had left, so I got hauled in to be the houser again, sort of the fire brigade. It was—I traveled up and down to LA quite a lot, and I grew to appreciate LA’s downtown and the interesting state it was in at that time. Broadway was essentially a Mexican market and quite wonderful in its own way, but the downtown was very shabby, although that whole episode came during the LA Olympics, I think. Wasn’t it ’84?

Holmes: 1984, yeah.

Teitz: Yeah, so I was going up and down. I recall that they fixed up Union Square for the Olympics, or is it—no, it’s not Union Square [Pershing Square], the big—

Holmes: The plaza—
Teitz: The square downtown, and the freeways were completely empty. Everybody was so terrified by the warnings of traffic jams they all left town.

Holmes: What were some of the major problems plaguing the LA rental market?

Teitz: Essentially the same as everywhere else. Rents were rising. It was the 1980s. It wasn’t a particularly good time economically. There was huge outcry over the ability of landlords to raise rents in the face of what were essentially not rising incomes. It was very interesting, actually. This was the beginning of the period of divergence between Los Angeles and San Francisco. In 1980, Los Angeles and San Francisco essentially had identical per capita incomes. By 2010, San Francisco was 50 percent higher, and Los Angeles had lagged behind, which is another story. But I think that LA was beginning to experience the effects of that lag, and it wasn’t a particularly happy time in terms of market forces. We’d just come through the great shock of the Volcker era, and the military budget had been cut way back, so LA was facing real difficulty.

Holmes: Well, it certainly was also the time—outside of a lot of economic turmoil, which I want to talk about in a minute—that we saw the start that rivalry, which was a much more public and pronounced rivalry, between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Teitz: Started it? No, LA was—it was very interesting. If you had asked me in 1980 who was winning, I mean, I would have said to you, “The contest is over. It’s done. LA is the dominant city in California or dominant metropolitan region.” It still is the largest by a substantial amount, but the story—it’s a wonderful indication, I think, or example of the mystery of economic development. The story of how that happened is a very long and complicated one, and it’s not over yet.

Holmes: Well, at this time a lot of your business community also seemed to be leaving San Francisco, either transferring out of state or down to LA or other parts.

Teitz: It sort of felt like it, but the reality was something else.

Holmes: Oh, very interesting.
In Silicon Valley, it was anything but, and what was going on was the creation of a new form or a new version of a classical form of growth, and people knew about it. Anna Lee Saxenian was writing about it at the time. She was a student of mine. I wasn’t her dissertation chair, but I talked with her about her work often, and I was probably on her committee, but I’m not sure. I don’t remember anymore. So there was a perception, I think, even then that things were brewing here that were not like LA, but I think that if you had asked me who was dominant I wouldn’t have had any hesitation, which would have been a gross misreading of the situation.

As Paul Krugman said in his article the other day, “Getting an economist to admit they’re wrong is pretty damn hard,” but I’ve never found it that hard. Maybe I’m not a real economist, but I’ve been wrong often enough that I recognize it.

Well, I wanted to ask you: I mean, we’re talking about the California economy, and this was certainly another line of research that you began to at least write about and think about by, say, the end of the 1980s. Articles such as your “Growth and Turbulence in the California Economy,” “Neighborhood Economics,” which I think is looking at small business development. Discuss this a bit—what were some of the issues that were grabbing your attention during the 1980s as a planner, but also a scholar of economic development in California?

Well, first, I think earlier than that I had taught the first or second—actually, the first course in economic development taught in the planning department at Berkeley was a student-led course by Phil Shapira, who has taken off into an academic career in Europe. But I taught the second one and then taught it consistently for many years or some years thereafter, and I think that economic development per se was not on the planning landscape very much. It had been implicit in planning always, but the idea that planners or planning had anything to say to what was the territory of the chamber of commerce and of business recruitment, which was what economic development amounted to at the local and regional and state levels—who can we buy, basically, or what incentives can we give to bring in jobs, or as people say, “Jobs, jobs, jobs.” So I became very interested—I had always been interested in it as a geographer because I was acutely aware of the way in which the British regional economies had developed. For example, the cotton region of Manchester from the late-eighteenth century onward was very much like Silicon Valley. People were inventing new things. There were networks of manufacturers. There was intensive interaction between firms. People began to specialize in distinct,
new ways, so towns would become specialized. There was even a town called Batley that specialized in shoddy. Do you know what shoddy is?

Holmes: No.

Teitz: Shoddy is wool or perhaps also cotton made, reconstituted, out of shredded clothing.

Holmes: Oh, interesting.

Teitz: That’s the origin, so something that’s “shoddy” is made of that material. And the specialization in that region was just intense. So this was not something I was unaware of at all. I recognized and saw it and learned about it and was interested in it. It’s just plain interesting to see how an economy actually grows and develops, and that was happening here. Within the limits of what I could do, I sensed that there were opportunities for planning graduates to work in this field. I had a student who became the economic development director of Berkeley, and he would come back to the class regularly for years. I would take the class—I think I maybe mentioned this at one point—down to Emeryville to see the steel mill.

Holmes: Oh, that’s right.

Teitz: I’d take them down to downtown Oakland where the beginnings of development was trying to happen unsuccessfully, largely, so it was a dynamic field, I think, and I was also trying to be involved with small business development, having done that a bit earlier, the research on it, and worked with the Small Business Development Center in Oakland. So I kind of got around. It was one of the lines of work that I was quite engaged in, and I think it’s still very interesting, a very interesting area.

Holmes: I wanted to ask, because I know the 1980s nationally, but also in California, was not renowned for an economic boom. I mean, we had stagflation, recession, and then a lot of slow growth. At the same time, we also have, in a sense, a type of conservative resurgence, with Reagan in the White House, George Deukmejian here as governor. What were your thoughts on this period—there was a lot of free-market rhetoric, yet if we pull the veil back a little bit what we see is there’s also a lot of state capitalism, which is somewhat the hallmark of the West in many respects.
Holmes: Yeah. What were some of your observations and thoughts as one who was also looking at this?

Teitz: I guess I did—I was not paying a lot of attention to the state at that time, although I’m trying to recall when I did all the pieces. I’ve lost the track. I guess that I kind of sat it out. I was very busy. I was running to Saudi Arabia. I was running down to Los Angeles. I was going where the action was. I was doing bits and pieces of economic development wherever I could. I was engaged in housing. Altogether, I think it certainly wasn’t a lost decade for me, but it was one where what connections in the 1970s through the state plan and Jack Dyckman and the Jerry Brown regime—the connections to the state were clear; in the 1980s, I think, much less so. I was very well aware of the conservative intellectual sweep. I was talking to Aaron Wildavsky, who was founding the School of Public Policy. Did I mention his famous conference?

Holmes: No.

Teitz: Aaron was founding the School of Public Policy, and, in typical Aaron fashion, he talked to many people, and some said, “I might. Is so-and-so interested?” He decided, well, the way to find out, he would call all the people he knew, about 12 or 15, and have them come together and have a conference on what the school should look like, and then he’d offer jobs to those who seemed interested. And it was actually a lot of fun and a good mixture of some very—Aaron was quite conservative, but there was a good mixture there. He was more a libertarian than a conservative, actually. He offered me the job, but I decided to stay in the planning school for reasons I don’t know.

Holmes: But certainly, as—

Teitz: That must have been earlier though, I think.

Holmes: Perhaps.

Teitz: Yeah, I think it was in the 1970s.
Holmes: But also, in teaching economic development, surely the rise of a kind of, I guess—I’m not a huge fan of the name, but we talk a lot today and even by the 1990s of neoliberalism, right, this kind of—

07-00:57:36
Teitz: Yeah. Yeah.

07-00:57:37
Holmes: —more of a return back to a classical economic outlook. In teaching economic development and looking at the department, was this discussion rising at least among your colleagues, I mean, from replacing perhaps the heavy Marxism that was there in the 1960s and 1970s?

07-00:57:58
Teitz: Yeah. Oh, remember, I was a neoclassical economist from day one, so it didn’t much affect me. I read it. I listened to it just as I listened to the Marxists, and it wasn’t a major intellectual challenge. That’s for sure. It struck me as kind of simple-minded, but it was there, and I think one simply dealt with it. I was not really—the term “neoliberal” really hadn’t emerged by then.

07-00:58:48
Holmes: Yeah, it’s was in the 1990s, I believe.

07-00:58:50
Teitz: But if pressed, certainly, now I would have been a neoliberal with somewhat to the left inclinations. I was trying to find ways to do things at a more local level, which was probably a reaction. I think you’re right. That was the main reaction, was to switch, either to go elsewhere or to switch to more local things, whether it was to Los Angeles or to Oakland or wherever. Interestingly, I didn’t have anything to do with San Francisco much at this point at all. I’m not sure why, probably no time.

07-00:59:47
Holmes: Yeah. Yeah. Well, speaking of teaching, in 1985 and ’86 you also had what I believe is your second round as department chair.

07-00:59:58
Teitz: Yeah.

07-01:00:00
Holmes: I wanted to see if you could reflect on that a little bit, thinking in terms of how had the department, the university, and even the students changed since your first term in 1970.

07-01:00:17
Teitz: Yeah. Yeah. Well, the academic world is always continuity and change, so the students were still, as they had been, I think, highly motivated. They were probably a bit more leftish but always with that strand of people interested in
design and planning in a conventional sense who were less motivated by political considerations. I think that period as chair, it was really an interim. I was filling in because nobody else was available, I think, and I played that role quite often in the department, to sort of keep things going, because I’ve always been a kind of departmental nationalist. I believe that you actually—if you have an organization, you need to support it if you believe in what you’re doing at all. Not all faculty do that, do believe that, for sure. So it doesn’t stand out as a memorable year, and I don’t see the big changes in students. I think they came a bit sooner, and, as I said, by 1984, ASCP was up and running. The sense of planning as a discipline among the PhDs, I think, was much stronger. They were going to meetings and giving papers, so the PhD program was in relatively good shape. One thing I regret in these sessions is that I don’t have a list of all the students of the different years, but that got lost somehow in my transition from Berkeley to PPIC. So I could probably—I would probably be more accurate if I had the names in front of me to remind me of who was who and who was saying what. I don’t sense that time as being especially full of uproar, but it probably was. [laughter] You know.

Holmes: Well, even thinking of changes and growth with you as a teacher, right. I mean, we’ve talked a lot about your scholarship and variety of works, both academic and within the realm of policy, but you were also publishing papers during this time on planning and education. And then, as you’ve said in other writings, you always regarded yourself as both a scholar and a teacher, that teaching was also extremely important—

Teitz: Teacher, scholar, practitioner.

Holmes: Yeah. Yeah.

Teitz: I think that I’m in a field that is a professional field, and the only way to justify a professional field in the university is to have an intellectual foundation that’s strong with some theory, and that’s why I supported the growth of planning theory. I think I wrote a small piece in planning theory around this time, I think, but—

Holmes: Were there particular new directions that you thought the planning education should be further exploring or taking?

Teitz: At this point, I think I felt we were doing what we needed to do, and we were establishing a decent foundation. I always wanted the students to have a stronger foundation analytically, but that’s because of who I am, not
necessarily who they are, but with all the back and forth we still had a decent level of methods being taught. Students were learning stuff that was, I think, better than they had. You know, I was not doing methods as much. I was doing more substantive teaching at the time, I think. But as a chair, it was a one-year period, and a year flashes by, just keeping up with the work involved and the various crises that happen every ten minutes on money and everything else.

Holmes: Yes, of course. Well, I think around this time you also took another more administrative position as chair of the Berkeley division of the UC academic senate, but what dates did you serve in that position?

Teitz: I think that was 1991, but I had been involved with the Berkeley division for some time before. I had actually founded or co-founded the academic planning committee, which was a joint committee, or actually it was an academic senate committee. I co-chaired it with—who’s our new chancellor?

Holmes: Carol Christ?

Teitz: Yes, Carol Christ. I hadn’t even remembered that until somehow I came upon it. So the idea of the academic planning committee was to try to improve the process whereby academic decisions were taken, and we had some agenda. I can’t quite remember what the details were, but we worked away at it. That was, I think, during the late eighties, and I was on various committees around the campus at the time. I don’t remember what else, but I think in 1990 I was chosen, elected. I guess the process is a bit murky.

Holmes: Yeah, how were you selected for that?

Teitz: Good question. I think a committee, essentially, as I was asked, anyway, if I would be the chair of the Berkeley division. And as it so happened, that came precisely at the moment of the biggest financial crisis the university had ever had. Chang-lin Tien was the chancellor, a really quite wonderful man, I think, and I spent much of that year running up and down from Wurster Hall to California Hall to go to meetings of, I guess, more or less, his cabinet as the debates went on about what to do in the face of the budget crisis, which was very severe. The ultimate “solution,” quote-unquote, was VERIP, the Voluntary Early Retirement Program, which at one stroke eliminated 15 percent of Berkeley’s senior faculty. I almost can’t imagine a more wounding blow to any university, and I, not to the pleasure of my colleagues, advocated along with Chang-lin that we should take a slightly lesser version, that it
wouldn’t be as rich, because it was clear that as the campus with the most senior faculty we were going to take by far the largest hit from it. I suppose you could say, “Great,” it opened up the ranks. Everyone moved up one place. In fact, they didn’t move up one place. What we had were a lot of unfilled positions for a long time.

Holmes: Right, and also a lot of, probably, lectureships and part-time work.

Teitz: And that was the beginning of the lectureship plague, which I think is not really healthy for the university at all or for the lecturers. It’s not a great way to run a university, I think.

Holmes: Was your position mostly focused on campus issues, or did you also meet with the system-wide academic senate?

Teitz: Yeah, we did, and we had regular briefings, so called, from the statewide finance manager, who was wonderfully obscure. The statewide budget, as the headlines recently revealed, remains as opaque now as it was then. I don’t know. I’m sure there were slush funds. There was one professor of mathematics who tried desperately over the years to find out what was really going on in the state budget, but it was too sensitive for them ever to reveal. I think the reasons in many ways were good. The statewide budget was protecting a lot of smaller operations like field stations and specialized research entities where sometimes a single professor had a long-term research program going on. It wasn’t simply feather bedding. It was part of a larger research structure. Now, whether in a really hard-nosed environment that was the best use of resources I can’t say, because I wasn’t looking at the budget, but I’m convinced that what statewide was doing then and what it does now is essentially not much different, that is, protecting vulnerable but small entities. It also manages to get itself into problems every so often with—and that’s true of the campus, too—ill-conceived efforts at economy, which usually fail disastrously. I don’t know why.

Holmes: When money is on the table in a UC system that’s so diverse and spread out, and Berkeley, of course, is the flagship, did you encounter some tension from other campuses? Or even anti-Berkeley sentiment among the other universities in the system? Many often say that, of course, Berkeley gets more money, which is not always true when you crunch the numbers?

Teitz: Yeah. I’m sure that was there. I didn’t really experience it very much. I had friends and colleagues across other campuses. I didn’t hear people railing
about Berkeley that much. I think people knew the size and the hit that
Berkeley was taking, and I don’t think they sympathized deeply, but you
know, that’s the way it goes. No, I can’t recall anything remarkable in that
sense. To some extent, the statewide academic senate tends to be controlled by
people from other campuses, and so, to the extent it has any weight, and it has
some, I don’t think Berkeley exerts an unusual influence through there. And I
think that whoever is president is acutely aware of the fact that Berkeley is the
public university of record in the world, increasingly falling behind the
privates, but not necessarily in science. And what every chancellor and, I
think, president has tried to sustain is Berkeley’s preeminence in science, so I
think the rest of it gets some reasonable attention, but the sustaining of
Berkeley as a scientific leader in my perception, at least, has been a strand of
policy that’s very strong. And it led to things like the various initiatives in
computer science, the building of the Berkeley computer science department,
the reorganization of biology into a molecular biological structure of
departments, a really amazing achievement. I wish somebody could do
something like it for the rest of campus, which desperately needs departmental
reorganization, and not so much reorganization as reconfiguration. We
probably have too many departments or too many programs. We have, I think,
over 128 language programs of one kind or another, so I’m told.

07-01:18:05
Holmes: Oh, wow.

I’m not sure whether that’s true or whether it’s one of those apocryphal
numbers, but we have a lot. We went through an effort of that kind in the
College of Environmental Design a few years before the time we’re talking
about when the department of decorative arts was essentially disestablished,
leaving behind a residuum that lasted for probably 20 years. It’s very hard to
do that. I remember being on campus in LA at one time, at UCLA. We’re
walking along. I think I was with Lee Burns, and he pointed to a small
building, and he said, “Do you see that?” I said, “Oh, yeah, nothing
remarkable about that.” He said, “Do you know what’s in there? It’s the
remains of the UCLA Agricultural School,” which had been abolished 20
years before, I think. And the sitting professors were still there. It’s very hard
to make change in the university.

07-01:19:34
Holmes: That’s interesting.

07-01:19:35
Teitz: And you only realize it when you see this, the extent to which what are
excellent and desirable rules make it very hard to do things that need to be
done. So the question is who decides what needs to be done and being—
Holmes: And, then, how do you implement it?

Teitz: And who decides and how do you implement it, and that’s never easy. I think people outside always think that—and even I do it when I’m feeling a bit more gutsy about it—think, “My god, we really ought to be able to do something,” but it’s hard. It’s really hard.

Holmes: I wanted to ask how would you describe the function of the academic senate.

Teitz: Statewide or Berkeley or both?

Holmes: How about both.

Teitz: OK. Statewide, I think it acts as a voice for the faculty. The administration that is statewide does consult, and I think the chair of the statewide senate does have a voice. Depending on who is in charge both at statewide and on campus, that voice may be more clearly heard or not heard. I think for someone like Chang-lin he took it quite seriously, other chancellors I think less so. At its best, the senate is the voice of the faculty. I saw that at its peak in 1964 at the great vote—

Holmes: For the Free Speech Movement.

Teitz: Yeah, it historically changed the campus, and it reasserted the faculty’s power in a way that people hadn’t seen in many years, and effectively a chancellor exited in a hurry. So the senate is very important at times of crisis. Most of the time, the meetings drone on. The chancellor comes and addresses the faculty, who are mostly not there anyway, and it does its business. It also is really important—and people forget about this—faculty governance, self-governance, is very important, and I think it still is, even though the corporatization of the campus is a trend that has been very strong and in many ways very unfortunate. It now takes a small army of administrators to do what faculty committees used to do routinely, and I could—I’m sure if I looked I would find some useful examples of that. Why that’s the case is not so clear. It’s part of a larger trend in society. The external requirements on campus for perfectly good reasons, for affirmative action or affirmative behavior in relations to things like Title IX, require new administrative apparatuses, and so administration gets bigger and bigger while the departmental administration gets smaller and smaller. Attempts to centralize things like book-keeping finish up with two sets of books because the departments are held responsible for what happens, but they no longer have the staff, so they
kind of keep the books anyway. It’s a combination of pernicious trend and seemingly inexorable forces of organizational behavior. I don’t know.

Holmes: From your observations, how would you describe the relationship between the senate and the regents? [Regents of the University of California]

Teitz: The regents?

Holmes: Of the university.

Teitz: Very modest, very modest. I’ve only met maybe a couple of regents in my whole life, never been to a regents meeting, so had I been chair of the statewide senate I would have gone to many or at least during the time I was statewide senate chair. The senate chair always attends regents meetings. The regents more or less behave themselves depending on who’s governor and how problematic the relationship is, so I don’t have a clear sense of whether the senate has much relation at all. The principal relation with the regents is through the statewide president, and right now I’m guessing that she has a pretty decent relationship. But the regents are themselves, I think, as I’ve watched them over the years a wonderful story of mixed emotions. There is a strong sense of loyalty to the university that is carried through except when really pernicious appointments are made, so the regents are tremendously supportive of the university’s independence. And every so often, someone arises on the governmental side, Reagan, who would like to reduce that independence a lot, but you don’t get an absolutely first-rate university without it no matter how hard you try.

Holmes: That’s interesting.

Teitz: As a public university, you just don’t get it.

Holmes: I wanted to switch gears a little bit here in our remaining time and talk about the establishment of the Public Policy Institute of California, PPIC.

Teitz: Oh, we’re racing ahead, I guess. No, I guess we’re there.

Holmes: We are there. Yeah. Now, this is a nonprofit policy research center here in San Francisco, established in 1994.
Teitz: Many people wanted it.

Holmes: Well, I know you were one of the founders, and I’m really fascinated by this history because there really hasn’t been much spoken about the history of PPIC, although every Californian who reads their newspaper and follows state politics and other issues sees papers from the PPIC and polls from the PPIC almost on a daily basis.

Teitz: But if you walk up to almost anybody you know and say, “What’s PPIC?” they’ll say, “What’s that?” Or, you know, “I’m associated with PPIC.” “What’s that?” You know, it’s amazing —

Holmes: Well, so go ahead.

Teitz: How did it happen?

Holmes: I know you were among the founding members.

Teitz: Well, I was among the people who were involved at the beginning. I don’t know if you could call me a founder, but I don’t know what a founder is in this sense. The real founders of PPIC are Bill Hewlett and Roger Heyns. Roger Heyns was the president of the Hewlett Foundation, William and Flora. Anyway, exactly why they decided to do this I actually don’t know. David Lyon might know, but I’m not sure what the precise reasoning was. But I think that the initiative probably came from Roger Heyns. Roger had been chancellor at Berkeley after the FSM. And when Reagan came in and the president of the university at the time—

Holmes: Kerr?

Teitz: —Kerr was fired, and when Kerr was fired, Meyerson essentially was told that he wouldn’t be named chancellor. So the replacement for Meyerson, who had steered Berkeley through its most difficult period probably ever, in grateful acknowledgement, they kicked him out, which I guess does happen to people who do things like that. He went on to do great things afterwards, actually, including saving the University of Pennsylvania in spectacular fashion.

Holmes: Oh, interesting.
Yeah. When he arrived at Penn, it was a disaster, although the first tentative steps toward recovery had been taken, but he just got the whole place reoriented, and now it’s again a top Ivy, hard to get into, at that time not hard to get into.

Oh, wow—I didn’t know that.

So, OK, there we are. It’s the end of the 1980s. Roger Heyns had been president of the Hewlett Foundation since he resigned from Berkeley. He had a heart condition that I think impeded him but didn’t make him ineffectual at all, but my guess is that Berkeley was too stressful. So he’d run the Hewlett Foundation for some years, and between them they came up with this notion of a research institute for California on California. Having decided to do it, they set about recruiting a president, and the person they took on or, I think, probably hired, because Ed doesn’t work for nothing, was Ed Hamilton. And Hamilton is really an ace headhunter. Among the people he contacted was David Lyon, who had been my student long, long ago. He was at Berkeley in the first year that I was there, as a Master’s student in planning and stayed on or came back—I’ve forgotten which—to do his PhD, which he finished while I was in New York, in ’68 or maybe a bit later. He went to work for the Fed, and then he went to work for RAND partly through my connection. So David was interested in the job. He had become the domestic vice president of RAND and had led it through a very difficult time when, after the Vietnam War ended, the military budget was slashed, and RAND’s budget collapsed, essentially. And the only game in town for RAND was domestic policy research, and David essentially went out and made that happen. It was a very significant achievement on his part, I think. He’s very personable and thoughtful, smart. He wanted this job, and he called me up. Over the years, we, Mary and I—and before, my first wife, Ruth—had been very friendly with David and Catherine, his wife Catherine. She unfortunately died.

Anyway, he called me up and said, “Would you be a reference?” and of course I would. I gave him a good recommendation, and they picked him. I think it was a good choice, so here he was. The original endowment was $70 million, and everybody’s jaw dropped open when anybody heard the number, but think about it for a minute. $70 million is $3.5 million of income, because if you take out 5 percent, right, if you make it grow decently, you should hopefully be able to recover about 5 percent, and that’s $3.5 million. Do you know what kind of an institute you can build for $3.5 million a year?

In today’s world, not very large.
Teitz: Right. A man, a woman, and a dog, and maybe not the dog. So, now, Bill [Hewlett] actually, after, I think, about two years after the institute was running added another $50 million, so the endowment was then $120 million, which was pretty good. And at that point, you had $6 million a year, which is OK, but not enough to run a serious institute, especially if you come from RAND, which is a high-cost operation. David was faced with a classic startup, and I’ve been through some of these. How do you actually build an organization when the mission was to serve California, to do research, and to provide information essentially for California policy? That’s a big mandate that’s interpretable in many different ways. David came out of RAND, and he saw it in a RAND-like way in which, essentially, you did major studies, if you can do it, of overriding importance, and you try to identify key areas and work on them. But he needed some support, and he asked me to be the initial—what we called the strategic planner. I did that part-time beginning, I think—I guess it was 1994. No, maybe it was a bit—now I’ve lost the date. It should be findable.

Holmes: Well, I know PPIC has said that it was established in ’94, so it was probably right around the same time.

Teitz: 1994, right. So he asked me maybe after he had gotten the job. He asked me to help with the strategic planning. I actually did a couple of—or several—for some years, I did every year a small strategic plan which we sat down and hashed over and tried to look and see where we were going. It was an interesting exercise, in retrospect not as valuable as one might hope, because plans are no substitute for action or thought. But we were located on the fourth floor of a building on Market Street, wonderfully located to see the grand parade when Steve Young and the 49ers won the Super Bowl that year.

Holmes: That’s right.

Teitz: The last time San Francisco did anything worth mentioning in the football department. One forgets how long it is. I enjoyed doing it. I was tapering down. With the coming of the Gulf War, Mary basically lowered the boom and said, “You’re not going back to Saudi Arabia anymore. You have a small daughter, and it’s just too dangerous.” It really wasn’t dangerous at all, but I think she needed the excuse, and she was fed up with it, and I don’t blame her, actually.

Holmes: Indeed, that’s understandable.
Teitz: So I had things to do, but I wasn’t that busy. I was teaching and enjoying it.

Holmes: What were some of the key issues that you were identifying in those early plans?

Teitz: Well, we thought that one of the things we would like to study would be to take a fresh look at California demography and demographic trends and issues. The state does good demographic work, but we felt that we could do better, and we had a chance to hire Hans Johnson, who was a demography PhD coming out of Berkeley at the time. He’s now the head of the PPIC Center on High Education. I certainly felt that PPIC could do good work in the area of planning and development. Particularly, I was interested in the Central Valley, and I saw that as an underappreciated, under-studied, and under-recognized area. Much of what we did or some of what we did depended on whom we could hire. We were lucky. We hired Debbie [Reed]—who came from Yale economics. We hired mostly—Hans was a demographer. We hired Debbie as a—she was a Yale economist dealing with human capital, and her first project—and the first project we did, actually was to look at income distribution in California, which I thought was very important. Now, remember, this was 1994. Was income distribution on the table? No.

Holmes: Not at all.

Teitz: But it was clear to me that it was going to be one of the big issues just ten years later.

Holmes: Which is really interesting if we flash back—

Teitz: That’s not uncommon when I—

Holmes: No, the 1980s, there were a lot of studies looking at income distribution of the Reagan economy, and then once we get to the 1990s, no.

Teitz: Yeah. Yeah, it was off the table. So we spent that first two years very busily hiring. Hiring was tricky because we had to go to the economics meetings and to the policy meetings in order to interview people, so it was kind of a spotty process. It took time to build up the structure. Meanwhile, David hired—God, I’m blanking out today [Joyce Peterson]. As the director of, really,
communications, he hired the person from RAND who came with her husband. She was a dynamite editor. You would have really loved her, except she would have torn you up. She was very strong-minded. I think we clashed quite often. And for those first years, we had no director of research, so we had, essentially, a person looking after the business side, Andy Grose, who put the endowment on a solid footing and ensured that it would grow. He also ramrodded the purchase of this building, which we moved to, I think, in 1996, maybe ’97, which was a good investment, I think—I hope. So those first two years were busy building. I was helping with recruitment, interviewing people, reading a thousand resumes.

07-01:46:50
Holmes: In regards to recruitment, were you mostly looking at policy scholars, economists?

07-01:46:55
Teitz: I would say David’s inclination was more toward economists. My inclination was more toward a somewhat broader band. We ended up mostly with economists, but we got some other people from politics and elsewhere. Right at the beginning, I had three students run around and do little papers on interesting topics that I hoped would lead to interesting research, and that was a kind of a quick effort. But mostly, I think it was kind of an institution-building period leading up to the first report, which didn’t happen until two or three years later. There was, I think, from the outset some tension within the organization over the extent to which we would explicitly focus on Sacramento or not, should we have an office there. David decided not, but we had a liaison from there, Fred Silva, who had been a legislative person, not a legislator but in the staff—

07-01:48:35
Holmes: A staffer. Yeah.

07-01:48:37
Teitz: —and knew the politics of Sacramento really well. And we did events there and here. I think what we were trying to do, our first and foremost intent was to build a reputation for first-class research, for really competent and serious research. That has carried through, I think, pretty well. PPIC became, I think, well known for—if you like—the probity of its work. Hans Johnson produced a whole series of pieces on state demography that were well received. We didn’t have any immediate impact, I think, on state government.

07-01:49:58
Holmes: When did you see that impact beginning to shift?

07-01:50:02
Teitz: Well, I’m not sure I could put a date on it, but in a key sense David’s perception of the institute—and I always regarded it as a presidential
organization, which is exactly what it is. The president makes all the key
decisions. So he put his stamp on it, and I was happy to help and advise and
give my opinion, but in the end he made the choices, which is the way it
should be, at least as long as you don’t have a research director. He eventually
came up with a research director out of the School of Public Policy whose
name I’ll fill in [John Ellwood], but he was part-time, and he was a political
scientist, a very smart guy, but not really functioning. And around, it must
have been—I don’t know. I’ve forgotten the date. Was it 1998 that I became
research director? Anyway, he stepped down. David was in a hole and asked
me to become research director, which I did. That was actually my last really
life-changing decision, because I did not feel I could do that and simply take a
leave from Berkeley. In some ways, it might have been smarter if I had done
that, but I didn’t, so it meant that I resigned from Berkeley, and that was very,
I would say, painful in some ways. But I didn’t really think about it very
much, because in the way I’d conducted my life from deciding to go to
America onward something came up. I would go to America, go and study
regional science, go to New York—you know, things come up—go to Saudi
Arabia. Whoever heard of that? I’ve been always open to new experience, I
think, and this was a new experience, big-time.

07-01:53:27
Holmes:  Well, I think that might be a good place to stop for today, and we can finish
up and explore the PPIC and that new adventure of yours here next time.

07-01:53:38
Teitz:  Sure. Sure. And I’ll get the names right.
Interview 8: May 11, 2017

08:00:00:03
Holmes: This is Todd Holmes with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. Today’s date is May 11, 2017, and I am here one last time with Mike Teitz, for our eighth session of his oral history. We are here in the beautiful city of San Francisco at his office at the Public Policy Institute of California. Mike, thanks so much for sitting down with us one last time.

08:00:00:24
Teitz: It’s a pleasure.

08:00:00:27
Holmes: Well, in our last session we were speaking on the founding of PPIC [Public Policy Institute of California] and its early days. And we left off with your resignation from Berkeley, I believe, in 1998 to take over the position here as director of research at PPIC. I’d like to talk a little bit more about your decision to resign and take this opportunity, as well as the reaction, of course, of your longtime colleagues there at Berkeley. You were there quite a long time.

08:00:01:02
Teitz: Well, I think I should probably begin by reiterating that in the first four years of PPIC, I worked closely with David [W. Lyon], and I drafted every year a strategic plan. I can’t actually find them now. And we worked around that. But by the end of—I guess, in 1993, ’94, it was clear that the management of research required something more. At that time, we had a part-time research director, a faculty member at Berkeley [John Ellwood] whose name I have forgotten, again, but I will fill in. And he was a great guy, but the institute, I think at that point, was not sufficiently coherent in its research program. I am not sure whether David felt that or not, but he certainly felt the need for a research director. I think the staff was a bit restive.

Our strategy right from the outset was to recruit the best possible people we could find, and we spent an awful lot of time on that, just finding out people and going to academic meetings and recruiting PhDs. And it wasn’t easy to get them to come. This was a new enterprise, and it was risky in some sense compared to a conventional academic job. Also, San Francisco is an expensive place to live, although we were paid very well. So we had recruited, I think, a pretty strong staff, beginning with Debbie [Deborah] Reed, who wrote the first PPIC report on incoming inequality in California—maybe the first report ever on income inequality in California. Actually, not quite, since critics of the state’s development had, from Upton Sinclair [Jr.] onward, had done that. But not in an analytic way.

David decided that he wanted a research director, and he asked me to do it. And for me, that was a very serious decision, because I felt that it wasn’t
possible to do it while still being a Berkeley faculty member. I could have asked for another leave of absence, but I had already taken some, and I am not sure that the university would have been agreeable. They probably would, but I am not even sure that David would have been agreeable. But I also felt that there was, in some moral sense, a necessity to devote myself to this enterprise. So I resigned from Berkeley, and it was difficult but, in retrospect, I didn’t spend a lot of time agonizing over it. It was just a tough decision to make.

What were the reactions of some of your colleagues when you announced it?

I think people were shocked, because I had been there for so long. And in many ways, I was seen as kind of a center of stability in the department, of somewhat more rational thinking in a realm where people tend—among faculties as they do—to get very worked up over very small things. Certainly, my colleagues reacted by nominating me for the Berkeley Citation, which is the closest thing Berkeley gets to a honorary degree. Berkeley doesn’t give them, for some reason I have never quite understood. But that was very nice, because it meant that a lot of people wrote very, very complimentary letters about it. And I think they were pretty much heartfelt.

And Berkeley did award you the citation.

Oh, yes. Which is sitting in the back of a closet somewhere. I suppose it really ought to be on the wall, but I have never put things on walls very much.

So I moved over here. At that point, we had the eighth floor and the sixth floor. I am not quite sure whether we had already bought the building or we were in the process of doing it, but this building had been the headquarters, historically, of the Pacific Lumber Company, a major corporation concerned with redwoods. And the redwood on the walls was just astounding. It was quite beautiful. The whole of the sixth floor—which was their corporate floor, not the eighth, which had the views, interestingly—was totally sheathed in old-growth, absolutely clear-grained redwood. Very beautiful. You can see some of it still downstairs on the wall in the lobby.

So that was an interesting environment. And of course, I was very, very busy instantly. But it was very interesting work, and challenging. At the same time, being in the city had some advantages. My small daughter [Catherine Teitz], who used to come over here—and she would push cartloads of stuff up and down the halls to help with whatever needed to be done. Her mother [Mary C. Comerio] had had her doing that at Berkeley in her office when she was chair. But the challenges were very big, and they didn’t get any easier.
Holmes: Well, what kind of focus did you bring to the institute when you took over as research director?

Teitz: As I said, I think we concentrated very heavily on trying to get very good, quality people. But we had a tendency then to debate with them what research they would do, because they were still in the mode of being assistant professors, and perhaps RAND [Corporation] as David’s background was something of a mixed bag. They prided themselves on the independence of their researchers at that time, certainly. But at the same time, everybody understood that they had to do the research that the [United States] Air Force wanted. We didn’t have that requirement immediately. We had the endowment, which at first was $75 million, from Bill [William R.] Hewlett, a most generous and remarkable man, I think. And a few years later, he gave us an extra fifty, bringing it up to $125 million. Which sounds like an awful lot of money, but to run a research institute at a high level of research quality, you don’t get far with $6.5 million a year, actually. It sounds like a ton of money, but it isn’t. It really isn’t.

We started out doing a number of things. We hired Hans [P.] Johnson with the intent of having a demography program. Quite early on, David had been in touch with Mark Baldassare, who was running his own survey operation while still a faculty member at UC [University of California] Irvine. And David persuaded Mark to establish the PPIC [Statewide] Survey, which has continued since that time, and is probably the one thing that is the most continuous about PPIC’s operation over the whole time. As I said, with Debbie Reed, we were exploring income inequality, and with that, I think, came an interest in social policy, in a broad sense.

Very early, we hired a number of people. Apart from Debbie and Hans, we hired Joanne Spetz, who got us into nursing. Now, why were we in nursing and why were we in health at all, I think it was never really a decision, per se. But that was Joanne’s specialty, and so we went with it. We hired Belinda [I.] Reyes, who was very interested in poverty, and return migration. So she fit well with a demography push. We hired Tom [Thomas E.] MaCurdy and Peggy [Margaret] O’Brien Strain to work on welfare policy, and we hired Michael [Alan] Shires to work on local public finance. So you can see it was actually a very, very broad menu, and despite the fact that we had strategic ideas, I think that in retrospect, we probably were excessively broad at that time.

We also hired Michael Dardia. Michael Dardia and Mike Shires both came from the [Frederick S. Pardee] RAND Graduate School, and Dardia did some very interesting work, especially later, in a variety of areas. But he was the first person to work on economic development strategy, and I was very
interested in supporting that. I didn’t push hard at that time for any emphasis in planning; my sense was that David was not particularly interested in doing that. But later, we did a major study in the Central Valley [California] which I ran, and I enjoyed doing it very much. It was a good piece of work. I had a really brilliant young graduate [Charles Dietzel], I think from Santa Barbara, who was very good at modeling. The study itself proved how wrong you can be, because we were projecting very large growth right at the—it came out just before the crash of—shortly, not that long before the crash, which kind of cut the Central Valley off at the knees so far as urban growth was concerned. You can be just too clever.

I think that in sum, to use a favorite expression of Joyce [E.] Peterson, who was David’s choice to come from RAND as the director of communications—she was a brilliant editor. Still, is, I guess, though not working now, I think. I think she is retired. I would say not the easiest person to get along with.

08-00:16:46
Holmes: Sometimes that’s a good sign of an editor, though, right?

08-00:16:49
Teitz: Yeah. I have never had trouble with editors. Amazing how many articles I have published where the editor didn’t change a thing. Maybe that’s because I think them over in my head and then I write them, so in a stream. Anyway.

08-00:17:14
Holmes: What fields were most of these young scholars that you were bringing in? Were these mostly policy analysts?

08-00:17:24
Teitz: They were a mixture. The RAND Graduate School had its own PhD, and they were all policy analysts. Most of the others were PhDs in economics. We brought in Paul [G.] Lewis, who has a PhD in political science, and did a whole series of studies—which connected nicely with the survey—on government in various forms, particularly local government. So they were a mixture, I would say, but with a preponderance towards economics.

08-00:18:11
Holmes: PPIC also became renowned for its polling.

08-00:18:19
Teitz: That was Mark’s survey. Yeah, yeah. And that would put us in the newspapers fairly often, although I am always astounded by the fact that when I mention PPIC, most people have never heard of it. But they have seen the name in the newspaper probably many times, except most people don’t read a newspaper. And when it’s mentioned on the TV news, it flashes by.
Holmes: How long did it take for PPIC to start getting some traction in Sacramento among the state government?

Teitz: Well, we tried right from the outset. We brought on [J.] Fred Silva, who had been a senior person in the legislature, probably both houses. Fred is very smart politically. He knows his way around. And we were having events here and in Sacramento, but mostly here at the time. I think that we were becoming known.

But I am not sure exactly what one means by “traction.” Does “traction” mean you are involved in governmental affairs? Well, yes, we were. Elisa Barbour and I did a string of papers around the issue of—yeah. That one, that thing on the top there. No, that one. Just hold it up. CEQA [California Environmental Quality Act]. Thank you. [laughs] In one of perhaps the closest collaborations, she and I, for several months, traveled up to Sacramento to meet with a group of people of pretty high level—two of the governor’s cabinet; the secretary, I think, of transportation and of environment—and some developers, and some high-powered environmental organization representatives. And we were trying to hammer out something that would be a compromise on CEQA that would make it easier to develop where development was agreed, and harder for people simply to block development in a NIMBY [not in my backyard]-like way.

And everybody agreed that that was a good intent. But in the end, interestingly, that was one of these efforts that didn’t go anywhere, like an awful lot of things. In the end, the environmental people decided that they were not going to go along with it. I think the Sierra Club, in the end, was so bitterly opposed to any change in CEQA—they regarded the CEQA as the fundamental barrier to ravaging the environment. And in one sense, they are right. But in another sense, CEQA is also very damaging, and there is no piece of legislation, in my opinion, that is not worth amending. The US [United States] Constitution’s a nice example of that. So that didn’t work out, but that was an example of the connections we were building with Sacramento at that time.

Holmes: Yeah. And I think what I was meaning by “traction” was to at least help foster a sound policy discussion. Because this is a nonpartisan institute, so it’s really trying to bring, I guess, both parties, or—

Teitz: You want to switch off for a second?

Farrell: Sure.
Teitz: Sorry.

Farrell: Okay. We are back.

Teitz: Go ahead.

Holmes: But of bringing various interests to the table to try to have a sound policy discussion, which seems to be the intent of PPIC.

Teitz: Yeah, I think that was going on. David tried. Somebody should do an oral history with David Lyon. He would have, I think, a somewhat different story, because everybody sees the world from their own perspective. But I think in outline, it would be similar.

So, I’m sorry—where were we?

Holmes: Well, I wanted to also discuss that as PPIC is beginning to mature and evolve, if we look at, say, the past twenty years that you have been involved—

Teitz: Oh, it’s really twenty years.

Holmes: It has, yeah. To kind of—


Holmes: And you have been directly involved at least—

Teitz: Right from the beginning. There from day one. Yeah.

Holmes: Thinking of how the institute has grown—and here, we are thinking of a larger breadth of issues—prisons or correctional policy, environment and climate change, water—

Teitz: Oh, I should have mentioned that one of the issue areas we were interested in at the time was the environment, and we recruited a person to do that. And she
has now gone off and is working in Sacramento. But there was probably too wide a range of issues at that time, because we were casting about. And I suspect in a way, we were looking for the right issue. I made, along with David, and I guess David’s ultimate decision, but I recruited Ellen Hanak to come, and explicitly, we discussed and agreed that she would do water marketing to begin with. But that has turned into a major source of interest and influence for PPIC, as well as a lot of support from Bechtel [Corporation], Stephen Bechtel [Jr.] I think mainly, and the first of the institute’s centers, the [PPIC] Water [Policy] Center.

So I think that’s a good example of crystallizing things out. And perhaps it just takes that kind of time. It would be truly remarkable, I think, if one were able both to have a strategic vision and be able to find the right people to implement it at the same time. Finding the people is really hard. I have always maintained that the hardest thing in an organization is HR [human resources]. We had many, many problems with people. They were not always happy at their terms of employment or whatever. We had a fairly tough review process. We pushed them to complete reports, and some of them were not fast writers, to put it mildly. And in some ways, I think that restiveness contributed to the changeover which occurred when David stepped down and Mark became the president. When that occurred, I continued briefly—I have forgotten exactly how long—as research director. But he clearly wanted to appoint his own, and so I stepped down to be what amounted to an adjunct fellow. Still working on stuff in PPIC.

But Mark had, I think, a somewhat different vision of what PPIC should be. One of the things that David and I wanted was to be visible on the national scene. And maybe that was an ambition that was unrealistic, although people do know about PPIC nationally, interestingly, because many of our people have gone to national organizations and are doing research there—for example, the Urban Institute at Brookings [Institution] and elsewhere—and at universities. Mark’s vision, I think, focused us back, and I can’t fault him on this at all. This is a presidential organization, and the president shapes it, ultimately. He focused us back onto California. He has constrained the range of topics, introducing some new ones, expanding some old ones, particularly introducing a focus on the prison reform process. Some good research has been there. And a couple of other areas. And also, changing the nature of what we produce. What Mark has done, I think, is to deemphasize the big report, which was a RAND-style product—very much so—in favor of many smaller pieces, with some big things. Ellen, for example, put together books, but that was done with the collaboration of a number of authors inside and outside PPIC.

So I would say that PPIC now is probably a tighter ship. And not the worse off for that. It is what it is. Mark also made a key decision to begin a
Sacramento office, which is a somewhat expensive thing to do. We had looked into it several times, and the costs seemed very high. But that office is now in existence. And actually, paradoxically, the technological improvements on video conferencing make it much more viable, because many senior researchers then—and I assume now—did not want to live in Sacramento. I think that was the reason in many ways why PPIC was placed in San Francisco and not Sacramento to begin with, and not at the University of California, which is what the university wanted very much, and pushed, I think, Roger [W.] Heyns, who had been chancellor at Berkeley, to try and get. But he and Bill Hewlett wanted a separate entity.

08-00:32:12 Holmes: You mentioned how, over these decades here at PPIC, that things began to change, and you couldn’t recognize some of those key issues from the onset. I wanted to ask, as one who has been here now for twenty-three years, that policy itself seems to change. And so it is one of the kind of lessons that you wanted to highlight, is that an organization needs to be flexible, and be able to evolve and grow with those same kind of changes?

08-00:32:51 Teitz: Absolutely.

08-00:32:52 Holmes: And especially among the leadership?

08-00:32:54 Teitz: Yeah. For an example of how things can go wrong, look at the current uproar at the Heritage Foundation, who made a bad appointment as director, or president, or whatever the chief executive is, but up to that time had been a very competent organization.

Flexibility was something we valued a lot—maybe too much. I don’t know. But interestingly, right now, I am engaged in a discussion with people at SPUR [San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association], in a sense, on a very similar question: what kind of organization is it? And historically, it’s been one thing, but it’s changing. And what should it be?

I think PPIC is on a pretty stable path right now. Its researchers have been very successful in raising the resources to do a lot of the work. They have managed to fund a center on higher education [PPIC Higher Education Center], which, interestingly, is dealing primarily, I think, with community colleges and the CSU [California State University] rather than UC, though God knows UC could use some work. Not in good shape right now. So my sense is that PPIC is actually in a pretty good position right now.

The other thing that happened that I wouldn’t underestimate is that David and Mark both have been very good at picking board members. And some of the
board members, from Arjay Miller onward, have been very generous. And that’s been a source both of support and of financial support, too.

And that’s extremely important for an organization that really wants to do policy research as opposed to just policy. Well, it’s important for anybody, but I make a distinction between organizations such as the Environmental Defense Fund or NRDC [Natural Resources Defense Council], which are primarily advocacy organizations drawing on research, and organizations like Brookings and Urban Institute, which are policy research organizations that don’t do advocacy, per se, even though they do often reflect particular political perspectives, just as their counterparts—Cato [Institute] and Heritage—do in DC [Washington, District of Columbia]. We are not big enough to have all that panoply here, although actually, we do, at a micro scale, with a huge welter of small advocacy organizations—probably too many, but that’s life. It’s like housing producers: too many.

08-00:37:26 Holmes: I was going to ask—

08-00:37:26 Teitz: Too many producers, and not enough housing.

08-00:37:29 Holmes: As you were saying, PPIC is really on solid footing now. Where do you see the institute going in the next ten to twenty years, and what new directions do you hope are included in that?

08-00:37:46 Teitz: I have given up trying to predict the future, frankly.

08-00:37:51 Holmes: Well, let’s go over the second question, then. What new directions would you like to see the institute go in?

08-00:37:59 Teitz: Well, I would like to see somewhere a really effective research program, here or elsewhere, on urban and regional development, incorporating housing and transportation. But really, a more regional focus. Perhaps that is wrong for PPIC, because it has a state focus. I would like to see that happening somewhere outside the universities, which are doing an okay job, but it takes more.

I think that the big issues are always there: poverty; race; environment. Those are the three big things. Of those, poverty and race have been with us solidly. Environment is the one huge issue that has emerged during my lifetime, although there were foresighted people who were talking about it all the way back to, I guess, [Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich] Alexander von Humboldt, among others. But I think PPIC has stayed away from race in general. It has
done quite a bit in poverty at different times, with different people. But I can’t point to the work as being definitive. Environment, we put our toe in the water and then decided that we would do it through the medium of water, and that has been very successful, in part because it’s allowed the institute to look at things from multiple perspectives, and not be hooked entirely to a single policy perspective.

That was about it, I think, for now.

Holmes: You just stated a few minutes ago how most of the general public really doesn’t know what PPIC is. They recognize the acronym, and they recognize the work if they read the newspapers. I guess my question on that is, is this something that the institute is trying to rectify, to get their name more recognized? Or is that perhaps also, if you are a nonpartisan research institution dealing with policy—if that may be the best outcome?

Teitz: Yeah. Well, I think PPIC is always producing material and trying to make sure that what it does is visible. But I don’t think it’s particularly, at least at this time, trying to become some sort of highly visible public entity. And from my perspective, as a research organization, that’s probably the right thing. If we were an advocacy organization, you can’t get enough publicity, right?

Holmes: No, absolutely. That’s a very good distinction.

Teitz: Yeah, yeah. We are actually a day after a big win for my older daughter [Alexandra Elizabeth Teitz]. She wrote the methane rule [Methane and Waste Prevention Rule] that the [United States] House [of Representatives] canceled under that strange law that allows rules to be canceled within 60 legislative days [Congressional Review Act]. And the [United States] Senate yesterday, in a very historic move, overturned the House’s rejection of the rule, with three Republicans voting with the Democrats. She wrote most of the rule. She worked, obviously, with a lot of other people, and was a—you know, I am quite proud of Alexandra today. She worked so hard for two solid years producing that thing, against a lot of opposition, and foot-dragging. So that’s a minor but encouraging day for her. Yeah.

Holmes: Well, you mentioned your involvement—

Teitz: But an example of how research and engagement in politics—in her case, a lot of research, but drafting a major federal rule. She was working as a political appointee for the BLM [Bureau of Land Management]. Sorry.
Holmes: No, no! No apologies needed. It’s an encouraging victory, I think. But it also shows, as you were saying, the importance of good research with policy.

On that related note, you mentioned your involvement with SPUR, the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association. I know you are involved with the organization. I wanted to ask how did you get involved, and when?

Teitz: Well, a former student of mine [Lisa Feldstein]—actually, I had collaborated with her. She was kind of the teaching whatever—“assistant,” “associate,” whatever they are called these days—in my course on planning history, which was one of my favorite courses ever. And she was on the board. She is a quite powerful person in terms of San Francisco politics; not a beginner by any means, but she happened to be a PhD student in planning. Anyway, she called me up one day and said, “You should be on the board of SPUR.” And I said, “Mmm? SPUR?”

Now, I came off the board last year, which was 2016, so it must have been around 2008, because I was on the board for eight years, which is the sort of normal span, or two terms. And before that, I had had very little to do with SPUR at all. But I knew about it. I knew many people involved in it. I had been living in the city for twenty years, so I was aware of it. But I had been—as research director and faculty member and whatever, when you are faculty at Berkeley, you are running back and forth; when you are here, you are running back and forth. I worked long, long hours.

So I said, “Sure.” And then I just got a letter of invitation from the board inviting me to join, and assessing me for $1,000 as my contribution. And I had no idea of what to expect at all, really. The board itself met in very cramped quarters just below Stockton [Street].

Holmes: Was this before their new Urban Center?

Teitz: Before we got the new building, yeah. And the board was a kind of a largish aggregation of people who were interested in San Francisco. It included a lot of interesting people: planners; architects—young architects, older architects with their own practices; people who were interested in civic virtue in one way or another. And generally a very nice group, and it was run by Gabe [Gabriel] Metcalf, who has been a very charismatic leader, and has led SPUR to a very considerable expansion during the period of his tenure.
Holmes: So SPUR was in the midst, it seemed to be, of a revitalization the same year PPIC was founded—and that was under Gabe’s mentor, which would have been the longtime director, Jim Chappell.

Teitz: Yeah. Jim had run it forever, and run it very well, and built it into a very influential organization in the city. And I think Gabe had a different vision, one that was larger in scope, and required much more resources, and certainly looked to increase the staff quite a lot. He also had a regional vision, which, over the course of time, resulted in the decision to expand by creating SPUR San Jose first, which was pretty well funded locally, and got off to a very good start, and then SPUR Oakland, which is a much tougher proposition financially.

There were interesting consequences to that decision. We could have instead tried to develop a regional organization, similar perhaps to RPNY, the Regional Plan of New York. But the choice was to go with this three-city strategy. I personally was not in favor of it, but I was very supportive of SPUR always. And once that choice was made, I supported it. I didn’t oppose it vociferously, because it was clear that that was the way the wind was blowing. And the opportunity with San Jose was there, which I never discount, having in my own life taken opportunities when they come up.

Holmes: What role do you see SPUR playing in Bay Area planning?

Teitz: And so that’s the big puzzle now: what is SPUR? SPUR is the three city organizations. SPUR is one executive committee above that. SPUR has a huge board—something like fifty or sixty members—and they have been trying to winnow it down. But each city has a board, so you have three boards, three directors, three city directors; you have a SPUR director and an executive board sitting on top of the whole thing. It is a very complex organization right now, and one that I think is not easy to steer, or support, for that matter. A lot of the funding comes from a massive event each year, in which SPUR San Francisco honors three major figures. It’s held at the Moscone Center, and the business community buys tables. And it raises $800,000. But as I said before, if you are going to have a more professionalized organization, it costs a lot more than that to run it. And if it’s going to have multiple pieces, that’s very complicated.

I don’t know quite how this is going to turn out, to tell the truth. We’ll see.

Holmes: What kind of perspective did you try to bring to SPUR? I mean, you obviously have a background in planning.
Yeah. I always tried to comment on things that I had some knowledge about. I also tried to keep the organization true to its purpose. Such a diverse board has many, many interests. People are interested in expanding the range of the organization’s work, but they never suggest the funding for it. I viewed my role as kind of a resident—not critical, but a voice of reason, to some extent. And occasionally, I had that effect, quite sharply when SPUR was proposing to endorse the proposal—which, of course, it passed when it was put to a vote in the city—to actually subsidize, quote, “legacy businesses.” I kind of reminded the board that one of SPUR’s principal things over the years was not to support legislation that didn’t pass the test of good public policy, and that certainly didn’t. It was an open-ended invitation to political corruption.

And luckily, although it passed, the government has largely ignored it. And I think they are having a hard time agreeing on anybody who qualifies. I should note that the McDonald’s at Haight [Street] and the park [Golden Gate Park] qualifies.

Yeah. It’s been there a long time.

And it’s a legacy business. [laughs] That particular event led me to meet George Miller, who is someone I like very much, and who I think is a very interesting person on the board.

What were some of the dominant and key issues that you addressed during your tenure there at SPUR? I mean outside of—

I have been a member of the SPUR, what was called the Regional Policy Board. SPUR historically had policy boards that were groups of interested people—some professionals, some lay people—but nobody paid, except for the one SPUR person who would work with the board. And they would take on issues. We did an early report on high speed rail that I think got a lot of attention, and has led to SPUR being involved with high speed rail ever since, which, in a way, was a branching out, but at the same time, an absolutely critical concern was the question on the table at that time in building the new bus station—

The Transbay Terminal?

—to create a box beneath it for the high speed rail to connect from Sixth Street when and if that happens. And it should, but it’s going to be expensive.
But it would make a big difference to commuters and the city in general, I think.

So that was a good example of a larger state/regional issue that really impinged on the city. And we tried, in general, to focus on the city and the region—sort of “region” in a broader sense. Since then, I have tried to help out on a number of projects that have been going on in that same general realm working with Egon Terplan, who is their person who does three or four jobs at once. A good example of why it’s hard for such an organization to exist.

08-00:59:35
Holmes: How about housing? Did you have any interaction with the organization’s proposals on housing?

08-00:59:41
Teitz: Relatively little. When rent control comes up, I usually comment. But I have really stayed away from housing issues on the whole. SPUR has its positions; I’m mostly in favor of them. But I haven’t been a strong voice there. I am not on the housing policy board.

08-01:00:13
Holmes: As a planner, what new perspectives did you gain by working with SPUR?

08-01:00:23
Teitz: I’ve always been interested in regional planning, and working with SPUR really brought that back for me, very much so. And it’s led me to think a lot more about what it takes to actually get a viable regional planning function, not necessarily a plan—well, I mean, we have something called “the plan,” but it actually is kind of weak. Trying to get a viable regional organizational structure in place that can actually affect the way in which the region grows for the better I think is very difficult. There are a number of models out there. We are kind of in, I would guess, the upper middle of regions in the US in that respect, with Portland and, to a lesser extent, Minneapolis being the stars, and other places, such as Boston, having relatively little; really, a totally voluntarily effort that nonetheless does some good work.

So I think that SPUR certainly reignited that interest, although it had never really gone away. I have had it since I was in high school, I suppose. Yeah.

08-01:02:21
Holmes: During your time with SPUR, what are your thoughts—again, as a planner, but also one that’s been connected and working with various organizations—on the importance of organizations like SPUR in urban and regional planning? Do other cities, such as Los Angeles, or Chicago, or New York have similar organizations?
Well, all cities have something approximating it. Historically, there was a huge distinction between economic development that was the purview of the chamber of commerce, and planning, which was the purview of civic organizations plus the planning department. Most cities didn’t have an economic development department up to relatively recently. It’s a new invention, in a way. A not very successful invention, but nonetheless it’s there.

So, remind me where we were again?

Discussing the importance of organizations like SPURs for cities and regions.

Yeah. I think SPUR has played a really valuable role in the city. In many ways, historically, it’s been sort of the conscience of the city. It’s a voice for people who believe there is such a thing as good design, good planning. Obviously, there is immense subjectivity in that, but there are also many objective things you can do. I think since SPUR has been around, there have—particularly the environmental movement has generated a vast array of organizations that do similar things, sometimes with much narrower focus, and often very effective. For example, I’d pick out the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. A very effective pressure group for producing bike lanes. But they don’t care about anything else, and they don’t care about the consequences of the bike lanes very much. And maybe that’s right. That’s what they are there for.

I have always thought of SPUR as having a larger view, trying to identify opportunities. Opportunities and necessities, too. In the last few years, SPUR has done a very major effort on dealing with sea level change, particularly on the west side of the city. A major study of the Great Highway. And more recently, a very promising one is the proposal to tear down the sort of bottom stub of [Interstate] 280. Where it comes in, open up the rail yards down there. Instead of having an extra quarter-mile of freeway, put it down onto a boulevard, and open up those rail yards for development. Which you could do, since they are really way over capacity for the rail that’s in there now. That’s a kind of visionary thinking for the city that I like to think that SPUR engages in. I don’t know this for sure, but I am sure that the tearing down of the Embarcadero Freeway [State Route 480] was on SPUR’s agenda. I hope so, anyway, since it’s been a big win.

So SPUR can be a visionary organization. It also is an organization for kind of rational response. SPUR produces, with great labor by the appropriate committee, review of the propositions at each election, and puts out an analysis—the SPUR analysis [SPUR Voter Guides]. We don’t analyze candidates, but we do analyze propositions. And those analyses are read very
widely. It was one of those propositions that was the one that SPUR did not endorse, but—and as often happens, the vote is passed because it looks good, or it appeals to their sympathies. It’s just life.

Speaking of the initiative analysis, one of the things that struck me in our interviews and research on SPUR was its public outreach. So it’s not just putting together an objective analysis of an issue, but also bringing it out to the people—and not just in papers, but sometimes in very laborious efforts to hold meetings, to really pass that information down. When thinking about regional planning and planning issues, I wanted to get your thoughts on the importance of that, because a lot of times we could write papers that go to, say, city hall or various entities, but it’s actually trying to get the public to understand.

That’s the hardest thing of all. I am not sure that you can. And yet, somehow, you need to. It’s not possible to have a real reform of regional organizations in the Bay Area, or the creation of a more effective regional management for the Bay Area, without state action. And to get state action, you have to convince state legislators. And to convince state legislators, you really need to convince some people, although maybe fewer people than many people think. I don’t know.

How Oregon did it is very interesting. They created a coalition essentially of farmers who did not want urban development, unlike our farmers, who all want to retire on the proceeds, because they think there is an infinite amount of land in the Central Valley for them no matter what. But that plus the organization called the 1000 Friends of Oregon, which really pushed environmental legislation in the state, bringing that together in that case allowed them to create a regional organization that is not perfect, but it does have an actual elected regional body, which is pretty key. So there is somebody to negotiate with on the part of the region that controls some of the resources, particularly for transportation, which is really critical. You can’t get anywhere much without something like that.

And the question for any region is how do you do it? I don’t think there is any simple recipe. I wish there were. But you kind of have to keep trying. And the Bay Area tries roughly every ten to twenty years; there is a big push towards some kind of regional thing. The last one was, I think “Bay Vision 2020” it was called. And I don’t know if I have already mentioned this: the definition of a regionalist is a person who, with all his cohort, links arms—every twenty years in the Bay Area—puts the head down; runs against a brick wall; collapses, bleeding; gets up and says, “Well, maybe better luck next time.” And it’s something I’ve used quite often. But it describes quite precisely what
has happened probably since 1939, when Telesis and [Thomas] Jack Kent [Jr.] tried to promote a regional identity for the Bay Area.

08-01:13:39
Holmes:
That’s interesting. Well, I wanted to transition a little bit. You retired from Berkeley in 1998, and then began your work with PPIC and SPUR. But you were called up one last time by the University of California to come back and help with, I believe, establishing UC Merced, which opened in 2005. What was the position that you were called up to do there?

08-01:14:14
Teitz:
I’ve forgotten what the title was. It was something like “visiting professor emeritus” that was funded by the university. I was supposed to be a resource, particularly for Kenji Hakuta, who is a wonderful man. He is a professor at Stanford [University], now back at Stanford—a professor of education. Extraordinary man. He climbs mountains in his spare time, and loves the mountains in general. I think that’s one reason why the task of being dean of essentially everything except science—which meant he had arts; he had social science; he had humanities, all twelve of them in one blob, as it were, within his dean’s domain. And his task was to try to forge a viable set of programs out of that, recruit faculty, and, in general, keep things moving.

The year I was there was the year before the first students arrived, so we were still operating on the grounds of the old Air Force base [Castle Air Force Base], at a small city [Atwater, California] down the road from Merced. There is an amazing Air Force museum [Castle Air Museum] there, with examples of not every, but an awful lot of the major planes that the US Air Force—and some foreign air forces—have flown. And it’s been there, I guess, since it was a major air base, but the air base disappeared, and the museum stayed. We were in old military buildings on the base, and kind of cramped. I never really did get a desk. I got a desk when I was there, put it that way. And it wasn’t clear what my agenda was, so I kind of set about looking to see what it was.

And I guess Kenji and I concluded that I would help him with recruitment. And that was interesting. It wasn’t successful, I think. I think my role there was not effective, which saddens me, because I have some admiration for the folks who have built Merced, and I think it’s a worthy endeavor. It’s actually the University of California doing something right for a change. It’s recruiting minority students from the [Central] Valley, who are very reluctant to travel, and as most first-generation students are.

But over the course of the year, I tried to help out as best I could. I would travel up and down probably most weeks. I would go for three or four days, stay in a B&B [bed and breakfast] in Merced, and in the course of that, the great perk was that on the days I drove, I would drive all over the Valley. I would drive down to Fresno or Bakersfield, and then swing back up on the
west side. I drove through the back roads of the farms in the north and the south, and I got to know the Valley rather well, at least visually and in terms of driving. It’s an amazing place. It has its own unique, remarkable character, and geographically, it’s a place I certainly appreciate.

The whole thing ended not on the best of terms. Kenji and I remain friends, but Kenji himself left soon afterwards. The faculty basically were not willing to entertain Kenji’s ideas for a more integrated kind of social science / humanities complex. They desperately wanted their departments. They wanted to be in their little grooves. Economists wanted to be economists and nothing else, and we speak to no one, and no one speaks to us, so to speak. I should have known better. I have been around a university for close to fifty years by that point. [Laughs] I should have known how difficult it is to inspire people in a new situation. And I can’t think of anybody more inspiring than Kenji. So it was doubly disappointing, I think. A lovely man.

But UC Merced will survive. It has its departments, and it will look just like everywhere else. And so be it.

08:01:21:24 Holmes: When the university was planned and being built, on one hand, there is a regional focus, which is important, because the UC—I mean, maybe outside of Davis—does not really have any kind of Central Valley / interior representation.

08:01:21:44 Teitz: It never has. No. And Davis has its eyes first to agriculture—or had—and secondly to the world at large. Every UC campus wants to be a star.

08:01:22:02 Holmes: I wanted to get your views on that, because as you were describing, UC Merced had a kind of regional vision, at least among the UCs. And yet, there was still some opposition within the larger academic community, particularly in the UC system, of “Why Merced?”

08:01:22:23 Teitz: Well, I think it was a choice. I think locationally, it was a huge mistake. It would have been possible to find land much closer to the city of Merced rather than plunking it out in the countryside, surrounded by really low-density suburbs. That’s a shame. That was a big mistake. But it’s a mistake that’s been made by states founding new campuses all over. You can look at what happened at SUNY [State University of New York] Buffalo, for example. They built a new campus way out, and then, because they had had riots, all the buildings are built like fortresses. Highly defensible.

I think Merced got some things very right. It has excellent science and engineering, and had it right from the beginning. They recruited very
competent, good people. I think they didn’t know what to do with social science and humanities, and they certainly probably didn’t have the money to recruit on any scale. And yet, it was clear from early on that one of the great attractions was going to be to minority students, and that somehow, you needed to appeal to them. And many of them would not be prepared for careers in science, or would find it very difficult and then drop out. I never quite thought of it this way at the time; I am not sure anybody else thought it through thoroughly. I am sure they tried hard. But it’s a startup, and startups are really hard, as we saw with PPIC. It’s not easy. Nothing is simple.

So it’ll survive. In a way, UC Riverside breathed a sigh of relief, because it’s no longer the last campus to be thought about. [Laughs] But of course, they shouldn’t have, because the new child gets a lot of attention.

Holmes: It does. A lot of money, too.

Teitz: But I have a very soft spot for Merced, and I wish it well. I hope it grows and prospers.

Holmes: For that regional focus and its position there, it’s certainly needed.

Teitz: Yeah. Was Merced the right place? Modesto is too close to Sacramento, I think, and Fresno already has Fresno State—

Holmes: Which is almost like a UC itself, if you look at the Cal State system.

Teitz: Fresno State is a very big operation. And I think that Bakersfield could use something, but it is not central to the Valley. They could conceivably have put it in one of the other Valley towns, but I think Merced had a little more infrastructure, social infrastructure, to it than the other Valley towns that are strung along [California State Route] 99.

Holmes: How long was your period of work there at Merced?

Teitz: It was just a year. It was a one-year deal.

Holmes: Well, I, too, hope that Merced lives and prospers, and we do appreciate your work.
08-01:27:11
Teitz: Now, I didn’t have any impact there at all, to tell the truth, other than stir up a lot of trouble.

08-01:27:18
Holmes: Well, sometimes that’s a good thing.

08-01:27:19
Teitz: No, no, that was not good. It was not good trouble.

08-01:27:23
Holmes: What do they say? Through our indirection, we find our direction, right?

08-01:27:26
Teitz: Yeah, maybe.

08-01:27:30
Holmes: I wanted to reflect a little bit, now that we are here, sadly, towards the end of our time together. And I wanted to have you reflect on your very large and prosperous career. One of our first questions is how has planning changed over fifty years?

08-01:27:57
Teitz: It depends what you mean by “planning,” but city planning has changed substantially in many ways, but not very much in others. I think the central concerns of city planning for a good urban environment—not in the, quote, “environment” sense, but a good place to live—is still very much at the fore.

Planning has changed in two or three major ways. One is that technologically, it’s become more sophisticated. The combination of GIS [geographic information system], computers, all of that, has deeply changed the field. More importantly, perhaps, the rise of environmentalism and concern for sustainability—and now, more recently, climate change—as the major agenda issues of the time have really influenced the field a lot. Locally, often that influence is not so visible. Locally, people are still worried about zoning, and NIMBY, and land use, and all the same things they were roughly when zoning was invented, or at least when it became legally defensible after 1926.

So I would say that there have been huge changes, but at the same time, much of the original impulse remains the same. And it has this idealistic quality of searching for a better way for people to live. Which often doesn’t quite coincide with what people believe at the time, but surprisingly, they come to believe it later on, as is true of the desire for something more approximating an urban environment has emerged as a major thrust, even in suburban communities, in the last thirty years.

So, like most fields, planning changes and remains the same. You could say the same thing about law. There are whole new realms in law, but law is law.
And so is public health, even though it’s changed dramatically. The plagues keep coming, and in the case of planning, cities keep growing. And urbanization continues on the world scale.

I think the other thing, speaking of the world scale, is that certainly, for practitioners or students coming up now, they are much more aware of the world scale of urbanization. And much of the work to be done is to be done elsewhere. China has been demonstrating that just so powerfully in the last few years. It’s amazing.

Holmes: Speaking of world scale, you have worked a lot in California, but you have also worked in cities around the US, and even abroad. At the same time, you have been a longtime resident—now for over thirty years, if I have my dates correct—of San Francisco. As we are sitting here in San Francisco, with chanting outside, what are some of the unique challenges that San Francisco as a city poses to planning versus other cities?

Teitz: Well, for me, it’s going to manage the end of the high-tech era, if it ever ends. But all such eras end.

Holmes: And we are talking here of that relation between planning and economic development.

Teitz: Yes. Yeah. I think San Francisco is looking down a road that is pretty darn complicated. I tend to be somewhat pessimistic when I actually talk about stuff, although I am an optimist in life in general. But the immediate challenges for the next twenty, thirty years are, first, climate change and sea level rise. I think the city is going to have an interesting time if things progress at the rate they are progressing now. Because even though it looks as though the bay is calm, we know from very recent stuff that the roadway south toward the bridge is overcome by water every year, and the Great Highway every year is covered with sand. So we have a lot of environmental challenges that are going to have to be dealt with, and they are not going to be easy.

Most people would put housing at the top of the scale of the issue. I don’t believe we have the political willpower to do much about it, and I am a great believer in the old adage, which comes from a friend of mine—I may have told you this story. My closest friend, John Herbert—in America, in terms of longevity—was in the New Zealand Army at one point, and he is sitting by a river. And he is sitting there looking across the river, and an elderly Māori man comes up to him and says, “Son, you look worried. What’s the matter?” And John said, “I’ve got a problem. I’ve got to throw a bridge across this river, and there seems to be no solution.” And the Māori guy says, “Son, no solution,
no problem.” That’s a kind of fatalistic way of looking at the world, but it may well be that there is no solution to the climate issue, unless things change fairly soon now. There isn’t a lot of time. I won’t be around to see it, but I fear for it. Yes.

So housing is an issue, but it’s always an issue. It’s always going to be an issue. There is nothing unusual about that. And the other issues of poverty and race are just America on a smaller scale.

08-01:37:17 Holmes: Would you say that those main issues are also confronting other cities as well? That those are some of the key challenges?

08-01:37:24 Teitz: Yeah. I have just been reading this book [The Rise and Fall of Urban Economies] by Michael Storper and his colleagues [Thomas Kemeny, Naji [P.] Makarem, Taner Osman] contrasting San Francisco and Los Angeles as regions. And they point out that in 1980, the two regions had an identical per capita income. By 2010, San Francisco is 50 percent higher. So that says Los Angeles has an even bigger problem than San Francisco, which may well be true. And it raises a lot of issues about how things have been managed in the two cities, and how much is luck. And nobody knows the answer to that.

08-01:38:18 Holmes: You know, it’s funny, when we think of calculations, that factor of luck—and sometimes it’s geographic, sometimes it’s other factors—but how luck is usually not calculated in there, but it does always play a part.


In your long career—and particularly in the end—you were honored with the Distinguished Educator Award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, you have won the Guggenheim Fellowship, a lot of this honoring the massive amount of work that you have done in planning. So, of course, we have to ask what new directions that you foresee, or would like to see, in that new field, in the years to come?

08-01:39:12 Teitz: In planning?

08-01:39:13 Holmes: Yes.

08-01:39:13 Teitz: In planning academically, research? Hmm. That’s a very difficult question, actually. Where should the field go? Well, first, I think the fields go where
they will. The field will go where the junior people take it, and they will sense what the opportunities are intellectually, politically, academically, and they will go for those opportunities. What I see that has happened is that planning as a field, academically, has become much more, quote, “respectable” in the sense of being a field within the university structure, a professional school, even though planning as a profession is not recognized, except in New Jersey, which is this odd little paradox. Only New Jersey requires planners to have a planning credential. The APA [American Planning Association] would love to have it universal, but they have not been successful for fifty years, and I doubt they are going to be now, especially in a time of deregulation.

So I guess that’s an elaborate way of saying I haven’t a clue. As always, I would like to see people doing good work, and I have always encouraged them to do that. And actually, there is a little fellowship at Berkeley—it’s a very minor one with my name on it [Teitz Fellowship], but I was just looking at the candidates last night, because the committee still sends me the resumes and asks what I think, though I don’t make any of the decisions. And picking it out among three terrific candidates, I picked the one who seemed to be doing the most innovative work. And I look for that. People will find new ways to address what are problems, or issues, or phenomena that don’t go away. And that’s true of urbanism as everything else.

The readers of these transcripts will see that there has been numerous times that new opportunities crossed your path, and you openly embraced those. We see this with RAND back in New York, opportunities in Saudi Arabia, PPIC, as well as founding, even, private firms while you were still a faculty member—and productive faculty member—at UC Berkeley. What inspires you, when many people would maybe not take that chance, to embrace that? Part of me was thinking of could this also be an impact of living through World War II over in England?

Exactly what I was going to answer. The most interesting ten years of my life are the first ten, as I have recognized while doing this process. I think I grew up with a great deal of uncertainty, and a good deal of opportunity at the same time, experiencing very new things at a very early age. And although I am not by nature a particularly adventurous person, though I have put myself, at times, in very perilous situations, like trying to climb cliffs where you shouldn’t. But I think, perhaps, that experience left me open always to new experience, and perhaps a so-far not misguided belief that it would all work out okay. [laughs] I wouldn’t give it any deeper significant than that, although I am sure there are many deeper ways in which one could parse the whole question.
Holmes: In looking over your long career, what achievements are you most proud of? And in that same vein, was there also anything that you may have done differently?

Teitz: Okay. Achievements? I’d have to make separate categories. And the achievements are not necessarily mine, but they are notable happenings—

Holmes: Milestones?

Teitz: I think that personally, the best achievement is my family. I have two great daughters. I have a wonderful wife. I have had a very mixed bag of emotional experiences over the years, and I haven’t always behaved the way I should, but I have been very lucky. And I value that a lot. I don’t give myself much credit for it, but I have been around, at least supplied the money, for a good part of it. Plus the quizzes at the dinner table. We always ate dinner with both girls, insofar as Alexandra lived with us. She was split living with her mother part of the time, but with me part of the time.

The second would be academic. What’s the achievement? Hard to know. I don’t have, in conventional terms, a stellar career. But I don’t know many people who more or less every other third day get something from ResearchGate saying that a paper you wrote fifty years ago was cited within the last X years. You know about ResearchGate?

Holmes: Yeah.

Teitz: So they keep sending me this stuff, and it’s amazing. A very simple paper—

Holmes: Public facilities location theory [“Toward a Theory of Urban Public Facility Location”]?

Teitz: No, not that one. No. It’s the methods paper [“Heuristic Methods for Estimating the Generalized Vertex Median of a Weighted Graph”]. If you really want to make an impact over time, write a methods paper, and get it picked up. It’s the heuristic for solving the p-median problem that gets cited over—. The other paper gets cited a lot, but that one just goes on and on and on. And next year will be fifty years. And there is a student in England—a former student—not of mine, but a woman who has just graduated from Cambridge [University]—who is writing a paper about it that’s going to be
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published, I think, in the *Computer Engineering and Urban Systems Journal*, which is a pretty fancy journal.

Polly [Bart] and I should both be proud of that paper. It may not be much to say you have only got one paper. Actually, the best paper I ever wrote is one that’s never cited at all, but that’s another story. But that’s the one that gets the attention, so I have to be proud of it. Yeah.

And then the third thing is institutionally, because I have always been an institutionalist. I didn’t always enjoy faculty meetings, but I have written that I believe they are important, and that you should go to them and listen, and participate, and not walk away. So I think it would have to be whatever role I had in the rejuvenation of ACSP [Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning], and the creation of the annual meetings. Because that’s now an institution that attracts maybe 1,000 people every year, and a lot of students are there, and I enjoy listening. I go to papers and listen. Or I go to sessions. So that would be something I am quite proud of, I think.

And again, it wasn’t just me. My colleagues Jay [Jaytana] Chatterjee and Ed McClure, we worked together, and many of the best things you do in life you do collaboratively. But sometimes you also have to sit by yourself in the middle of the night and ask, “How can we actually solve this?” And in a way, that’s what I did with the methods paper. Getting it out and getting it to work was a collaborative effort. But you have to sit down and think it out.

Lastly, we, of course, would be remiss if we didn’t ask what advice would you give to young planners and academics who are just now starting their career?

Well, the first thing I would say is be absolutely sure that is what you want to do, because it’s far harder to be an academic now than it was when I started. Where I started was pretty far down the pack, but many people have done that and are now doing it. There are people who are the first in their family to go to college. Although I wasn’t: my sister and brother actually made it to college, but we were the first.

So be sure. How can you be sure? That’s an interesting question. For me, it was always when it came down to it, are you intellectually excited by what you are doing? You will be bored at times in your life, for sure. But if you are not intellectually excited and interested in what you are doing, then do something else. Because an academic life that doesn’t have that spark, as I have observed in many of my colleagues, is really not a great life. It leads to huge frustration, and it leads to the kind of sadness that you see in academics, who feel that somehow, their lives—particularly, they often feel that they are under-recognized. The truth is that nobody can get enough adulation, and
everybody makes mistakes. But if you really care intellectually about what you are doing, then it’s a really good life.

It means you have to like to read, by whatever medium you choose. And maybe books are done, but not books as things with chapters and words. But paper? I don’t know. I hope not. I like books with paper. But you have to have those ideas, and they have to turn you on, you know? Like what you do. Easy to say when you’ve done it, but what the hell? [laughs]

08:01:55:06
Holmes: Absolutely. Do you have any other questions that you wanted to ask, Shanna [Farrell]?

08:01:55:09
Farrell: I think that was—yeah. Do you have anything else that you want to add?

08:01:55:13
Holmes: Any final thoughts?

08:01:55:15
Teitz: A final thought? I guess my final thought is that I apologize to anyone who is deeply important who I have missed in this narrative. But making it up as you go along is not always the easiest thing to do. But I’d like to thank you both, Todd and Shanna, for being such great interviewers and patient oral historians. How else should I describe you? Excellent. So it’s been a great experience. Tiring, but really fun. Thank you very much.

08:01:56:17
Holmes: It’s been our pleasure, and thank you.

08:01:56:18
Farrell: Thank you.

[End of Interview]
AFTERWORD

The creation of an oral history is a rewarding yet demanding process. I am grateful to George Miller for the opportunity; to Shanna Farrell and Todd Holmes for their thoughtful and supportive efforts to make the process work; and to the Oral History Program at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. In the spirit of oral history as I’ve come to understand it, I have made very few changes to the text, other than to correct dates, spelling of names, and evident transcription errors. My often-clumsy locutions have been something of a dispiriting revelation, but they remain.

Reflecting on the effort, I do feel that I was probably insufficiently prepared to undertake the history, but that is my responsibility. However, the Oral History Program might benefit from providing prospective contributors some written guidance. Much of what I have done since completing the interviews has been work that would have been better undertaken before starting. Nonetheless, I am grateful for the incentive to read the several hundred letters that I wrote to my mother between 1956 and 1964, which she carefully saved. Most of my files from 1956 to 1994 remain in storage. Without access to them, I may have made errors in specific instances. If, in so doing, I have offended anyone who might read this, I do apologize.

I dedicate this history to my parents, who were the loving bulwark of our family through difficult times.

Michael B. Teitz

December 10th, 2017