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Oral history interview with Olav
Hammarstrom, 1982 October 21-1983 March
10

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Olav Hammarstrom from October 21, 1982 - March 10, 1983. The interview took place in Wellfleet, MA, and was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00]—in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, October 21, 1982, Robert Brown, the interviewer. [Audio break.] Uh, Mr. Hammarstrom, maybe you can—you were born in Finland in 19[0]6. Can you perhaps say something about your childhood, your family? Uh, what sort of background did you have?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I would say middle class, upper, upper middle class, my father's background, but mostly lawyers and bankers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And my mother was uh, ship brokers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sheep?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Ship.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ship brokers.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Ship brokers, in Veval, [ph] and, part then of then, of German stock from the old Hanseatic days, when Veval was one Hanseatic city, Veval and Reval [ph] and so forth, in the Baltic.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And I grew up partly in Veval and then moved around to a couple of places in middle Finland. This, my father had various banking jobs.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he would go from bank to bank, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: From bank to bank.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And were you, uh—were there several children in the family? Were—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: An older brother and I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —we were the two ones, and [inaudible] it was a fairly uneventful childhood, except I still remember vividly the part of the first World War. It touched us because Finnish troops came into Finland, and we had once a garden, and we lived out in the country, it was completely destroyed by the Cossacks. They had their horses in our garden.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh really. You mean Russian troops came in.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Russian troops came in. And also, remember, I could, because of my grandmother's Hanseatic German background, I spoke German fluently as a child, and one word I remember from that was *tarsenkommen*, [ph] which means sink—sunken ships, from the, the magazine [00:02:00] *Debokeh*, [ph] where they listed all the ships that the German submarines had sunk. And that, for some reason, has stuck to me, and it's—I always remember that one word. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was one that was especially vivid. Did you speak German then with your mother? She spoke—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, my grandmother—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your grandmother.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —we lived very close to my grandmother. I spoke German with my grandmother—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And what was—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and Swedish with my mother and father.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was your, was your mother a considerable influence on you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, quite a lot, and I think what little artistic talent I had came from my mother's side—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did it? You had—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —not too, not too much from my father, but she did quite a lot of—it was part of education in those days. They had the watercolors and so forth, you know, a good education in those days, and the finishing school in Switzerland, and things like that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you remember doing things when you were pretty small, beginning to make drawings, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think I could—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —construct things?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, I still have a lot, a few drawings here that my mother saved from my age of four up. I constantly drew, even when I was in school, a very rigid school, Latin school, you were forbid—you were supposed to sit like this, with your fingers on the pulpit, and look at your instructor constantly. But they let me draw, for them to sit—knew that I couldn't listen if I couldn't doodle—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, really?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and they let me doodle. So I was drawing straight through school. In fact, then, that was the only subject I had but straight A's, was in art. And then I graduated, so my art instructor said that "you are born to be a painter and an artist, but if you plan to make a living, don't do it." [Laughs.] But he was a frustrated painter himself, so. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was uh, through high school, though.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was through high school. That was through high school.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what kind of art instruction did you have? Could you describe some of what you had in that school?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It, it was drafting, and very much [00:04:00] watercolors, watercolor paintings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Looking—going out into nature, or, what did you paint?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, unfortunately, not. It—we had models of ducks and things, and we had to paint them, and Greek heads, you know, sculptures, I think they had to copy, that was that kind of a thing, very little of the nature.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you—had you been around to—been able to see works of art? Had you gone—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes. Very much so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —traveled a bit and seen—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I hadn't a chance to travel, but we had quite a lot of very good exhibitions, in Helsinki, and I particularly remember a big show of Cézanne. I was there practically for one week. It was every day there, and I did a lot then of actually to improve my technique in watercolors, actually, copied a lot of Cézanne paintings, in watercolor, just to find out he was doing it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why do you—what do you suppose there was in Cézanne that fascinated you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was his uh, his feeling for nature, and his warm color combination. It somewhat did to me, really warmed me up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Nothing to do with his structure and his sense of ambiguous space.

It was the colors.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no. It was the color.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because the usual painting you would see was darker and more somber?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Yes. And then, several of his uh, paint—I don't have here. I can show you something. Yes, by influence of him, of Cézanne, I did a lot of watercolors, and then, there's been I—after high school, when I started at, in the University of—Institute of Technology in Helsinki, I did this self portrait of myself.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Now this, this certainly indicates a real competence in watercolor.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was pretty good—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I have to say it myself, and this [00:06:00] is not of the best, but it's just typical of the innovative—the use of watercolor, and it was very much influenced by Cézanne, and this was 1927.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is this a—is there preliminary, um, drawing in pencil, underlies this? Just the very merest sketch, I think.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, there are some lines you see.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, but just the very merest.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Just very, just the outline and then the rest is straight in colors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, Finnish painting, you saw, though, as a boy, was uh, still quite old fashioned by comparison with Cézanne?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, by far, that's why I reacted so for it, but it was all very formal and traditional.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Fairly much as your training had been at the uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, exactly, so this—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the name of your high school?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: *Svenskanomaluceit*, because—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So this was a Swedish—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was a Swedish school. They had two, one Swedish and one Finnish, normal [inaudible], it was a state-sponsored school with a very strong Latin, Latin trended [ph] it, so I had four years of Latin.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh. Was your—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did—were you put into the Swedish school because—was it—was your father Swedish descent? I would think.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is that the reason, do you think, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh no, that was really from our homeland; it was Swedish.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So Finnish was uh, the language of a lot of people, but not—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, the majority.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The majority.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. The Swedish at that time was, about 10 percent of the whole population was Swedish speaking, mostly along the shoreline, the west coast shoreline, facing Sweden.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was there any class distinction between those who spoke Swedish and those who spoke—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Originally it was very much so, because the wealth and education came from Sweden. So the educated group, and also the ministry, and all the technical things, lawyers, every—that was Swedish, and the Finns were more or less farmers, and, and less educated. And during my era when I grew up, it was actually, uh, [00:08:00] very tumultuous years before the Finnish started waking up and getting education, and come up to that level. So it was almost a hate between the Swedish group and the Finnish group, but particularly the Finnish with, they felt that they had been really put down by the Swedish, and they were very much right in that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So you were somewhat aware of that as a young man.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh I was very much, very much aware of it, and it was also—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you at all involved in political things as a young man?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, nothing political things, kind living it up and in the war, when the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean in the Second World War?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, or so-called, what they called the Winter War, this was 1939, '40. Whatever the fraction [ph] is, the Finns thought that the Swedish speaking wouldn't be so good, but then they found out that the Swedish were just as much national Finnish at the Finns.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So that leveled up, the whole situation changed after that. And by now, this Finnish, Finnish speaking group, we saw at once the technology. I think in science, in arts, medicine, and so forth, I think as a majority, all Finnish speaking. So the crest, [ph] crest now—think that's the right word—it's mostly Finnish speaking now. So the situation has changed there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, so also in that respect, uh, Swedish is a minority group now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you know, uh, in your childhood, did you know any artists? So, you said your mother had an interest in art—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —but I mean did you—were you—were your family or yourself friends with any of the painters of the day, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —architects?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No. No, not when I grew up, so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That must be the business world, and banking, and those were the friends—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the friendships lay there.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why did you go on [00:10:00] in technical education? Was your strength, uh, in that rather than in literature or languages, or, what—you went to the technical university. Um, why do you suppose you decided that? [Audio break.] Yeah, I was wondering, why the technical university instead of the, I suppose the continued classical university education?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, let's say, the day after I graduated from high school, because 1926, last of May, the first of June, I volunteered in the Finnish Army. Everybody had to do one-year service, except it became a—to serve up, to say, it was called you had to do 15 months, and you could go before you reached that age, but everybody had to do it, anyway. So I went immediately the day after I graduated, went right into the Army, and spent my year then in training, and so forth. And during that period, my father committed suicide.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Wow.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And I didn't like to bring this up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, because Marianne's father did the same thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah. Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, anyway, so that changed up the whole family picture for our family; it was very desolate. And uh, so when I came out, or was through with the Army, I even considered to continue; I was in the Air Force to continue become a pilot.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Italians [ph] liked the life in the Army, particularly, life for the pilots, you see. They have just, going to hell with everything, partying and girls, and—[inaudible]—like this some kind of—in that early stage of flying, you know, that we just felt that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —very reckless, kind of romantic.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Completely reckless, yes. It was that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Live for today, and—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Exactly, and I couldn't face [ph] that. So, I already had gone through the tests, I think, so I was approved [00:12:00] to become a pilot, but then I said, "Nothing doing," and I couldn't find a job for anything, so I ended up on a construction job as a handyman, and worked there for one year. At the same time, I'm into night classes, in an arts and crafts school, called Athenaeum, actually, the same school Marianne graduated from.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yes, mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And I was taking courses in architectural drafting and lettering and so forth, more in the professional line, instead of pure art line which I could have chosen too, and that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why do you, why do you think you were doing architectural line? You were thinking in terms of getting a job, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —practical career.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, and of a practical career, and it paid off in that respect, that, that uh, building boom started, and most of the architectural firms were very short of draftsmen, so there was this architect whose name was Palmqvist [ph]; he's mentioned here somewhere.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and he called up Athenaeum and said did we have anybody who could, they could recommend for him as a draftsman, and they recommended me. So that's when I started my first experience in architecture. And he said that I should try to apply to the Institute of Technology. I said, "I don't have a chance, before [ph] mathematics are so bad because I've been to Latin school, and have very [laughs] little of mathematics and physics." And the little I had was very bad. So, he said, "Apply anyway," and he would write the recommendation. So, then I went back [laughs]—[inaudible]—through the list uh, that all the nine names that were approved, and I was not there. I was very sadly walking out through the door when they said, "Wait!" They said, "There's still one exception, who, because of this recommendation, had been accepted," and that was me, [laughs] [00:14:02] and that's how I got in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you got in, was it a great deal of trouble to make up for the mathematics, or did you have to do very much?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I had to do quite a lot. And I practically, I was so bad, so, many of those cases for those tests, I didn't understand anything. I hear "learn it by heart," how to solve the problem, knew it step one, step two, step three, step four. We're not understanding anything about it, just maybe [laughs] this is through, and afterwards, I was—often wondered why they stress so much mathematics, for I never used it, after that. Never!

And also, if you have a problem of that kind, it usually involve a structure, and engineers, and then you have the structural engineers—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You turn to one of them—[cross talk]—can do the calculations.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —who does all the calculation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I never have once had any use for all those mathematics, always one—and the same thing goes in the air here, and also in education here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that about half—a good percentage of your courses were mathematics.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The first two years—

ROBERT F. BROWN: First—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —first two years about half, half of it was for—was mathematics and physics.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what was the remainder, of the first two years? What—what—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The remainder was really design, very much design and solving architectural problems.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And how did you—[cross talk]—could you describe how, what those courses were like? What was their um, assumption? What was their uh, outlook, or approach?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it started with very naïve, small problems, and that, I jumped right ahead of the whole class. I had already one year experience in drafting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I had been in an office. So, to me, it was child's play.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because you had already had to solve small problems and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I had solved all—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the Palmqvist office, huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, in the Palmqvist office. So, that was no problem [00:16:00] in itself, but then of course, there was two stages, there is, in Finland, you don't make a test as you call it—you get a diploma.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: After two years, you get the so-called, was the *lilla* [ph] diploma, which means the small diploma, and the preliminary, and to that stage, it's more or less the whole group has the same, the engineers and the architects, they're all in mathematics and physics and chemistry up to that level. And after that, you specialize, you see. The engineers go one way and the architects go one way. So from then on, you get just pure architecture.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what did that consist of practicing? Drawing, uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Practicing drawing and so, you got problems.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And did you study what had been done in the past very much?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, much more than here. In that respect, it was a remarkable school. We had about two years of architectural history. On top of that, we had one year on Scandinavian architectural history. And, you can't believe how tough the tests were. For example, you went up to a test, and they say, "Draw a section of Notre-Dame Cathedral," or, "Draw a floor plan of such and such church in England," and you had to draw it up! You really had to study, not just to see a picture, say "that is that," but I know, this is—you had to show the constructions that you really knew what they were doing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.] Did you cat—get onto that quite easily? Was that something—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, yes, actually, I loved it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had a vivid memory for structure.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I, I had memory for structure of it, very strong picture of memory—[inaudible]—to say the names of—I saw it there, more or less, so it was very easy for me, and I enjoyed it. And we had also one course with that lot very much in the Scandinavian architectural history. You had to measure [00:18:00] and draw a historical building who has not been measured and drawn before. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you pick?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I picked a Gothic cathedral in Pergo, [ph] it's a small town outside Helsinki, about one hour outside Helsinki. It has one of the only—it's really a Gothic cathedral. It doesn't look like Gothic, because it's one of those steep foundations built in granite. The walls about six feet in the beginning, and then up—and then it's a very, very steep roof. You have seen pictures of them. It's a gable, with some little ornaments in it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And uh, so we had our group, three, three architecture students, and they measured the whole thing, and they, beautiful drawings of it. And I got so carried away, so then there was an old—called Cour des Loges uh, a—old—it was a Swedish count originally had owned it, and built this great residence in the early 17th century, and that was also unmeasured, and we got so excited about this job, so we measured that one, too. But it was a marvelous experience. We learned a lot, really, how things that are put together.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the name of it? Can you spell it, the Cordela—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Cour des Loges , uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: How do you spell "shee"?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, I—it's French, the Cour des Loges , Cour, la—la—L-O-G, I think, *loges*.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, *loges*.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: *Loges*.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Cour des Loges yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So you were really carried away by that. What do you think—what is—what was there in those exercises that appealed to you, do you think, [00:20:00] in drawing and making these beautiful, measured drawings?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It—very much graphics, just plain graphics.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay, the appearance on the paper.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The appearance on the paper always meant a lot to me, it still does.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did the tedium of the, of the task not bother you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not a bit. No, not a bit. I could spend endless hours on drawings, just to get that, that perfect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In fact, during those early student years, they sort of took them out of the survey from when I was starting in, in the Institute of Technology so, most of the time, I had to work my way through at the same time. So I worked in various architectural offices—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Which you can see there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was all during those student years and I also drew—it was fun, because I am very good in ink drawings. I do it—I bet I spent—but my crowning glory I think was a first front-page ad in the leading [laughs] newspaper in Helsinki, of Stutz automobiles.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: All those mirrors and drives and cars and things, and, but for weeks, I mean. But, unfortunately, I lost all those. I don't have a single copy—[inaudible]—fantastic drawings I had to—[inaudible]—I'd make myself, but they're so like their own, what I had done. I did that to make a living. Another thing I did also, I did something that might amaze you. I did interior and furniture drawings for Marianne's mother and father.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: She was an outstanding interior decorator with very good taste but not really trained. And her father was, after all, an architect. [00:22:00] But, not uh, working as an arch—he worked as a writer and a critic. And he needed quite often illustrations to his book and I did little illustrations. And she again needed drawings and—for certain interiors, and furniture, to fit into interiors, so I did the working drawings for her furniture, and she was an excellent instructor, and particular in getting—I remember especially, I had to draw some Rococo furniture. You know, it's those beds—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sure.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and things. And how she had the—[inaudible]—written, and beat [ph], you know. I drew a line, and it ended up as one of those rosettes or something, and she said, "That's impossible, because it didn't have written. It has to go here low, up down," and said, "you just have to jump up, take a deep breath, let it out, and then it comes." See, really—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Very good, and yet she couldn't translate it into a drawing herself.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, she, she could not herself at all, but she could see what was right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was her name, uh, Marianne's mother? What is her name—was her name?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Strengell.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, what was her first name, I mean?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Anna.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Anna Strengell.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Anna, Anna Strengell.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. And a very gifted interior designer.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very gifted.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You would—would you also learn how, in terms of scale, in terms of relation of the size of the furniture in proportions to the interior?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, oh, very much so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would you sketch up the whole interior from—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —for Anna Strengell?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, very much so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then you would also do the working drawings.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Then I did the working drawings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was a kind of training, I suppose, most of your fellow students didn't get, did they?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not at all, no, not at all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They didn't worry about furnishings, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no. One thing that just occurred to me, what's interesting, in those days, of

architectural education, which I'm still lacking, or hard to get grasp, [00:24:00] and that, that architecture was—the only way that we were teaching it was black and white. Color was never introduced. People—color didn't exist.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Not even into your, uh, finished renderings?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, a little bit, you just put colors here and there, but, but nobody stressed it. It was black and white.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: All the drawings were black and white. Everything was black and white. And it's so different now, but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, this stem—the—it doesn't sound as though it stems from the uh, common at that time still French Beaux-Arts tradition; it stemmed from some other uh, tradition, the, the instruction you were getting? Because in Beaux-Arts rendering, it's, as I've seen, there's often a great deal of color.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, there's a great deal of color.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But this tradition was what, uh, one coming from Germany, or from somewhere else?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It might have come from Germany, or maybe Scandinavian in general, because also, I think just a technical thing, nothing was printed in color. Whatever books you saw, there was never—you never saw anything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: A reproduction—[inaudible]—never saw an architectural reproduction in color.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it might've been almost through an accident of uh, what they could see, which was—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. But at the same time, because, photography was so rare that many of my professors and instructors were excellent watercolorists—they went to Italy and so forth, and there are fabulous sketches in color, watercolors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But as students, you weren't to do renderings or uh, studies in color?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, nothing, nothing. Constantly black and white.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh, was uh—were field trips any part of your, uh, study? Would the teacher take you out to discuss buildings? There was—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, they did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They did.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, they did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh they did that, quite, but only locally, only thing [ph] now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But that is an important part of architectural education, isn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, very much so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To see how things translate [00:26:00] from scheme, from drawing, to—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, very much so, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Both good and bad.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you begin to sense certain strengths, uh, within yourself, in terms of what you might be, be able to do best, even as a student? Were there certain things that you seemed to do much better than others, or certain things you enjoyed doing more?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, I was always ahead in presentation, because I was so good in drawing and drafting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But also, I had a very strong feeling about simplicity, and not too much of the old-fashioned ornamental thing, and then, I started—went to Salen [ph]; in 1930, came the Asplund exhibition in Stockholm, you might have heard about.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yes. You mean he designed the buildings?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He designed the—he designed the exhibition, and several of the buildings, and the various architects, including Alvar Aalto, and some other things, did their things, but he had the overall designs, so he really was in charge of it all, see. And uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that a revelation to you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Incredible revelation, not only for me, but practically for the whole group. In my years, it was the first time, actually, in the history, in architectural education, that we made a complete protest, said, "Nothing more of the old, now it's this, it."

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean when you came back from Stockholm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: When we came back from Stockholm.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was there in Asplund that so appealed to you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Eh, it—I would say it was—he had two qualities: first, that he was brave enough to break the ornamentation and the, what that—[00:28:00] we called it the fancy stuff, and tried to get, go down to the bones, and then that he had extremely good sense for material, and extremely good sense for proportions. So what he did, it just appeared to be just straight to me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. The materials hadn't been handled too well, in your opinion, by the traditional?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no, there's—barely even touched it. They—no, not—technically, what was this and what was that, but not what it meant then.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You didn't know the properties of material, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: We knew the properties—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you—but you were—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But it wasn't applied aesthetics at all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Whereas, Asplund did in his building [inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: As—Asplund did—and it seemed [ph] to me. So that changed a lot, in the whole group and that applied to me, for actually, I got a couple of prizes in the school competitions there, just because I was so. You had to be advanced at my level, as to catch on, or be that radical like I was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well your teachers evidently then went along with this change, did they?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, we had—one young instructor's name was Hilding Ekelund, and he went along with that. The older professors were sort of in between. They let us do it, but you could see they didn't quite understand it, and I don't blame them. For example, I knew a couple of architects in Finland, on the—a little older group and generation from me, who felt that this was it, so they tried to do it, but they couldn't, because it didn't go to their heart. They were still so grown up in the old tradition.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And they liked ornament, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They liked ornament, and—[inaudible]—when they do something, it was completely forced. And, they took some shapes or something, like copying Corbusier, tried to do something [00:30:00] like Gropius, without really understanding what it was all about. But in my generation, they started catching on

because we grew up with it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Well the older men, did it—they could uh, just do the facades, but they couldn't do—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Exactly, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the whole structure and interrelate each, outside, inside?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Whereas you had, your generation was able to do that.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, Eliel Saarinen was—did—was he different from these other older architects, or do you think not, he—because you could see his work, but he wasn't appreciably different.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no, I wouldn't say, no, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of course, he was gone by then, but you could see his railroad station, and that sort of thing.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes. And uh, in a way, he was quite close, but it was his famous place, Hvitträsk. I don't know if you have heard about it, that was his actually home, and his first work. It's—Hvitträsk was a complex starting out more or less like a summer residence, and there was this group of three young architects: Eliel Saarinen, Gesellius, Gesellius, and Lindgren. And practically without any money, they built, they just went to help to build this, almost like a palace, overlooking Vitträsk, which is a lake, and that is still up today now. It was some quite romantic, and they tried to create the Finnish style. And it's also very successful, and it's one of the big things in Helsinki now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But it's exceptional, even in Saarinen's work, is it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, it's successful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you were saying that otherwise, he was more—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —traditional than so radical.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this built—was that built, uh, that residence or summer place, built out of timber, or was it uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: A combination of timber and, and masonry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: A combination of both. [00:32:00] I'm amazed that you don't know about it—[inaudible]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well I do, vaguely.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Vaguely, something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But the uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: We know it so well because Marianne and I almost grew up there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Marianne, particularly Marianne, who was part of the Saarinen family.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well now, but I went there skiing. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was, was student life uh, enjoyable for you? You had to work, of course, after school, didn't

you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —but did you still have quite a big social life? Is that an important part of university?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, it was quite a lot of social life, too, and sort of it was tough for me. [Laughs.] I had to have my studies, and, and I had to buy—work for, [laughs] for my living, and partly support my mother, and then on top of that, a social life. So it was really quite hectic years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you continue to—you, you took your time uh, in the school, I guess. How—you were there in the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Then it took me 10 years to graduate.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because you could—you had to work as well, is that—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Because I worked as well, yes. But on the other hand, when I graduated, I had such an experience, so, compared with the other graduates, you know, who practically had not much office experience or any, but, I was really grown up in that respect. And when I graduated, I worked for Bertil [ph] Lilliquist, [ph] whose name I have forgotten—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to write in. I've got it right—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Bertil, Bertil Lilliquist.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. And he was—at that time, they had just started on the Petsamo Nickely [ph] project, and he was in charge of that. So, when I graduated, I worked for him on this project, so that what's led me into the Petsamo Nickely.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is 1937, approximately.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That you began working on it.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, so you—had you seen uh—had you traveled beyond Scandinavia yet? Or you—not yet?
[00:34:00]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Nowhere, nowhere, I never had the chance.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah. So you were aware of what was going on outside just through magazines—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Only through magazines.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and publications.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, only, only through publication.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This Petsamo Nickely project was to be a huge thing, wasn't it, a mine and a community?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It turned out to be an enormous things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the beginning, how was it? What was it, uh, did you do with Lilliquist? Did he—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it was really a place to start, was kind of a—I should have at least a plan of it here. The office of Bertil Lilliquist, he had one small group—[inaudible]—eventually two or three, including me, was working on this Petsamo, Petsamo project, which at that time consisted—you can barely see it here. It's outside—this is the town, actually the factory area—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —just next to it, and a couple of barracks for workers, and then under construction was some kind of a, called it clubhouse, for bachelors and visiting people, and they lived—mainly, the technical stuff,

and that was about it. And then, there was a village, which is not shown here, or barracks for workers. And, they didn't have any plans for anything! They just, the whole thing moved so fast that they had to go and build and build, and in this mine, and the factory and so forth, and didn't think of what it really meant. So the first set up of barracks was for workers, what I call the temporary workers. It means construction workers, just came up there to make a lot of money and leave.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But then was a second group of workers which were the miners, who were permanent, [00:36:00] and, originally, the Canadian engineer who was there in charge, he thought that he could treat them just as well as the construction workers, and just put them in barracks and it was set. But they refused to stay without having their wives and their families up there [ph]. So they practically had to change the program to accommodate the families. So then the [laughs] whole community started growing. First, they built them barracks there for so-called top bachelors—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —permanent ones, so they got really more, more than—this is called, so-called the barracks.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], and let's look at these. Are these masonry or concrete structures?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, this was—these was—[audio break]—it looks very funny, but this was some kind of a plaster on wood, and the whole thing looks so bad because it's camouflage paint on it, on top of it. So there was two floors, each one had a room there, and there was common rooms and so forth below.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So there was very little consideration given to style or aesthetics, or anything of that sort.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Nothing, nothing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was purely functional.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Purely functional, just slap it up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And function meaning, enough room for them to live in—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and to keep their morale reasonably okay, giving them common rooms and things.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, so, that was actually this, but this group here, and then, then the restaurant, a fairly large restaurant for that had to take care of the construction workers and these mining workers, and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you work in Helsinki, or were you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: At that stage, with uh, Lilliquist, in Helsinki.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You worked down there in—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and it was extremely bad communications, when you talk about 24 hours by train to—*oomph*—

ROBERT F. BROWN: To get to northern—[audio break].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Whoops—it took about 24 hours by train from Helsinki to Rovaniemi—it's right on the Arctic Circle—then [00:38:00] it took about another 24 hours, by truck up here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And the mail was just about as slow as that, and airmail didn't exist.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So the communication in place was horrible, so they got the drawings up and then if it, something didn't fit or the surveyors had done something—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Two days to get back—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and then come back, so it was a constant fight between them and say, we didn't understand their problems and they didn't understand our problems, and then came a new chief. The first chief was, was uh, a Canadian, English-Canadian, who was in charge of the mining, and the second was an expert in the melting, and he said right away—his name was Cinco [ph]; he was a very good guy. He said right away, "I don't accept this. I got to have the architect on the job. Otherwise, we can never move forward." He was right. And, and Lilliquist did it, he can't leave his other practice. He had his private outside practice; he did a lot of very nice churches, and apartment buildings and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he a good person to work—for you to work for?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The very good person—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to work with. So, so he said—and he couldn't speak one word of English, either, and I had been, when I started there, I had been studying English every night like mad, and it paid off.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because, because the basic technical people in the International—this was International Nickel Company, they're English speaking.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were all English speaking, and didn't speak anything else. So this was very fortunate, for then they offered me the job. So I would be sent out first as a representative for—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The job had to move quickly because it was to be strategically important—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —nickel.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Nickel was strategically important; mainly, they were after money. And it's faster to get into the nickel; they got the money out there. But, nickel was considered so rich, they said it—but in the moment, [00:40:00] that the nickel, when the melting process going, the whole enterprise is paid for in one year. So that was really one of the things—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —but then, then, later on came politics in this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the war coming along.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And the war coming along.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were sent up there—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So that's why, how, how I ended up there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did your work, did your work change very much? Did the style of buildings change once you got up there, at Petsamo?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, I would say it's—I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You began to see the real conditions.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I began really to see condition; I could see the human aspect, too. I started humanizing things. I get them all—like residences and homes, they're not like barracks. And I and friends talked quite a lot, and many of these, even at—in factory buildings, that changed quite a lot. I don't recall—[inaudible]—yeah, I started—this is not a good picture because of the high basement, but I started making—instead of having the barracks, I made two-family houses, and one-family houses, and small, small houses, with wood and warmth and fireplaces and things inside and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: For uh, it was absolutely unavoidable. It was a part of a—to me, an intriguing social awakening to see what goes on and how a community starts operating. So, just as at first, there was a—the

temporary construction workers, in barracks, and then we started out with these permanent workers, were the miners and things, who required housing for families and so forth. And then on top of that, moment the wives came up there, and their families, okay, you had to have a clean bagger [ph]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —very quickly, [00:42:00] and then, also partly because of this climate, and the dark winters, you had to have something, otherwise they'd go nuts. So they ended up, you can believe it, they ended up, for example, I remembered it here, a library. They had a choir. They had an orchestra. They had the theater, both movies and live stage theater; and built the sport clubs. They had to build—we had to build a soccer field. They had skiing; we had to build a ski jump. We had to build, build an indoor arena that wasn't finished, but, but all this just to keep the people there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: To see this amazing amount of activities.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you realized, in a very, very compressed way, what a community, even a normal community, might need—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes!

ROBERT F. BROWN: —tremendous experience.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was fantastic experience, to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was awakening for me; I had no idea. It was just like, us, naïve engineers were told to build a barrack, and that's it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was their city plan, was just a couple of barracks.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

[END OF TRACK.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] Were you uh, fairly free, uh, to go on your own in terms of the style of the buildings, or did you have to consult with Lilliquist back in Helsinki very frequently?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not very, practically, when once they're going, not to draw anymore.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But he was there if I needed some advice or something or technical, but in aesthetics and so forth, on my own.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You could go. And—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I could go. But, you got so limited be—mainly because of the client and also because of the building materials, because everything has to be shipped up from the south.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did the in—the manager, Simcox, [ph] did he play much of a role? Did he—would he criticize and watch what you were doing, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, [laughs] there was interesting interference with him. I think I mentioned once that he came—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and his contract was that he would have his own residential—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —building—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —designed by, by uh, Maxwell Fry. Well, I had one quick look and it—Maxwell Fry had designed a marvelous house, which would be ideal into the era. [They laugh.] But nothing, there is no account [ph]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —up there. It was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: A warm climate but not for the Arctic.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It, it was steel and glass practically, the whole thing. So, it took me a while to convince [laughs] Simcox that it just doesn't work. So finally I had a new design for his house and so forth, and, he started warming up. And uh, he was first very anti-architect. He said, "The gate into the—" his industrial area, "—is my limit; I can't go inside that gate. Outside, okay, go ahead, but do my house first." So, [laughs] I did his house first and slowly, [00:02:00] he started understanding what I was doing. So he ended up—but inside the gate, they couldn't do one thing, not even to a control room in the melting house, without my approval—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It ended up that way.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It, it ended up that way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. So Simcox must've had some awareness though of advanced architecture, if he had Maxwell Fry design his house. Then he must have had some—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, because then—no, that was not Simcox.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, it was the company itself.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That, that was the Mond Nickel Company.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The Mond—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —M-O-N-D, back in England, I see.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Back in England, and they had some relationship with Maxwell Fry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So actually, they sent Maxwell Fry once over to Finland, just to check how the Finnish architects were doing. So I took Maxwell Fry actually on a tour up to the Petsamo area, and he came back and supported me in doing all right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did—how did—what was he like, Maxwell Fry?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, he was very pleasant, fairly quiet man, very nice, and very—not pompous at all. No, I enjoyed him very much. My English wasn't too hot yet at that time. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were trying.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was trying.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did, did you develop a great deal of confidence on this job? I mean, this, this was, this really was, for a young architect, was a wonderful, a large amount of responsibility, wasn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was an incredible responsibility, and also, in, as you say about building confidence, I was forced to build confidence, but if you have been sitting and let's say, if I have been working in the same position but in Helsinki, I could always ask somebody.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I was alone. There was nobody I could ask. If I would ask, there would—I knew it would be two weeks before I had an answer. That was too late. So you just had to go ahead.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it was a great training ground for you.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It's incredible training ground. Oh, it definitely was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In terms of aesthetics, [00:04:00] uh, what were—were you able to do some things in terms of design, your aesthetic ideas, and were—did they develop a bit, or—I know you were fairly limited here— [inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was extremely limited, but I did quite a lot. I feel—actually, I would call it self-improvement. I got a feeling more for, both for materials, and by force for simplicity, also with simplicity, how important proportions are, and what you do, and how to tie it to the ground, a relationship between building, and the ground—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the ground.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —which was more important than anything here, because you couldn't cover it up. You couldn't put a bush there, [laughs] if you have put a window in the wrong place, as Aalto always—have you heard the story about Aalto?

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Aalto's in his office drawing, drawing this marvelous elevation, and then he was drawing a beautiful tree in one of these elevations, and all of this was Alvar Aalto's little boy came in, and looked at Papa, and Papa was drawing a tree, so the boy said, "Papa, why are you—what are you now hiding?" [They laugh.] Well, afterwards, a master put these plants in the right spot.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh. But you had to face up to the fact that—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I had to face up; I couldn't get the bush there. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. So you had to make those look pleasing, the transition.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. Did you—how did you try to do this, with uh, sloping walls, or, how did you try to give things sort of a relation to the ground around them?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it was very tough, really. It was very, very tough. But, many cases, it didn't work, as you can see here, where—

ROBERT F. BROWN: These houses.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —where you ended up with a basement like that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The basement just comes flush—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Because in the next corner, was level up there, and all underneath is solid granite.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You just couldn't go into the ground. Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not—you couldn't. As much as possible, you tried to avoid it. For, if you [00:06:00] had the foundations of rock over there, but it's not—do you know how the footings, that you go eight feet down to this, the frost level?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Here, you go two and a half, 30 inches normally. There, you had to go eight feet down.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You tried to avoid that, that—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh boy, you certainly did that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well then you were uh—in terms of your uh, architectural draw plan, we've discussed that, but—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —this was also a time of uh, the Winter War, which was what, 1939 and '40, the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: 1939 and '40.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Finnish-Russian War.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you dropped everything because you became—or did you? You were a part-time soldier, at that time.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, the moment the war broke out—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —I was called in by the Army.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, I was 100 percent in the Army.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the—but the nickel mine and smelter continued.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, the melter, what—that stand, [ph] the melter wasn't built yet—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and the factory was not even working.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It wasn't even completed.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was not completed, and the mine was just almost finished, but not the melting procedure, nothing of that, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you went into the Army. Did many of the other men also, they dropped everything to fight in the war?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: How the war started, in the morning we went to work as normal, eight o'clock. Ten o'clock, the Russian bombers came, and they bombed everything around, but not the nickel mine, you know.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, but they liked to try to get it undisturbed, I assume. And, all the workers, everybody like me had already had military training, so it was of no—[inaudible]—so everybody was drafted. The same night, of the workers, they had made one company, foot company, which was sent up to Lenahammery [ph] Harbor to fight. They were fighting that same night. [00:08:00] And uh, I was left behind with a platoon to take care of the immigration [ph] and destruction of the mine, that was my orders, and I was under incredible pressure, for I was the only one then of the, let's say, the higher-up management—the other drafting [ph] was sent somewhere else, so I got all the darndest telephone calls, for partly of families in south Finland, say by the —my boys, and partly of my parents and partly my father, but I even got a call from England, from newspapers and say, "How is it going?" That they heard this report and that report. Wild reports were—no medium [ph] borderline was so short that you could see what's going on here, and my old boss, Simcox, was sitting under their bridge and border, and could see what's happened on this side.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean, he'd gone to a neutral—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He left.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He sent them all—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He sent all the Canadians and English.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: All the Canadians and English, he sent them out immediately.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But they, the—Simcox, they had finished his house, two weeks before this happened.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He hardly got to use it, then.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, even got a Steinway grand piano to the border.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you um, any premonition? Were there—had Russians been snooping around the place before?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not really.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You never saw them.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: We saw them afterwards.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, but afterward, but their border was some miles away.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, oh yeah, no, we had no idea about this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: We saw that the, the situation was tense in Karelia, and we are led around—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Down below in the south.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, but we didn't expect anything up here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, when the—when it then started, actually, and the Russians started landing troops and so forth, so our orders was used to retreat, back where we could stop them, and do it as slowly as possible, and there was a good reason for it. There's an atlas book here. The reason was that we should retreat as slowly as possible because the Russians [00:10:00] had great forces, tried to break through and break off Finland here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the middle of Finland.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In the middle of Finland, to go here to the Swedish border, and they got quite far in here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So we had the order just to stop them from coming in here to move, to retreat, to get them to link together, to retreat as slowly as possible. We did, but that was our orders.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you, how many of you were there, just a few hundred?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, 600.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Six hundred.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And they had thousands against you, did they?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They had 30,000.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But they, their tactics were rather stupid, right?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were so completely stupid; it's unbelievable that it would be so bad.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you, you've—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then also, their intelligence, we thought their uh, their intelligence was perfect, but Hel [ph] Miska [ph] collected everything; the Miska collected in south Finland too, for Finland had a very strong Communist party. And they thought that when they come in, the Communist party would meet them with open arms. And that was that, and they thought the same thing was happening up north. We heard later on they actually had a list of all the top boys in the administration including me, who was supposed to be wiped out immediately when they came in, but the Finnish Communists were more—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Nationalists?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Nationalist Finns, and they were furious; they were absolutely—and they all joined the Finnish Army and they—just as volunteers, not mad like that, so it was complete discord relation on their part. Well, I don't know if there is more to say about that, except that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That continued for a year, and was it—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, that was only three months.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Three months.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Three months this war, and—but when we left, everything was destroyed there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You, you'd carried out the destruction of the mine.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, I did—[crosstalk]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So then did you go back to, to Helsinki, after the war?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Then I went to back to Helsinki where they—[inaudible]—some kind of a [00:12:00] temporary peace treaty with Russia. I went back to Helsinki, and uh, actually, my own home. I was—that was my first marriage. Marianne is my second wife. And uh, so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had family down, down then, your wife, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, and in one of the first buildings there, I got an apartment, and moved up my wife and daughter, who was about one year old—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —for five days, then the war broke out. So and destroyed everything in here, destroyed including my home, so the whole thing went. And when I came back to Helsinki, after the war, I had nothing, except a dirty uniform and a toothbrush. My wife and daughter had been evacuated to Sweden, like most of the kids from there and so forth, she has relatives in Sweden, so it worked out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And so you be—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, so I was completely at a loss, and then one of my good friend, architect friends, said, "For God's sake, take over Alvar Aalto's office." Because Alvar Aalto was in United States, actually doing propaganda and get support and so forth for Finland, and he had somewhat got stranded here, come back. So, I took over of the surrounding Alvar Aalto's office, for about, a little over two months, mainly city planning and so forth, for there were three architects in Aalto's office at that time, and they were all killed in this war—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So his office was completely stranded. So, [laughs] around his office, for little over two months, I would say, they thought they were seeing Aalto. I don't think he even knew I was running his office. And, then, Finland is—pressure from International Nickel Company and Mond Nickel Company, and Russia, because it's back. So in the final peace treaty, because the whole Petsamo area [ph], so then the head of the company [00:14:00] called me and said, "Are you willing to come back and start again?" I said, "Absolutely." So, [laughs] then I dropped Aalto's office and went up again. So, so I had been working for Aalto without seeing him a single time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ha. Well, Aalto had a lot of work? Even in the midst of war, there was, there was a lot of—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, oh yeah, he had a lot of work. He had a lot of work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Was there anything about his practice that was—you could see was different from Lilliquist's office? Were they—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were they quite different?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, this was quite different. Lilliquist's [ph] in that respect was much more, I would say, old fashioned, in a way. It was not a traditional thing, but he was very warm and human and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and feelings. In particular, I loved his—he did a lot of small country churches, and they were very, very warm and sensitive.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Whereas Aal—what was Aalto's office like, in his practice?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Aalto's office, it was very, at that early stage, very influenced by Corbu, of course, Corbusier. And that way, but he had his personal touch, but Aalto is—was a great artist, and great feeling for materials, and a fantastic draftsman. His sketches are incredible.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what did you have to do? The two months in his office, what were you doing, renderings, and preparing finished drawings, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, what I actually was doing was doing mainly city planning, had the two, two large areas, who were left half-finished when he left, and then the boys who had been working on it were gone. So I had to call for, for the—it was for the industrial areas, and they insisted on going ahead. So I was finishing up those city plans, actually, and residential areas, and so forth. So that actually—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well when you went back up to Petsamo, then eventually, it was taken on by the Germans, wasn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it was never—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Never?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, the countryside, the Germans went through there, but uh, in the mine itself, was constantly under Finnish control—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:16:00] Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —but working for the Germans, so then it started, finally started running. So the Finla—Finnish government sold the nickel to the Germans.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But you, you weren't under their close control up there.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not inside the community. There was no Germans inside the community, but there quite a lot around, around the borderland with Russia, and so forth. And that's where I was partly involved in doing just architectural work, for I was drafted right away when the Second War was starting. I was drafted in the Army immediately, and actually used as a scout, mainly for the Germans, because I knew the country; I knew the Laplanders. So actually the day before, for example, the day before the war started, I was sent out—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The day before the Second World War started.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, I was sent out to scout out the Russian fortifications. Very discreetly, they said that, "Would you please—maybe you should leave your passport and all your papers here, in case you happen to cross the borderline," because I think that the orders, you had to cross the borderline to do maps over where the fortifications were. So, it was, as well, and that was pretty tough, and that was in June. It was in full sunshine day and night, and practically bare tundras, so it was very tricky to move around there. But so I was gone for a week, as my Laplander—[inaudible]—[laughs]—we had no radio contact or anything in those days. So when I finally came back to the Finnish border, there was a complete German division. I couldn't believe it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was even before uh, they'd invaded Poland.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were already up there.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were already up there, and then came the declaration of war, and we're all sitting there waiting for it, and then they stormed in, with my maps. So, [laughs] so I said, "And you like meeting them along onshore where they are?" They took one look at myself and said, "Never; everybody would think you are Russian, [laughs] unshaved and—[inaudible]." [Laughs.] [00:18:00] They said, "Well, you would be shot immediately by our boys, if we think you are Russian." [They laugh.] I was partly picked also because I knew the Laplanders.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was a skier and a good scout, and also, I spoke German.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah. The Laplanders kind of went between the borders? They just would migrate? Or there was traditional, so there was not—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Traditional, there was nothing for them so much—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —but partly, they migrated because of the reindeer stables.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah. Did you get to know them fairly well?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, the Laplanders, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were they quite different in temperament from the Finns?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, quite different. I loved them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What were they like? It was more—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They are very bright and extremely sensitive. I think all, more or less nomad people are that kind of sensitiveness. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: To, to what?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, all my scouts—

ROBERT F. BROWN: To, to—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, like, I had all my, my personal scouts and things, they were all Laplanders. And every time I got a new guy, for example, so he came in, then about for three days, he walked around me and like, sniffed around and so, and when, after three days, if he accepted me, then he'll announce his whole heart toward everything I want himself, and then it was, I could say anything, and he did it. But first, he had to find out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But then, if I did—the most faithful things you could do, and also, they didn't have any military training, but they all volunteered, because this was their country, and their home, so they all volunteered. And, because they didn't have any military training, they didn't call me. I was—I ended up as a company commander, so I had 200. I'll bet one third of them were all Laplanders. Aided't call me sir or anything. The only thing they called me was Zola [ph]. They all say, "Hiyula!" [ph]; this Laplander shout—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —so I was really worried. There was once, once, during the whole war, came the, [00:20:00] came the battalion commander up there for inspection. I thought that, anyways, how can I get them—they never lined up for group or anything, and also, I could—barely could write commanding verse [ph] because I had been in the Air Force. So I said, "How are you going to do this?"

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And he came crawling in as a surprise and we had a tent at that time, mostly we had sleeping out in the snow. We were in the woods all the time. So he came crawling in, and so I tried to stand up in the tent to give him an official report, and he said, "Just sit down," and then just a couple of Laplanders came in right there inside, said "Hiyula [ph] and who's that?" [Laughs.] [Inaudible]—I said that is a boss. But he, he was—had humor, so he'd—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Because their society is very egalitarian, isn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. They're excellent draftsman, and they loved color and graphic. They're excellent handwriting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm, hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And sense of humor. Very—for example, when we sat around the tent, it was relaxed and so forth. Then they started telling stories, and building it up, and they all knew the stories, and see how much I could take, building them with wilder—and one would say, "Ooh, ooh," and then it was added to it, to see how much I really could take.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well did you speak to them—did they know Finnish, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They, they spoke English. Most of them spoke Finnish too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did you inflict a deal of damage on the Russians, these troops?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, very little, very little.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you would keep them off guard, keep them back?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, yes, that was our purpose, just to keep them off guard.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it continued that way 'til the Germans surrendered, right?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. Okay! [Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the uh, conclusion of World War II then, did you stay at Petsamo or return there, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, never after that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, no, that was at—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: For, that was the [00:22:00] end of it, because then in the final peace treaty between Finland and Russia, the whole Petsamo area, including the mines, was given over from Finland to Russia. And Russia has then followed up on it and developed the mines—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —rebuilt the whole thing, and it's full production I understand now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you went back to southern Finland.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I went back to southern Finland.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And how did you uh—did—were you immediately able to get a job, or were these bad times, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was a very funny situation, because my work, in Petsamo, was uh, I would say, filled with rumors and mystique, because of these strange war conditions that we were 600 against about 30,000, was that government press everything, kept us, as much as possible, out of publicity and focus, and nobody really knew what happened there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean after the war, they tried—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: During the war.

ROBERT F. BROWN: During the war.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: During the war, absolute—nobody knew anything about it. They kept it just because so the Russians wouldn't get any idea—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —how incredible the situation was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And how few there were.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: How few there were, and also that this—that we are still, also during the war, just completely in the nickel mines [ph] and it was in production, for the Germans, that was all just *shh*—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Like that. So, that also included me, in a way, so I was a kind of a mystery architect, and

also mystery, I was a company commander in a war and practically nothing happened, the—but because of this mystery, I was almost pronounced one of the big Finnish heroes, by doing nothing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you did [00:24:00] have—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —a good deal of uh, occasional skirmishes, didn't you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, I had a lot of it, and I was in charge a lot, because they certainly made me a company commander, which was unusual, [laughs] in a way, for a reserve officer. And uh, so those rumors, which, south of him, and I was called the—in architectural professional circles, I was called the Laplander. Everybody knew about the Laplander. [They laugh.] And they knew that I was involved in industrial work. So when I came south, you thought I was looking for work—everybody tried to catch me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was just reverse. So, I didn't know what to do, for I didn't feel that I was that good at all. I had done one thing, but what is the next? And then uh, I don't know if you know the name Gullichsen, or, the Ahlstrom Company.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You might know it in connection with Alvar Aalto. But Maire, Maire Gullichsen was one of the ones and her husband, Harry, who sponsored and actually got Alvar Aalto going, and get him one of his first big projects was Sunila Factory, but it was built for the Ahlstrom Company, or the Ahlstrom concern.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which was what, a uh, paper, or uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was a paper mill.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then he also built his famous, uh, residential house, Mairea, because Gullichsen's name was Maire, so it was called Mairea. And, anyway, they lived outside Yunabory, [ph] which is uh, the town in this Kumo River Valley. So, they asked if I would come and take over the regional planning, or supervise the regional planning, carrying on for the master plan was done by Alvar Aalto.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And Aalto [00:26:00] recommended me and the Gullichsens asked me, and so, I ended up there, and being in charge of this. It was mainly city planning, and checking, and I got a response for the government, too, so I got quite a lot of authority to set—decide what would be left as agriculture, what would be industrial areas—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —how much to reserve for roads and so forth—much bigger power than you ever have here in taking land for the right purpose.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. Was Finland concerned to industrialize, or to further its industrialization following the war?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it was, quite a lot, and what happened in this valley was that a lot of industries which had been located in the southeast corner of Finland, Karelia, there had to be evacuated—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and most of them moved into this valley, the Kumo River Valley. So there was a big development of new industries right there. So, I ended up right there, up to my neck, practically, for first, I had to check on this, really development on the master plan, and follow it, and then, through my connection with uh, actually working directly for the Ahlstrom concern and Gullichsen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, but so, I had uh—was in charge of a master plan for Normark, [ph] that's one of the Gullichsen headquarters, that's really where the big offices are, and then, uh, Picklava [ph], where I designed a

large, new war boat factory, and housing, and so forth, for the area, and then Kauttua, this was another paper mill where I did a big addition to the factory, and a complete master plan [00:28:00] for the whole area, and, and uh, housing, and so forth, which was followed up—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Could you do um, some aesthetic designing at this stage? I mean, or a little more than you could at Petsamo? Were you—or were these again, purely functional structures?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were, unfortunately, very functional structures, mainly because the rush.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, there was a rush.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: There was a fantastic rush to the factories. You had to be moved over. For example, I think the first case was a factory for a copper mill, refining plant. It had to be moved, and it's such a rush. So, when this basic concrete structure was up, the machinery was in, and the factory was going, then you put the walls up—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was incredible.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really, hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was just incredible. There was such incredible pressure. Also, and uh, the paper mill in Picklava, went up in that same speed, and I had very little help, because you couldn't get any help. You couldn't even get a draftsman or anything. So, uh, I did practically every drawing myself, and sometimes in such a rush, you didn't have time to print. You drew all night, in the morning, even to the job, and they were going on. I was actually, at that time, I was in a way running three offices. This, what I mentioned to you, I drop them now here: Normark, Picklava, and Kauttua. Now, each one of them about, about driving time, about one and a half or two hours in between—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —a triangle—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The only time—I had to drive, and the only time I slept was in the car. So then from one place, and then I arrived, for example, in the afternoon, to the next night—[00:30:00] place, and then, "We need this! We need this!" We'd say we'd have it by the morning, and they had it in the morning. Sometimes, you didn't even have time to get prints, and it went right out there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Part of this Picklava factory, elevations were full drawings, but I didn't have time to draw in all the windows. I drew up one window, and then I marked window, window, window, put in a center line. I never saw it—I wished—myself before it was built. You just had to go!

ROBERT F. BROWN: But before that, would you sit down with their engineers and know what they needed, the spec—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, you had—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had all that.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —spend an awful lot of that. So we had the technical information—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —it was question, really, of—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of you're doing the graphics, so that the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was doing the graphics, and impossible aesthetics. And, and uh, it ended up to me that it was such a press for—I figured out that I worked about—for a long period of time, I worked about 18 hours a day.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And slept mainly in the car, which, of course, resulted—I was a pretty bad wreck. I didn't—first, I was a wreck only when I came out after the war, from Lapland, and then after this, I didn't sleep for half a year, practically at all, and then driving like this, and then, on top of it, the dissatisfaction of not doing a good design work, and would like to do something good—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and then, forced to rush like this, I got completely desperate, and, and very depressed. And my friends knew it, and all tried to help me in a way, just, any way they could. So, so it—huh?

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you couldn't get uh—there were—there was just a shortage of help; you couldn't find people?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You could find people—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They'd either been killed in the war, [00:32:00] or they were too busy doing—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They had been killed in the war, and an enormous percentage, for all the young architects were more or less in the same position as I was, and they were uh, reserve officers, mostly platoon commanders, and that's where the biggest—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —losses were.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —biggest losses were. So there were very few of them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, one of my best draftsmen—I had two draftsmen; they were both girls. They drew beautifully, but they had no idea what they were drawing. They had the drawing in one to eight, instead working myself [ph] to one quarter. They do it exactly, but just blew it up!

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But no more information, nothing resolved; it doesn't prove anything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were uh, by 19—say, 1945 or so, you were really pretty desperate, as you say.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was a grievous—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —gravely desperate.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you get some relief from this eventually, or what happened? Did you finally—were you able to quit, or—you said at that time you went to Sweden; you made a visit there. Was that to—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, that was just a lecture.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, I been two trips to Sweden; one was in—very quite interesting because I built this Picklava war boat factory—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and, without this, someone, engineers, we were sent to Sweden, for they had just built a new war boat factory there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So we went just to get all the technical information and so forth, and I went along. [Laughs] and uh, Swedes were very amazed that the Finns could afford, and send an architect, to study a technical thing like that. So they asked me, "What are you doing, come here from Finland?" So I said, "Well, you see, Finland is a poor country; they can't afford to build without their architect." I mean after all, if you are a

good architect, you are in charge of economics, too. [00:34:00] You can squeeze in square feet and you can squeeze in this, and you can see that the streamlining is right, that the function's right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So I said, "We can't afford it without an architect." And it proved to be right. People turned out to be busy with factory. And I had quite a lot to do, not only with the technical part, but the streamlining, and location of the various elements, within the process of production. There were—that was one visit to Sweden. The other one was just a lecture about Laplander bits and all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the—you were stuck with this—these various projects for four years, from 1948 or so.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, by that time, you were uh, what, you were getting some free time, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, by that time I got completely desperate. I just couldn't take it anymore. I saw—I really saw that, more or less, I said that "I have had it," that "either I'm going anywhere, or, I'm going to quit architecture, and drop it completely. I can't go on like this."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And uh, friends liked to help me, and then came two chances: one was uh, uh, Jørn Utzon, the Danish architect who built the Sydney Opera House, who had been a student for one year, working in Alvar Aalto's office.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was a—I hadn't met him then, but I heard a lot about him and everybody tried us to get together, for they felt we were somewhat in the same spirit.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean both what, loving to draw, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Loving to draw, and approach, and sense for nature, and so forth. And uh, maybe a little bit Bohemian, too. He was just like that; he was fabulous—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —charming guy, and brilliant, [00:36:00] which I'm not that, at least in a certain respect. But uh, he worked for Aalto, and, we never met during that way. I was always up in Lapland area at that time. And then, he was transferred to Gullichsen. I met him once then. He came when I was there in the Kumo River Valley project. He came over and we started talking and so forth, and uh, he told it, in Morocco, there was a big German, not German but Danish construction firm, engineering firm, going on and developing a building industry, and he had this idea of opening a Scandinavian architectural office in Casablanca.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And that would be, he said it were better, instead of open just a Danish office there, to make a combination so there must be one Dane, [laughs] one Swede, one Norwegian, and one Finn. So he said, would I like to be the Finn? [Laughs.] I said, "Absolutely." So, we started on that, planning on that, and he turned out to be very serious. And then, Alvar heard, that was I was desp—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Alvar Aalto.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —Alvar Aalto, that I was desperate and trying to get out, get out for any price, just to have a break. So he called up and said that he needed somebody to supervise the structure of the dormitory building in Cambridge for MIT.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, he had just secured a commission then.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, he had. It was already gone. There was one Finnish, young Finnish architect, Partila, [ph] Billy Partila, was there, but he—but back to Finland, and he needed badly someone, for this construction had started here, to supervise it and also coordinate the Finnish drawings with the American working drawings that were made here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And so he needed somebody badly. I said, "Absolutely not. I think it [00:38:00] much more fun to go to Casablanca, and have my own camera, [ph] the Bedouin's building supervisors." [They laugh.] So I said, "Nothing doing." And, uh, then I had my passport; am I reading French like mad, and all set, and then I got the wire from uh—Bootson [ph] was already in Casablanca, and said, "Nothing doing." It was a devaluation of the franc, which meant that the whole building industry [laughs] in Casablanca—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —collapsed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The whole thing collapsed, and, I sat, I sat there. I had just cleaned up my desk. All, everything was okay. I was ready to leave, and there I sat. And Alvar, Alvar had left Finland, and the secretary heard about this incident and called Alvar, who was in Stockholm, and said, "Do you know that Olav is not going to Casablanca?" So he called me and said that, "Why don't you come to Boston?" [They laugh.] I said, I said, "Oh, all right, if you arrange the papers and the money"—for you can get out from Finland because you could get dollars; you had permission to travel and so forth. I said, "If you do organize that, I'm willing to go." So, with his connection with MIT and so forth, one week later, I was in Boston.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gee.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And that's how I came here. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were over—you came over then about 1948 or so, was it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: 1948, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did you find the work, and what, what was your reaction when you got here?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Wait a minute. Well, I was tossed in, working immediately very hard. Of course, I knew, thanks to Petsamo, quite a lot English, [00:40:00] with a bad accent and so forth anyways, I still had. But uh, I liked to work, even if it was completely different. The working conditions, the procedure of making working drawings, and the procedure of supervising and what to check, it was completely different from the European, or especially Scandinavian way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But uh, I went along quite all right, with the firm, who made the working drawings, Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, who made the working drawings. I think I did a good job in that respect, for Aalto had very difficulty to deal with them. He deal—could deal well uh, with Mr. Perry, I think, who was in charge of this particular part.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But, nothing else, for he didn't like—he was very critical about uh, generally, the approach between the people who produced working drawings, and doing that process, and the job, that there was, that there was no really connection—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to get the working drawing over to the job and it was partly because Alvar was an excellent draftsman. He drew—also working drawings, but he considered working drawings beautiful things. And then they came to Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, and then translated them to mechanical, American working drawings, and Alvar was so insulted. He just took it as a personal thing, as, "How can you do that? And this, this is it! This is the way it should be." The other one—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Whereas the American workman was used to looking at mechanical drawings.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They had to look at mechanical drawings, which actually told the same story, but it, [00:42:00] let's say in a different language.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was a mechanical thing, and Alvar, Alvar had this thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, it—this was very hard for, didn't get it across.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. I got to—

[END OF TRACK 01, SIDE B.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] Okay this is the uh, second tape. The design itself, for that dormitory, it's a serpentine in plan.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it very difficult to communicate to the American workmen, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it was not.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was not.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it was not. It was really a strictly mechanical and geometrical thing to draw it up. There was no problem in that. I think it was more a problem, first in design, to convince them—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —that it could be done.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —why it had that shape.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did they um, the materials, for example? Were they all worked out already by Aalto, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were worked out by Aalto, and he was very good in that he used typical materials, actually, for Cambridge.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He used a standard brick, and little bit more than the standard brick; he made it more standard than the standard brick.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you mean?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Laughs.] You know, a brick is a brick, but he had a long, long time to find those—if you, next time, to drive by it, look at those shapes of the brick which are badly cast; they stick out from the wall—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —all that. He went, I think, all the way to Canada before he found that kind of a brick, and it was a small, small factory somewhere in the country, who couldn't do any better brick, and Aalto said, "That's it." [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why did he light on that slightly warped brick, do you think?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it gives some kind of a handicraft and human touch, instead of have it looking completely mechanical.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It might—it would slightly counteract the mechanical quality of the American working drawings.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, exactly, exactly, that's what—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you had patience with this, and you could—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you smooth it over—was he around much of the time that you were doing this, or did he go back, uh, home?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Usually, he went back home, and then I started the smoothing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Well, what were some of the lessons you derived from supervising this project? [00:02:00] What were some of the things you learned, yourself, from uh, supervising this project?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, uh, one experience, I think the first lesson that I learned, that uh, which I didn't

quite understand earlier, for, I had seen the specifications for working drawings, and specifications for the new American Embassy in Helsinki, was supposed to be built, right, or had started before the war, and then going on, and we could—in Finland, couldn't understand the exact little detail of everything written down, to the absolutely last small detail. But, but that, I learned here, and in a way, there was something that was missing, to me, was to trust the builders. If you handed a specification like that to a Finnish building constructor, he would take it as a personal insult, like, "Don't you think I know my job? Don't you think I know how to do it? Does every little thing have to be detailed like that?" They would take it as an insult, and here, you have to have it. And also, in a way, because of that, I think, that they felt here, that they were not so much responsible as a Finnish contractor, because he took that, he took it as his pride and his responsibility. Here, they checked who had signed the drawings, and then, the guy who had signed that drawing gave to his next guy, who also signed the drawings, and he went to the third. There were some drawings, I think, in this package, who was—had five or six signatures, [00:04:00] before it went out to the job. And everybody pushed it to the next guy. And that was, to me, a shocking experience, and, they were very good builders, but they didn't take the responsibility.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Could you sense a difference in the result?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, in a way. In a way, I couldn't see it, but I could feel it, that this lack of, of responsibility, make it sort of impersonal, just like there was that many signatures, so also in design, it ended up like just one of these I don't like too much, or never liked too much in the big offices here—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —because the big offices kills, in a way, the individual. It's a compromise, or it's a team, and everything is some kind—one gives here, one gives there, so the strong personality is lost.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And in, at least in Finland, you felt that the personalities came through.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That came first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There'd be two; there'd be the architects, and then the master contractor.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Yes. And if they were on good terms, it really meant something. No, I felt that was a big, really big difference in the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it wasn't simply a difference in skill; it was just the tradition here of the, uh, craftsman, the artisan just doing things unthinkingly, just—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —having something so specific to follow through.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Right. No, I would say so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think the skill was there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you—this was—lasted into 1949, then, this work for, for the Aalto firm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And after that, you intended to go back to uh, Finland, didn't you, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, you decided you'd stay on.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. [00:06:00] My intention to go back to Finland was sort of doubtful from the very beginning, for my feeling, when I left, left Finland—Morocco, Cambridge, or wherever, that I left it for good, for maybe because of the intensity of both work and war in Petsamo, made me feel that Petsamo was my country, and my land, and that's what I fought for, and that's where I had done all my best creative work, was in Petsamo. And Finland, as such, more or less left me cold.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, it really did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You, you were indifferent to it? You were—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was quite indifferent.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did the people seem uh, different to you as well, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, partly that, I think, and also, I think it was a question of survival, because when I left Finland, I was, as I told you before, I was in pretty bad shape—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —mentally and physically. I was really a wreck. And, all the friends that I had who had survived the war, they—you can't believe this, what happened in that age group and education group, that practically all of them died, either by suicide or drinking themselves to death, practically every single one. And, I had a choice. I could have stayed there and done the same thing with it. [00:08:00] This was a question of survival. So this was my feeling on not going back to Finland. That was the intuition, that was my thing. It wasn't made up in my mind, but I had no desire to go back. And then I came here and had this good period of very hard work, in Boston, and I liked it, and then I met Marianne again who was my first love in Finland, and I saw her when she was eight years old, first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And uh, grew up together, but then, changed and as girls usually do, they grow up faster than boys, and then I was still struggling my 10 years in architectural school. She was already famous and into Milan, and exhibiting stuff, column [ph] and so, so, but I was so left behind. So, she—[inaudible]—the demand [ph]; she ended up here, and I married, actually, a socialite girl in Helsinki. It was a good marriage, and we have a daughter, but it was unhappy in that respect that she had no feeling for my field, and no feeling for art or architecture or something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, she didn't fit in this picture of my work and so forth, so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: She was fairly dilettantish, when it came to the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: She was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —dilettante?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: She was not even that. She didn't even try to do something. She was a complete socialite.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and uh, she refused to live in Petsamo. She was crazy. She didn't think that I even was a good architect. She was just, "So, huh, maybe you can do something." So, but we are still very good friends and so forth, but then, during the war and all the long separation, so forth, so we completely drifted apart, [00:10:00] so, we ended up in a very friendly divorce.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: We actually went to the same lawyer together, and settled the whole thing, and we are still on good terms. She had been visiting us here with her next husband, which is the right one for her, for he is a diplomat, an ambassador, so she is just in the right circle.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh, huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, that's all fine. But that marriage collapsed there. And it—and had collapsed when I came over here and then I met Marianne again.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did you happen to meet her? Did she come east, to uh, Cambridge?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: She came east to Cambridge just only to see me, for she knew that I had the ride, [ph] for I was in contact with Eero. So Eero knew that I was here, and Eero and Marianne was very close—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —so Marianne came over to see me. And then uh, I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You, you had met Eero, and uh, Eliel. You'd known them.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, yes. I had met them, met them in Finland.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you were a student, or even later, you'd seen them?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: When I was a student.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, actually the first time I met Eero—oh, I didn't meet him when he was living—I think Eero was 15 years old when he moved over here with the family.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But I met Eero when he had a scholarship, a Guggenheim Scholarship, again to Finland, and stayed in this Hvitträsk place, the family place, which I mentioned, together with three American architects who also graduated from Yale, and all had scholarships, and did a lot of works and projects there, drawing, and I joined this group. I spent practically two [laughs] months together with them in Hvitträsk—

ROBERT F. BROWN: When did that—[cross talk]—in the 1930s?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Early 1930s, I would say, or maybe mid-1930s, I think, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And how did Eero strike you? What was he like when you first met him?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, fairly bullish, [00:12:00] and very strong and forceful, but excellent draftsman, not at all in the Finnish sense, but the Finnish were drawing graphically, very exact drawing, very dry drawing in a way, just line, and Eero was slapping on these big, flourishy things and so forth—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and actually, he took part—we all took part together in a competition, some competitions in Finland. But Eero was—Eero, in a way, thought that maybe he would try to see how he would do in Finland, but it didn't turn out at all, for he was much too American in every respect, to fit in, in that picture. But that was the first time I met him. It was still—he was still, already at that stage, very forceful and very single minded in his approach to every problem. He just dived in and then he has to solve it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Fairly, fairly demanding, even as a young man.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you contacted him, after—while you were at MIT, on that job.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And you um, then met Marianne and you decided to be married and all.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, because she had a divorce and I had a divorce—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and we just, almost naturally floated back together where we had left off.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well when—in '49, the work on that dormitory was essentially—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh—[inaudible]—right here, and this—

[Audio break.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Before we start talking about Eero and Saarinen, uh, I'd like to add some small, maybe personal comments about Alvar Aalto.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Good.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It might interest you in a way—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I'd like it very much.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —part of his personality and his approach to things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible]—Finland is—[inaudible]—Aalto knew each other [00:14:00] more or less just socially, and professionally, as I told you, I ran his office when he was here—[they laugh]—and we never met, but we met a couple of years later, in 1944 about, uh, I met him, and then he said, "You were in my office." "Oh yes." [They laugh.] [Inaudible]—good laugh at that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then came this assignment, and I accepted to come, come to Cambridge, and there I learned quite a lot about Aalto, as a person, and also as his approach, various things, and also, it amazed me very much, it was criticism about United States, uh, mostly from a professional angle. He, sort of, particularly, New York architecture, didn't like it at all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He said he thought it was "cruel and impersonal." His approach to students—he was lecturing at MIT every time he came over; that was the connection, really—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —with, and his—he felt that the students were so poorly educated, that they could mark [ph] this, particularly he was worried about, they have no architectural history in their courses. He felt they knew nothing about the past, and nothing of architectural history, and he was very critical about that, partly because it's very much stressed in Finland and in Scandinavia, this architectural history and so forth. So he felt that was such a lacking, and then, another lack was draftsmanship, which also was stressed incredibly in the Scandinavian countries. [00:16:00] And so he was very disappointed, in that respect, of teaching at MIT, for, you know, he—or maybe you don't know, but he was excellent in making up stories, or telling stories. He just built them up and he dreamt them up, and so you never knew really what is true or what is nothing, get going. And one of his favorite stories, critical stories, about students at MIT, because you know, just, they don't know anything of architectural history. So he told this story about—after one of his lectures, in the end of spring term, came up to him and said, "I am going to Italy this summer! Could you please give me Michelangelo's address?" [They laugh.] That was about Alvar Aalto's favorite story about the cultural level of the [laughs] architectural students at MIT. But that was typical of him, though.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He would—they would tend to be slightly exaggerated stories.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, definitely [laughs], definitely so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How was he to work with, as you did, on this project?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, he was good to work with. In a way, he was very demanding, for he normally only worked at night. He, also in Finland—I knew that from my friends and so forth, for nobody lasted long in his office, for usually, he slept until around 11:00 in the morning, then he got up—and lived just outside Helsinki, and then, just, nowadays, it's just 10 minutes about, just communications—and then he went to Helsinki, and had lunch, and spent—so forth, and then came back to the office about three in the afternoon and so forth and looked around, and then at four o'clock [00:18:00] in the afternoon, he started working. And then he worked until three o'clock in the morning. But the staff has to be there too. He couldn't work alone, at least somebody had to always be with him when he worked, so he had to discuss it and work it, and very temperamentally discuss things and toss it down, draw up things and marvelous sketches, and very hectic, and usually, at the same time, drinking quite a lot. Also, when we worked here, together, had an apartment across the street on Madison Avenue on the Boston side, and partly we worked on this, and I also helped him with the competition in Finland, and that was tough going. We had, there, work with him and part entertainment, and he built up his temperament so he was almost just shaking, drinking quite a lot, and drinking everything. He had—he drank beer, liquor, whiskey, all just like mixed all together—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and building up, but still, incredibly creative, tossing it down. No wonder he slept until 11 next day. But you had to be at nine o'clock or eight o'clock in the morning on your job.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you mean you had to go to the site side—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I had to go to the site.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had to be working on drawings, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Working on drawings and go to the—where the construction, drawing; we still had to be there. And he expected it, to do it, but you knew that then you had to spend the night just working with him again. No, it was a strain. And, and then, that's just very much Aalto's temperament, but it was interesting to work with him, regardless of this, to see how his, how his brains worked. I would sparkle; I was getting thing and immediately got it down on paper in some kind of very visual imagination, for he was just as much as a painter, as an architect. So, he drew those [00:20:00] fine sketches and then slowly started shaping them up into buildings, or site plans, or ci—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —city plans or things, but it's very much a visual thing, and then he started organizing it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When would have you come in on things? At what point would you come in on the design for—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, in the very early stage, when he tossed out some ideas and said, "Just follow up on this." Then I started fooling around—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —in a way, and then we got together again, and then it was one step forward and so forth. So it was in a way of—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did this loosen up your own design process?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think it did. I think it did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because you said you worked quite a lot, initially at least, from um, intuition?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, very much so. And this—Aalto was very much intuition, to start, very much so. So, but no, I think I learned a lot. [Laughs.] I mean, it was interesting to see just how his brains work. So, I always remember one detail. When we worked over from—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Boston?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —Marlborough Street—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —Madison Avenue over the bridge—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —to Cambridge, mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to Cambridge, it was just before the bridge one morning, he said, "Do you know what?" He looks at the traffic there, commenting about the traffic and so forth. "Do you realize if you just take a cross section of the street, there is less than one person per car?" I said, "What?" [Laughs.] "Yes," he said, "there's less than one person. Look at the thing." Oh yes, you saw the stream was two cars this way and two cars that way, there was one person in each car, and on each side, was an empty car parked. So he took a cross section and said, "There's less than one person per car—[inaudible]—it's an enormous street; what do you have? Less than one person." And it—I loved that comment—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —but it was true. There was just a rush hour in the morning. [00:22:00] And another thing that I liked about him, when we walked over the bridge—Aalto, as a lecturer, was an excellent performer, you know. He was really an actor, too, at the same time, and, walking over the bridge, so we came up at halfway over the bridge, talking and—[inaudible]—and then we come closer to MIT side. [Whispers] he started—[inaudible]—that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —[resumes normal voice] or just make—checking his tie, combing his hair, then when— he was a great professor when we arrived at MIT. [They laugh.] I loved that, and it happened every time. You know, just about halfway over the bridge, he started this—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —seemed properly to be there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh my.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He'd be the big professor. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you—what do you uh, assess his great strength to have been, in architecture, in design, in architecture?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very much his sense for form, and material, very much organic forms in most of his design, not only in furniture design, but also in plants and things. He followed through in some kind of organic things, what then called his best work, in that field. I think his later work, like the Finlandia House in Helsinki—I don't know anything about it. I haven't seen it—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —finished, but, I don't care about—I think it less Aalto than Aalto himself, but his strengths was just in creating, very much from organic shapes, almost from plants. Some of his floor plans are completely organic.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So he, he'd had—been Finnish trained, and yet he had moved on his own course—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —distinctly, from—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Dis—oh, [00:24:00] distinctly so, distinctly so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were with him into 1949, and how, how late were you with him on this project at MIT?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, to the very end.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Which was a very unfortunate year for Aalto, the last year here, for his wife, first wife, Aino—who I mentioned did all the interiors, and was a very good person, and very good designer, in interior things—she died in cancer during that year. That put an enormous pressure on Alvar, for he was very dependent with her. As I once said before that he was like, his connection, he was up in the sky, and she was down to earth—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and she was the connection. So that was a very big strain for him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But I could tell another small anecdote typical of Alvar. Uh, when he decided, you know, his furniture—then that's one of his early ones, that stool—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and there was a stool, without the back; you have seen them all over—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —the round stool. And then he was going to, [laughs] when the whole thing started—it was before the war sometime—he was going to have a big exhibition in London to introduce his new furniture. Well, it was in the winter. The shipment of the stools had arrived, for the opening, but nothing else. Something has happened, it was ice blocked or something, but the next ship, the ship—was a ship then—didn't arrive in time. So there was Aalto, on opening night, all he had was this stool. He had—[they laugh]—about, unfortunately, about a hundred of them. So Aalto was completely undisturbed, and said, "No, we are going to have the opening." So there were several rooms, so in one room, he put a group of squares, of those stools; in another, [00:26:00] put a group of triangles; and he put some singular stools here, a lot of planters in, and in each practically every second room, he had a bar—[they laugh]—but it was a glorious opening. And there was—at that time, Aalto could barely speak English, but he spoke, of course, Finnish; he spoke Swedish; he spoke German; he spoke French; and he spoke slightly Italian, and somewhat English. So, and all this has built up so he gave a lecture, a roaring lecture, just typical Aalto.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was very exuberant, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very exuberant, yes. And it was a great success, and after—when the lecture was finished, one of the reporters came up to him and said, "It was a fabulous lecture. Would you be—would you please tell me, in what language did you talk? [They laugh.] He tossed them, all things together.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But that was typical Aalto, but that was one of his tricks. I know once in Finland, and in relationship to the presentation, the first presentation, the Kumo River Valley plan, which he had done, and he expected a lot of protest, or something, from the group he was talking to. The group was actually the farmers, and the landowners in this region, who were somewhat upset that—[inaudible]—would keep my farm and the other would do that and so forth. So, he did his trick, we heard it once before, that he talked quite fast, showed the drawing, and used, particular for Finnish language, a lot of strange words, foreign words, Swedish words, and some German words and so forth, professional words, tossed in there. And then, [00:28:00] when he saw somebody just about ready to ask a question, then he very quickly switched to the next drawing—[inaudible]—and so many people didn't dare to ask a question, for that would show that they didn't quite understand what he was talking about.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And he really made it by purpose that way. So he was floating through and everything was approved.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ha.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was just a game! But he did it beautifully. And also, when he gave quite serious lectures, he had—he was a master, particularly in the Finnish language, which is very, let's say onomatopoeic. You can make up words practically, but—and I tell you, but I had spoke Finnish just as well as Swedish, because of my training in the high school and in the Army and so forth, and, and professional with these builders and so forth, all Finnish, and so I loved the Finnish language, for the—for example, the only language I can think of, still, for really getting mad, is in Finnish, for they get so mad, they can barely talk, so they make up their words, and everybody understands you.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it's fantastic in that respect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's the combinations of syllables add up to some meanings with such flexibility.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes. And Aalto was a master in that. So, sometimes, it—I felt, and I know my friends in architecture are critical, critics really, felt also, that you listened to Aalto's lecture, and it was brilliant, and marvelous. Everybody was excited. But then, to write it down, you say, "What did he really say?"

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But, what was it, really in back of the thing? There was so much words, almost poetry, really, but when you came down to it, [00:30:00] what was it?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It's an art in itself or a typical Finnish art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was the way it was said, the occasion itself that counted not, not the content.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes, yes, and the sound of the language, for the Finnish language, if you talk it well, it's music. Well, I had a professor in—he was an art historian professor, and he lectured the same way. You was practically sitting in trance, it was so beautiful. But then you start—looked at your notes, I had practically not written down a damned thing. [They laugh.] You know, and that's a—that's one of the arts of the Finnish language. I got carried away about that, now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he, was he a generous man, at all, I mean, in—with time or with advice, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He was very generous. Yeah, I would say about that that I think one of Aalto's, was the first big achievement, was that he put the Finnish architects, as a group, on the map, for uh, he was very generous about work, soon just after the war when there were very few architects left, and so forth, and he was uh, actually working for the government in distribution of work, so he could work with architects and spread

them out, and just to take care of it. He was very—instead of trying to grab work for himself, he just spread it out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, he, and also he—just a reputation of architects in Finland, it's getting up here, but when I came over from Finland, so, I expected there were seven [ph] architects. Everybody said, "Oh, you're an architect." But here they say, "Ha, what's that?" But [ph] my approach here, nobody gave any credit to you more than—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —to a dentist, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —or, yeah, anything, just an architect, [00:32:00] but in Finland, was so very high status to be an architect, which was just a top level of composers, which were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why do you suppose that was? Why was there, uh, in Finland, why—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Part, because it's a very high educational level to become an architect, and I think Aalto had very much to do with it. He was that—what I bringing about on this—[inaudible]—he really brought up the level—the social [laughs] status of being an architect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: More so than say, Eliel Saarinen ever had.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Much more so, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, mm-hmm [affirmative]. I think you're suggesting that, back home in Finland, Saarinen really didn't have the influence that, say, Aalto did.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not by far.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No. And you stayed with uh, Aalto on this project, was it through 1949, approximately?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was during that year that you were contacted by Eero Saarinen?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, did you go out to see him, or he came, he—he came east?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, now I was there too. I went out there too, to see him—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. And Marianne was there too, on the Cranbrook faculty

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And Marianne was there too, at Cranbrook. Yes. And then there was Ee—that Eero—Eliel was still alive, and then, uh, Eero's sister, who was married to Robert Swanson, an architect, and they both offered me—both tried to get me into their office, both Swanson in his office and Eero in his office, were—just because Marianne contact with Eero and so forth and Eliel. So I went with Eero. I have fortunately had about one year together with Eliel, too, for uh, I liked Eliel very much. If you like me to say some comments about that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Please do, yes. [00:34:00]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —for, Eliel was a very warm, warm-hearted, relaxed man.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And uh, when he was around, Eero was quite relaxed too, for even as Eliel wasn't doing any active work in the office, but he came every day to the office, went through things, and checked what was going on, and, and because he was such a person of warmth, uh, he went from desk to desk practically every day and talked a little bit to every guy in the office. And uh, what was funny was when he came to my desk. He

had a great sense of humor, and he had these endless amount of Finnish jokes, which he couldn't use, but most of them were built in the Finnish language and so forth, so they lost their point if you translated it. They couldn't be translated, for the joke was worse or onomatopoeic as I said, the Finnish language is. So, he, he I think prepared himself very well, for every time he came to my desk, he had a new joke.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, so then we, we two, was roaring with laughter, and the whole office was still looking us and didn't know what it's all about. [Laughs.] And he loved that. He did it every, every time he came there. And uh, he was very fond of Marianne, very much so. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Their families had been very close.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, the families had been very, very close.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And also, for some reason, he was personally very fond of Marianne, so that's why he had this—Marianne has his money [ph]—many marriage letters from him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:36:00] As a mentor, how—the year you were with him, what sort of things do you think you learned from Eliel Saarinen?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Actually—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Not too much?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not too much.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was sort of in a way retired, wasn't he?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He wasn't imparting much—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no, nothing in that respect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. So, was the office chiefly dominated by Eero?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, oh yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And was he a pretty dominating figure?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, he was kind of dominating figure, but, but, as long as Eliel was around, Eero was very relaxed, for all the big decisions could always be pushed up to Eliel, so Eliel gave his blessings and Eero was fine. But that changed quite a lot when, when Eliel passed away, for then, Eero felt the responsibility and the pressure very strongly. He actually changed quite a lot from that moment on, Aalto in the office, and Aalto in himself, mainly. He put such a pressure on himself.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. You think, to good purpose, in terms of—no.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I wouldn't say that. Maybe, he forced himself to work very much, but it was such a pressure, on his work, too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Well now you had that with Aalto as well.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not in the same degree at all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, for Aalto was constantly relaxed then when he was working and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's just that he—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He was not hammering, not forcing himself to produce something. Eero was really forcing and forcing and forcing, constantly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Audio break.] This a continuation of the interviews with Olav Hammarstrom, Wellfleet, [00:38:00] Massachusetts, and this is December 16, 1982. [Audio break.] Last time, we were—had talked somewhat about your coming into the Saarinen architectural office in Michigan, and in particular, you talked about the year or so when Eliel was still alive and came occasionally into the office, and you describe, oh, your joking and your general relationship with the elder Saarinen. Wonder if you can say anything more about him, any other aspects of him that you remember in his last years, uh, before we go on with your work, when Eero was in charge?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, I could say that he was a very humble, and warm-hearted man.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was humble, really?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He was humble.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Despite his—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, well, never had any idea—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —leadership and—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —that he was a leader, and such a strength in field of architecture. He was small in size, quite short, and extremely well dressed in, in the pastel colors, always very well dressed, and he has this, as I told earlier, this marvelous sense of humor.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But, warm, and, for example, the day he died was on a Saturday, I think. He was over in our house inviting Marianne for lunch at the country club, on the following day on Sunday, while I was playing tennis with Eero, and suddenly, somebody came out to the tennis court and said, "Eero, come quickly home," and Eliel had died falling asleep in Eero's chair, in the big broom [ph] chair. So it was an ideal death, in a way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: My, my.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, to go back to the office, uh, as long as [00:40:00] Eliel was around, and made his tools in the office and did his art, so Eero was a very relaxed person. He could always fall back in judgment of something, on Eliel. But, when Eero took over the whole responsibility, he was quite a changed person. He got—he was so tense, and had so strong ambition to prove that he was at least as good as Eliel. He had also actually the pressure from his mother; had always, since small boy, he had this pressure of, he had to live up to Eliel's standards. And when Eliel passed away, then Eero felt this pressure very strongly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you think, uh, Loja felt Eliel's standards were? What do you—what was it that Eero was to live up to?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Design, if, if that would explain it, in a way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Quality?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Quality, yes, his, his quality.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and also, his uh, very strong self-criticism, I think that's something that every good architect has to have, and also the hardest part, I feel, in being an architect, that you had to criticize your own work, constantly. Constantly feeling that, can't you do better than that? And then, force yourself to try and try, and Eero had that almost compulsive, that never give up design. Actually, some of his projects I felt were actually over designed, for he didn't know where to stop. He's still trying and trying and trying.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now over design, by that, you would mean what, beyond the need, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Beyond the need, or trying to search for a form, and with all that he felt that he has a good form, and then search and search and try, and then bite off and come back to what he had.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That happened very often. [00:42:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[END OF TRACK 02, SIDE A.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] Do you feel that this over designing, such as you've just described by Eero Saarinen, sometimes affected the result?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Sometimes, I felt it did, and sometimes also, you know, after he had found a form or a shape, even before it was established that it was the right form and the shape. So then, he tried various shapes and then often came back to this one, original form. But sometimes, it was quite disturbing. He had something very good, and then he started again, almost from scratch. I remember one occasion where he had a very good scheme for one of the buildings at the General Motors Technical Center.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And it was approved, by them, and ready to go ahead—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And when Eero had a new idea, and thought that this is a better one, and [laughs] presented his new scheme to the General Motors management, and they said, "Nothing doing, we have already a scheme," and there was a long fight and finally they won. [Laughs.] And they were right; they were agreed afterwards that they were right, that this new idea wasn't just as strong as the first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you think, uh, ideally, however, his perpetually reworking things, uh, made for think—exploring every option?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You think—and it, and it's best, it could've—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it, it definitely did, it definitely did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But it must've been hard on you people in the practice. I mean—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it was, it was pretty hard.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Things were never, uh, completely, firmly established.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no—

ROBERT F. BROWN: After—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, but uh, you know, in a way, I worked pretty much the same way, that I'm trying [00:02:00] and trying.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, it, Eero realized that, first at the—my relationship with Eero in the office, realized that I was more or less alone there, because I had always worked alone, like in Petsamo, so forth, with very few helpers. So also in his office, he left me practically all alone in designing the restaurant building for the General Motors. I spent over a year, I think, on that one project, and he left me that way. And, because I was fighting the same way he was, so we wasn't together—[inaudible]—for example, a simple front elevation, it was just plain glass, this glass and steel, structurally sound, and we worked almost three months on that one elevation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Refining its dimensions and proportions?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Just refining the dimension and proportion and dream and so forth. But it paid off, for it became an awfully handsome building, actually; it got a gold medal as a result of this. But you—[cross talk]—one beat [ph] and it also proves that Eero felt that when he had reached something, he could never be really wrong, that what he said then was final. And we had an argument about the handrail to a stair, some short stair, in the sitting area by there, in the restaurant, and Eero had one idea and I had another idea, and I felt that my—mine was very good, so I tried to fight and Eero finally said, "You—no, this is it, so." So, it was done that way. And then when it was all built, Eero looked at the handrail and said, "How did—how did we get this handrail?" I said, "You insisted on it," [laughs] and he said to me, "Who? You should have fought harder. You should have fought harder! [00:04:00] Why didn't you—why wouldn't you fight for it?" So it, in a way—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He would turn it, turn it back to you.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, so it was my fault. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Did he have a very uh, tender ego?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, in a way, yes, I would say so. Yes, yes, and also, always this drive in, in winning, in, like in competition—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I can tell more about that, but I can also now mention, as an example, he knew that I was a good skier because we had skied together in Finland before, somewhat. And uh, so he liked to ski with me, and I very soon discovered that I didn't like to ski with him! For—constantly by skiing downhill, for example, or slaloms, I had to ski next to him as—and he asked me. You had to wait on this leg to have been forward [ph]; we have enough fall log [ph]; you had "do this, and do uh, do that"; had to be an instructor constantly. And, [laughs] when he went to Aspen, for skiing, and he went to ski school, and uh, you know, they test them first and then to see in which class and which group you go, so they put him in fairly low class and he was furious. He said he's going to be in the top class, in the racing class. There was a big [inaudible] but they couldn't put in the racing class, he could never make it down the first hill. But that was typical.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] So he was uh, difficult for you to deal with? Was it—or did you get along with him?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I got along with him—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had a sense of uh, humor about his rages.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, because I knew him so well.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then also he was really very sweet to us, me and to us, Marianne, partly because of her Finnish background and we had seen him as a teenager, and so forth, so he felt that we was almost like family, as his children [00:06:00] now feel that we are family.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Well you uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That affected—and he was—had very few friends, I think the—really close friends, I think the only one was Charlie Eames, and he was in California at that time, so, they were far approach [ph] so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Eames because he'd known him when they were both young men, when Eames was in Cranbrook?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, during the Cranbrook years, as the—they took part, for example, in big furniture competition for the Museum of Modern Art. You might have seen it. I think Marianne had the brochure— [inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in the 1940s.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], yes. Well was Eames uh, noncompetitive with him too, or was, was he a competitor?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I don't think so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Not in the same way.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not the same way, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, they were always very close.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very close.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were with uh, Saarinen Associates then for several years, weren't you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Mainly, I worked on the General Motors Tech Center, and the restaurant building, and then also on the master planning, and then on a lot of special interiors, and presentation drawings. I have some that I could show you, anytime you feel like it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Audio break.] Now we're looking at several of your sketches for the General Motors Technical Center.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This first is what, so—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The first is uh, a stairway in the Styling Building, and the Styling Building was some kind of very important public affairs building too, for they have guests there, and which, the stylists like to prove what they can do, outside styling cars. So, they asked for spectacular things. So this is a stairway from the main lobby to the upper level where the executives are, and it's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's cantilevered.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It's cantilevered over a reflecting pool. So it's hanging in steel rods.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now this was your idea. [00:08:00]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was basically—no, it was basically Eero's idea, except the pond, or the reflecting pool, came later on.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But you would uh—he would discuss it with you, then you carried this particular thing out.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, I carried it out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is your, your first is—your first sketch.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's the first sketch.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then, what Eero liked about my sketches is that I did this kind of sketches to show the idea and the spirit of it—

ROBERT F. BROWN: A pen and ink sketch, a large scale.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —large-scale sketch, without committing yourself. You see, so often, architectural perspectives and renderings are very exact; you can see practically every break [ph] and every detail. Then you are stuck, you can't change if it doesn't work or something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean, but I think, because the client will say, "I like that."

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: A client says, "I like it."

ROBERT F. BROWN: A client says he likes this, you're not committed to uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —anything but the general scheme.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's the idea, that's the idea. That's what Eero liked about my sketches.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And how did that uh—how did your—the General Motors clients, did they want something more precise, or did they—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In a later stage, but they accepted this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But they would accept things—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —on the basis of this.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They would accept it, and then they—that way, you got to go ahead—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that typical, do you think, of an industrial client?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Most of them wanted more precise initial ideas.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, and that was particularly difficult with General Motors, like in the styling department, for they make the meticulous draw—presentation drawings of car models—but every bolt is shown.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, if you made—tried to do even close to something like that, they would start the criticizing, and "look at this" and "look at that."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But if you did this first, and they say it okay, then you had to go quite far ahead before you needed it to pin down every bolt, and you knew that the bolt [laughs] was in the right spot, so to say.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, who was—uh, who were you dealing with, styling people, or the higher executives?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This was the vice president of styling.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But he presumably could take [00:10:00] a broader view than those men you just mentioned, who had to look for every bolt—every joint.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes, yes. But the same thing when, with the restaurant building, for example, had a quite loose sketches first, and got the approval, and then they went ahead.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So this is quite typical of that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now these other, there are other sketches of the uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: These, these are sketches, also studies of the same thing that actually goes—we didn't go in detail, so you can see what we—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sections, and for—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —for sections, and perspectives—who shows more the structure of idea about it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Then I'd like you to show—I think this—[inaudible]—uh, about site plans—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and renderings, and rendering techniques.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Eero was quite intrigued by what I could do with a color pencil, and this, for example, can believe it or not, this is one of the site plans.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yes. Oh, they're in pencil. [Inaudible.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You see, it's all in color—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is very much, uh, done in great de—with great finish.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now he was intrigued because he had not thought of this detail, in the site plans?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, he hadn't thought of this technique, in a way, but then he was intrigued so he drew himself, for example, there's a three-like set. In many cases, he used three different colors: a light green, then a dark green, and then the black.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He did?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: For it—he did and I did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: For his trees.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, to—for each little tree, here's a three different kinds of color pencils.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But in a way, that was carrying it too far, wasn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean it—[cross talk]—did appeal to the client?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Your aim in here, you've said much earlier to me that you would carefully look at the terrain, the lay of the land—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —as well, and getting a feeling for it.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then you'd make your basic sketches for the building, [00:12:00] as we just saw, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —or for the whole site plan.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Sure. Well in this space, everything is artificial, starting with the lake and the layout, uh, completely flat ground.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So there wasn't a whole lot—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: There was nothing to study.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —of unexpectedness in the natural terrain.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was just, right there.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was right there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. But you think, uh, for your generation of designers in architecture, you, are you usually attentive to the terrain, do you think?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not in the same degree.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were, you were more attentive, do you think to the terrain than most of your contemporaries?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh by far, I would say by far.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Most of them would just do their designs sort of in the abstract, that is, with respect to the land.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, abstract with respect to the land and the vegetation and trees, so usually, I had, for any site plan, have even the old trees marked in by the surveyors. I knew exactly what was what.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you suppose some of this came out of your time of necessity at Petsamo, when you had to know precisely the nature of that terrain or things wouldn't work?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Those were very extreme climatic conditions.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. And then, my warm feeling for nature, particularly trees, combined with that experience.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [Audio break.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —very large perspectives, and that maybe we should just roll up the spindle, or—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Typical how careful we study some interiors—[inaudible]—this is a cashier's desk, uh, in the restaurant building.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yes, so, you had to go into great detail.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this by your desire, or Eero's, or, at the requirement of the client?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it was Eero's desire.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And I enjoyed to do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So I thought, in a way, I loved to do this kind of—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he compulsive about details?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, he was. Yes, he was, very compulsive about details.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This, they're interior studies of the restaurant [00:14:00] building at General Motors. I'm sorry the—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This is a perspective, inside perspective, but it's a large lobby area. It's the main entrance, is here, and the five steps up to to the dining level. And, to separate the dining area from the lobby and still keep it open, we had the idea to have a screen, loose screen, dividing, but not like a wall, but you could see through it and see over this, over the big lake, and so forth. And, so, that when Harry Bertioia came into the picture.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Harry Bertioia.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you knew him, from Cranbrook, quite well.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: We knew him from Cranbrook, and he had made a small metal screen with small panels, about 18 by 24 inches, which Marianne had.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this cast, or rock work, or wire, or what?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it was small pieces of steel, which he poured melted brass, silver and gold dropping on them, and then they were welded together, so it made a marvelous pattern, and Eero got intrigued by that and said, "Why don't we get Bertoia into this?" So Bertoia got the commission, and that was his first big job, that opened the whole field for him, so he made these panels that were 15 feet high, and this was 36 feet long.

ROBERT F. BROWN: My.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And the panels, which were about one inch by three, in Marianne's screen, they were blown up to six by 15.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Six by 15 inches.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —inches, inches, each individual. And, [00:16:00] so he made this, and to get it transported—he made this in Pennsylvania, where he had a farm, and had his uh, studio in the barn, and even the barn wasn't large enough, so he had the screen partly outside. And there was a mill pond, and the stone wall along the mill pond, and he had those screens, metal screens, standing on the edge of the mill pond. It was the most beautiful thing you have seen, these reflections in the mill pond of this thing. So, it was made in parts so he could transport it, and it took them all over there, and put in, and it was rolling—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were these bars of steel?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were all steel.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Bars of steel—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —or rods of steel?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It, it was rods.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Rods of steel—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They, they were also steel.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —which he dripped gold and silver.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well this was probably the first uh, large-scale metalwork done since uh, traditional crafts.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, I'm pretty sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you had uh—did you feel he was a notable designer? Had you been—kept your eye on him for some time?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But this was his major breakthrough, wasn't this?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was his major breakthrough. He had never done anything even close to that size before. For then after that, he got many commissions. There is a bank on Fifth Avenue where he built somewhat similar ideas—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —a panel, panel—of metal panel.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So these were 36-foot long sections—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —15 feet high.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And how many were a number of them going—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, they're about 30, 36 inches altogether, his screens—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —36, but this was left—[cross talk]—open, but this was part of the way the table stopped there so walks, it wasn't so close, but here the tables came to the edge—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —so that's why the screen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Screen was more or less behind the staircase—uh, the steps.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But behind the steps, so these railings didn't exist then, that's where the screen started, and came in. And another—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And did the uh, client accept that [00:18:00] idea, they liked it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes. They liked it, and they accepted it, shaking their heads, you see, after their use of metal in car manufacture; it's precision work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, one of the vice presidents, when he saw this screen, he said, "For God's sake, why do we have to pay that much money for this? I could just have gone to my workshop and have all my welders drunk, [laughs] to get the same thing."

ROBERT F. BROWN: What carried the day, however, with the client? What was it that uh, got them to accept—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Mainly because they didn't—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Bertoia's—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —understand what it really was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, and they wanted to—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, the—yes, but if I just—if it—they got so intrigued by it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And was one aim of this, uh, stint, technical center, to be very splashy, to make a very modern statement, to be new?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Partly to make a modern statement, and also, to make a—this was only for the employees, this restaurant. Also, for them to get a complete break from their working setup and working conditions in, in the big workshops and laboratories where they worked, to have something complete different setup, with a view of nature and the pond, background music, and the whole setup. There are very beautifully designed tables, and clothing, everything. So, that was—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were prepared to uh, spend a great deal of money—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —on the furnishings.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, there was practically no limit.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Like in most of the buildings, that's where, for example, Marianne's rugs came in, for Eero's fee was based on the overall building mass, let's say, let's take, like the Styling Building.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So there is an enormous long building and so, so [inaudible] corner there on the sketches. And, it was just repeat, repeat, repeat, [00:20:00] so there was nothing really to design. If you once had settled for a system, then it just went on. So, that's why you had so much free left over to work endlessly hard, inexpensively. Like in an entrance lobby, you could have a stair like this which cost a fortune; you could have expensive furniture, Strengell rugs, everything like that. And that—and there was a carte blanche for it. So they liked to have that thing. And Eero liked it, but it was the only challenge he had into his—practically in the project, and once the building was set, then it was just this, was like a little pearl set in there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were you involved in some of the furnishings? Some of the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, quite a lot. Actually—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You worked closely with Bertioia, here?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. And act—the whole thing was Eero's furniture. The whole interior was Eero's furniture, manufactured by Knoll.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did Eero spend much time designing furnishings?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, he spent quite a lot of time. Uh, for example, this new line, you know the pedestal tables and those—there was one, I can't remember his name right now, who worked in Eero's office, was actually sent to—was partly trained by Eero, and worked in the furniture department at Knoll's, but then came over and worked at Eero's office for at least half a year, only on the furniture, to develop these types.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was uh, Bertioia like? What was he like for you to work with?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, sweet, charming, very easy to work with, very sensitive, very sensitive person.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would he be involved in the presentation to the GM people, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not at all. [00:22:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Eero would handle that.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Eero would handle that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was Eero, by the way, like in making it, when he made a presentation? Because he was so intense and driving during the working time. What was—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, he, you know, he was speaking very slowly, uh, almost stammering sometimes looking for words, and slow and things, and that, I know in the General Motors case, that impressed the clients.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But when he really got to things that he felt he must have something there, well, it's—it worked.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He seemed like he was thinking it out and being extremely careful.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes, yes, no, he was very successful. When you first listened to him, it was that this is never—you're just nervous—[inaudible]—how is this going to end? But it was very successful. You know Calder?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's one of the better things that Eero did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What, with, with—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: With—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Alexander Calder?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —Alexander Calder. In that big uh, central pool, there is a piece of sculpture, a water sculpture. It's called *A Water Ballet*—I have beautiful slides of it—made by Calder. It was a serious—actually, you don't see anything when it's quiet, but serious of, of uh, like hose outlets, just under water level. Then you turn it on, and then it starts spraying: some high spray, straight, some rotating, and—[inaudible]—and some just bubble in the surface. It's a beautiful thing, and that was Calder. So Eero talked to Calder if he could do something like *A Water Ballet*. And, they worked on it and they had all the technical help they could get in constructing it from the General Motors' own staff, but they had to sell this idea. [00:24:00] It was very hard. So he invited, was it two of them, General Motors' vice president for dinners to his home, and Calder was there, and Marianne and I was there, involved in this. I don't know if you know or if you ever met Calder.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No. He was there too?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He was there too, and he's a—was tall, big, clumsy person, and somewhat very childish, that's why he started out, just like a play, with all his mobiles and things. He was just a childish thing. And so he was there, and Eero presented it and tried to really build up Calder, and Calder sat at the dinner table, very sleepy and just this way and that way, and finally fell asleep on Marianne's shoulder and started snoring. So it's, that was the end of that, [laugh] so, forget the whole water sculpture. And then afterwards, Eero [laughs] talked to them and they were so impressed by him, that he was so complete, that he didn't give a damn about anything except his own work, so he got the job.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why, why did that impress them, do you think?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It's hard to say. I guess they were only by impressed by Eero's slowness and things that —

ROBERT F. BROWN: Eero was still giving—was giving his usual slow presentation.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And here the artist was snoring away.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Laughs] he was snoring away. No—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can't figure out how that impressed them, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, but it did! It did!

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Did Calder then spend a lot of time with you people, uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, very little, I had very little to do with Calder then, then it once—and he worked directly with uh, engineers and so forth in the Technical Center, and together, it was Eero then checking how it would work, and so forth. It used so much water. It was so expensive, so they don't have it running constantly, only [00:26:00] on certain occasions or certain hours a day or some big visitors are coming, then they had to spark the flowing. [Papers shuffling loudly.] I'm sorry for the noise.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the uh, GM Technical Center was one of the major jobs you did when you were with Saarinen.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes, it was really the major job. See—yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now this is the restaurant—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This is the restaurant—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in the Technical Center.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and I just talked about the screen—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and this is the location of the screen. This is the section, and there is the screen, and this is the lower lobby level.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. On the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And there is a plant there, square boxes with trees in them, and then the lake, the big lake starts here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you reflect the large pool—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —which Calder sculptured.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Bubble—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was actually—[cross talk]. So this is a study what you can see, the lower level, sitting level—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —walking level, dining table level, and standing level, so you see that what, what the view is—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah!

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —the vista is created.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Very carefully worked out the uh, view they would have from within—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —to the outside.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes, a difference of pick up—every detail in the building was worked out like this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you think you were uh, driven to such details, you and the firm, because uh, it was a flat site, and you needed to develop these close connections outside, inside, lobby to dining area—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —to sort of relieve what could've been a very monotonous quality.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was definitely just to ease that feeling and to utilize as much as possible the view of the lake and the landscaping.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [Audio break.] Well, we're looking now at a very large drawing [00:28:00] of the Research Building, right, the very largest—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —building with uh, the stainless steel water tower on the right. What did—was this a presentation drawing, or a drawing that was made for the client?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This was a presentation drawing, and made for the client to show the relationship to the water tower, to the building, and the reflecting pool. We had an excellent, detailed model, also the water tower, and the building, and the entrance lounge, and we have these drawings that I have shown you, too, renderings about the pool, and the site plan. But Eero liked to have something more alive to show the relationships between the buildings, what the effect would be, not in detail, but just a general effect on the area. So that was the purpose of this drawing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which you couldn't quite get from a model, or from the detail.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: For example, the Research Building, the emphasis is on it and yet, and you show its—the fenestration.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then the other buildings to the right, or in the distance, are shown in a more general way—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —that they wouldn't fight with each other, would they?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No. But still—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were they all done more or less to the same size proportion, module?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, the same module was carried through the whole projects.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And yet, a—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The only exception was the restaurant building, that is way too more of a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And yet, because they were such great distances from one another—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —they would, uh, fade the atmospheric effect on the buildings in the distance, that you wouldn't perceive them as, uh, simply monotonous repetitions—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —of the building that was nearer you.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Only but—I am sorry, but there was one good point also, which was Eero's, and all the brick that—end partitions, not shown here, because—you can see little—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The end walls are—right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —end walls, brick. This is the power station, that was all brick, every building had the same [00:30:00] end wall and some brick there, and each building has its own color. To develop glazed brick, it didn't actually exist at that time. It was ordinary brick, glazed. It was Maija Grotell, in Cranbrook, who developed the brick.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, it was pretty hard in the beginning for—when it didn't glaze, didn't cover it, absolutely solely, because we get some water in through it, and it froze and popped—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Popped off the glaze—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and popped off the glaze.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —popped off the bricks.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So they took quite a while and a lot of experimentation until they finally had it. So, each building has these fabulous glazed brick, but each building has its individual color. It really made a lot of difference and excitement also in the overall thing, and so you have splashes of colors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Certainly. Were these colors at all related to the—to symbolize function at all?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just for variety, and for their own beauty.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was—yes. Color used to symbolize function was inside the power station, where all the pipes and ducts, each one has a special color, so you could see in the color what was the function of that particular pipe, so it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —sometimes a very practical thing. [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, another aspect that comes from this wonderful pencil drawing is the uh, nature, such as it was, I mean the landscaped effects of nature, the trees, the groupings of trees and the pool, uh, do as people often say "soften" the buildings. Was that a major consideration or not?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was, it was. It was a major consideration.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You all felt that those buildings by themselves were too stark?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: By far much too stark, and also, in certain cases, for example, it's a group in front of a building and so forth, there handpicked [00:32:00] huge trees that cost about a thousand dollars a tree just to remove them and replant them. But then natural area on the sides of the building, so then you start with just with fairly young trees for large areas. But some special trees are just around the restaurant and so forth, just brought in by purpose to break—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to break the effect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I'm sorry—if you all thought the buildings were stark, why did you uh, stick with that particular uh, shape of the buildings?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, that was a very functional shape.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And also, that ties in with the modular system.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The modular system, and the system of partitions, light, and air conditioning, were all worked into the model. So for example, in certain areas, overnight, you could switch all the partition and put them all in a new location, that's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you had a flexibility uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was a flexibility.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —for uh, internal systems—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —with this recta—or cubicle structure.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, with this cubicle structure—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it wasn't primarily aesthetic.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I think the, [laughs] the aesthetics almost came afterwards, to try to make it aesthetics—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Perhaps that's why you and Eero spent so long on uh, simply the fine detailing—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —very minimal uh, fenestration.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's true, very much true.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Tried to at least make it seem, what, to have been elegant.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes. So also like in this building and the other, sort of a fairly deep—so it was vertical, right? Yeah, 50 feet, 50-foot-deep buildings, and there were no central support, in the middle of it. One 50-foot span all across it had to take the load of the next floor, just for the flexibility.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, so you had nothing to tie you in; you can do anything you like within that place, divided, all the way, as long as you stuck to the model.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Let me ask you, do you feel [00:34:00] that buildings of this nature, um, glass, boxes, or whatever you want to call them—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in steel, is, is the detailing, the finishing, quite important?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It's very important.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Otherwise, what, what happens? I'm talking now about appearance; I'm not talking about engineering. If they're not finished and detailed very carefully, do they seem drab or something?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They're very important.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That, that out there, let's say it drab and it look cheap. You can see right away it looks just like a badly put piece of—like in a puzzle, put the piece and it doesn't quite fit. The problem is that it has to be absolutely exact. So the workers are always laughing at the workers, English—each panel, they have a—had an enamel surface, and each panel came from the factory wrapped in plastic. So the worker, to—wrapped in plastic, all that they needed was a screwdriver, put it in place, and everything had to be so exact. That was the hardest part in the thing, and just stick to the exact measures. One thing was a little bit off, the whole system went off. It had to be just right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But in coloring, it was very difficult.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In coloring.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In coloring, and deciding colors of panels, and interiors, doors, everything because everything was prefabricated. So you couldn't end up let's say in the old-fashioned days, a normal—like building a house or something, you had it built and then you look and see that what color you like, and what shade that should be a little lighter, or a little bit darker. Here, you had to plan. The doorframe was made in one factory, the door was made in another factory, the wall panels made in a third factory, and they all had to blend together, so you had to [00:36:00] spend enormous lot of time to try to guess what the final effect is. And get samples from the various things and put them together, and check them in various lights and say, "This is it." But then, they can't, and they're all finished, and colors was there. Nothing, there was nothing painted on this job like that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: On the job uh, finish and detailing was out of the question.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The, the job was simply too large, was it, is that the reason? Or, the, the suppliers of all the parts were too diverse.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You could never uh, build them by custom—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —a custom build on the site.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No. Nothing was built on the site—[cross talk]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you'd have to—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had no fabrication facilities there to speak of.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, nothing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this part of the, the idea beneath the scheme though? Did they want to—did the GM people want to make this a, sort of a technology about the technology of the present?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you think by having everything prefabricated—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was not—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was partly a force to do it—[cross talk]—the size of it, and I'm, it was very much Eero's idea, really, to see how far you can go in this kind of a system. Eero was very, very involved in developing this kind of a technique.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did this—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and uh, this whole layout for this—this site plan layout, was called a campus layout for a factory. It was the first, and it has been used all over the country after that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was quite influential, wasn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was very influential, in that respect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It was an idea and approach that you would sub—you subscribed to, didn't you? You believed—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —because you had had to do that in the Kumo Valley under very adverse conditions. You attempted.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes, yes, I attempted—[cross talk]—it's the right word.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —developed parts—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and detailing that could be made into a small building, or a much larger one?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Right, right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:38:00]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The system, originally, was started out as Mies van der Rohe.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Germany, or when he came—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, here, in Chicago—

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —this modular system and panel—[inaudible]—it was the steel, and panels—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and steel and panels.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Illinois as to technology—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I can't remember who it was, one of the—I don't remember, an architect who came and saw this and said to Eero, "This is easier than this."

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Well that was a compliment at that time, though.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was very much a [laughs] compliment, at least in those days.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you all very uh, pleased with this?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. I think Eero was very pleased with it, too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you feel this was the kind of work you'd like to continue to do?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Definitely not.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why not?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, it's too mechanical.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you said, once said that you're an intuitive person.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible]—a play of the imagination and intuition.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, that's—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —considerably, didn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's very hard to apply in a case like this. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

[END OF TRACK 02, SIDE B.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] December 16, 1982, Wellfleet, Massachusetts. [Audio break.] It's an interview with Olav Hammarstrom continuing. This is cassette number three, December 16, 1982, Wellfleet, Massachusetts. [Audio break.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —talked about his styling and the stairway, in the Styling Building.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the uh, Technical Center, yes

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In the Technical Center, and I tried hard to find out the name who was the vice president at that time, and that was his name, I certainly remember, was Harley Earl.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Harley Earl.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Harley Earl, and he was a great extrovert [ph]; everything has to be like that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and that was one reason why the stair just, a thing like that. And then the next project, which I was involved with, was his private suite in his office, and it was absolutely unbelievable.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you mean? You mean very—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In design, it was, at that time, in contrast to the whole, let's say, Mies van der Rohe approach to design. Everything in that area of his has to be non-modular. You had to be floating, sweeping, streamlined; *ooh* like—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —it was unbelievable. And, and it has to be presented in the most fantastic ways so he would accept it. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean he was a difficult man to please.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, he was very difficult, just because he was just, that kind of a man, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he wanted—he was a prima donna?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, boy. That was understatement, and, and Eero caught onto that very quickly. Uh, the windows—I have [00:02:00] a book that I was going to show you later. This is the book actually about uh, techniques in rendering and design, but I thought I could show it to you, of the drawings I made for him. This is a detail of the washroom in his special suite. Everything—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The washroom.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was the washroom, that's a little sink there, and there was something else here,

and the whole thing, a drawing about size of this table, rendered like this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is the plan.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was the plan. But this—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Laughs]—[inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this, it's—it looks almost like a seashore, with some um—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —debris on it. I mean it's so free—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and floating, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, that was the idea. So I, [laughs] I broke through to this door, just to present, and then, they made a quite an incredible—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did he describe to you, or did he go on about what he wanted, but in ve—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, he wanted—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —rather vague terms?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very vague terms, and Eero translated it that it has to be something like this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because Eero had worked with him before, or at least—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —had spent more time with him.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, I spent more time and analyzed it very quickly, what he was after.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He wanted sort of a fantasy.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, absolute fantasy so, [laughs] so we had then, we had all these plans, and then we had some interior perspective, so Eero was to present to him, on a certain day, and practically worked night and day to get that presentation ready. And then, [laughs] two days before the presentation, he called up here, "I'm sorry, uh, I have to go to Paris. If you happen to be around"—for they had a deadline, [00:04:00] because some, some budget meetings or something for GM, so to get the money for this whole thing. So, so he said that, "I'm going to Paris on that day and, and I can't come back, and so forth; be happy to have this settled." So Eero said that, "Well, maybe I should come to Paris and present it to you." So he said, "That's fine." [Laughs.] He said, so, [laughs] so Eero called me and it was about 10 o'clock at night, and uh, [laughs] in two days, he's going to Paris to present this project to Harley Earl. And uh, he said, "After all, Harley Earl is going to be in a nightclub or something in Paris. I can't roll out these big drawings there." So, [laughs]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —we had 48 hours to redraw the hill—the whole project in black and white, in small sketches, would be look good in a nightclub in Paris. [Laughs.] It's true! [Laughs.] I did it, and Eero [laughs] went with this bow [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: There was just what—[inaudible]—bow [ph] like that, that I showed, that staircase, you know, that kind of a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —flashy black and white—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Flashy ink, and broad brushed on.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Practically brushed on.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, brushed on—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —quick quick, with read or write [ph] in a nightclub, [laughs] where there was nightlife anyway. So, [laughs] so off Eero went, [laughs] with his bundle. I was a wreck, and Eero went up, and we got a wire next day, "Okay, go ahead," [laughs] and then this was done. Uh, but Eero was very quick in that he realized that what is right and what time and what person. So we had this kind of a presentation, all my big, fancy, ridiculous in a way—there, [00:06:00] and then switched over in 48 hours to a nightclub presentation in Paris, and it worked.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well this was one of Eero's strengths, was it, uh, going to great lengths to make the right presentation?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, uh, I would say so, and that was leading up to one other point that I was bringing up; this is one, which I'd like to, because it's so funny and good and typical of Eero, and the second was, it ties in with this about Eero's approach to competition, architectural competition, and that actually ties up with, with Eero's father, Eliel.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, first, he was brilliant, and an extraordinary craftsman in drawing, and in presentation, unbelievable really, and he was criticized why he became an architect, he would have been a super painter, an artist. He did this, but his craftsmanship was perfect, and he proved it very much in architectural competitions. Architectural competition in Europe were much more common than here, particularly in Finland. All the big jobs—maybe still, but they're lost, last [ph]—in those days, were actually commissioned based on competition. Uh, government jobs—[inaudible]—and so forth, they were a very good jury, of government and so forth, people judging, and it was based on competition, and Eliel, all during his generation, always won. [00:08:00] He—the only time he lost was when he got a second prize was the *Chicago Tribune*—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well that was in a competition over here.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And that was A competition over here, and that made his introduction to this country—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —which led to the whole thing. That was about the only time he got a second prize; he constantly got the first prize.

ROBERT F. BROWN: People sometimes said he could've even been a painter, in other words. He was so—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, oh yes—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And that's Eliel—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes. That was Eliel. And then came Eero, in competition, and Eero also constantly won.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did he compete from an early age in compet—he was in competitions, even in the late '30s, he was—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I assume so. I don't know—but later—[inaudible]—it was a competition, he always won. And he also was in competition with his father. Well, now, there is one thing I can't remember. There were—because that was before I came here—there was a competition for an art museum, art gallery, or something in Washington, DC.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: What was it?

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was to have been the National Gallery of Art—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, that was it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —of American Art.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Okay—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —I think Eliel won it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, I think so.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think Eliel won it, yes. No, or Eero.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, the two were together I think, as—almost as partners.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I don't think so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Or, the story I'm telling here because that was before I came, so I don't know exactly. It was either this competition or the competition of the St. Louis Arch—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —where both Eliel and Eero took part. And, Eero won, but then, I thought it was the arch, but Marianne says it was this, this Washington [00:10:00] competition, but the jury called up Eliel, and congratulated him and said, "You won the competition; it's great!" And they had an enormous party, all together, and this poor guy in the jury had the [laughs] horrible task of call [ph] up Eliel and say, "I'm sorry, it was Eero who won." [They laugh.] [Inaudible]—so, so he [laughs] called up, and said, "Eero won," and this is one of my favorite explanations of Eliel's humor. When Eliel got the news, he came to Eero and said, "Do you know what? This way we got two parties!" [They laugh.] Is that great? [Laughs.] [Inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It says a lot about the man, doesn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, that's what I mean; it just plain shows the man that, and Eliel's party isn't [inaudible]—Eero got it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible]—and said, "Have two parties," which also, after all, this was some serial [ph] plan of that, but also, it lost something in him, but that's the way he took it. He said, "This is great; we got two parties!" And that's very much Eliel, the way I always remember him. So, but that's what I had—I told you about how Harley Earl.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: About Eliel, and uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you, you uh, stayed in touch with Eero then, uh, later didn't you? I mean you, a little later, went on. By the uh, the later '50s, were you—who were you with then? Were you with any particular firm then? Or were you—you were with uh, Eero until—through '54 or so, weren't you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, and also my own. [00:12:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you were on your own in Michigan—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In Michigan, yes. I had a lot of private jobs and so forth, and residential work—it was a home—and uh, I left Eero partly because uh, as I told you, I liked to, to be more or less a lone ranger in architecture—worked alone and Eero respected it, and the big teamwork, I was not good, or I was frustrated; I had problems, so I left. And Eero always tried to get me back, in a way, and so he likes to—he likes my approach to things and we understood each other, and it did work. And then Eero one day said that, that uh, "Could you come up and talk?" and said "Well come and talk." He said he's planning to move, move east. "Oh," I said, "Do you like to?" I said. He said, "Yes, but it's so complicated to have the office outside Detroit, and all the consultants, everything, in New York, and so forth. They're constantly running." It was a problem, that all the consultants, all the technical people, constantly running back and forth, from somewhere to a small village outside Detroit. So, he said, "If you're going to move east, to"—and he had always very strong feelings of his ties to Yale.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, did he?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, very strong feelings about it. So he said, instead of going to New York, he'd like to go to New Haven, uh, and be in that area. And he said that, that's his plan. [00:14:00] And he said, would I like to join him, again? I said, "Well, under one condition: that you actually move." But, that was, uh, Marianne said earlier—uh, no, that was my fault. I said to you that uh, when Chris and our girls graduated from Cranbrook School, we—she was ready to move. That was not exactly little right; it was exaggerated, because it timed in, which uh, maybe with me, because I felt I had enough of that area, uh, think to do something of my own, or move or something. And Eero had tantalized me all the time in coming back to him, and then he said that now, he's going east. So I said, "If you are going, then I believe to join, so let's go together." So, I joined up, and worked in the office there for a couple of months or—on, on the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was about 1961 or so, wasn't it, about 19—early '60s, or late '50s?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The late '50s, I think.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: When did he die?

ROBERT F. BROWN: In '60, or 6—something like that.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, that was time around, yeah, so, so I said yes. So, we joined up and I worked on the CBS—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the CBS building?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I worked on the, mainly on the levels. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was a high-rise, and you worked on the, the floor plans—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —layout.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —on, on the floor plans, actually, on the distribution of it. [00:16:00] I spent about three weeks in New York prior to that to find out CBS worked. They didn't know it! They had one office here, then one office downtown; they had an office here, and one studio here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were very disconnected.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were so disconnected. The only thing I could find out how they operated, was a telephone dictionary.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The, the—it's true! I found the telephone dictionary; I found out, and then I had to try to figure out who was the boss of whom. They didn't even know that! It was unbelievably disorganized, you can't believe it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, I, I spent three weeks in New York trying to find out, more or less, what was the whole business about, and what to put in the skyscraper. They had decided they'd like to have a skyscraper. What to put in it? Anyway, so Eero more or less gave me carte blanche on that part to organize the inside, and he organized the outside. We had done that once before. So, so, he designed the whole thing, outside, the— [laughs] so for, I was supposed to fill it in. [Laughs.] So, so, I had a model of a sort. Oh, it was almost this tall; it was over 36 levels in there, and playing with cardboards and sitting—who is sitting next to who. And the damn thing was, because this was so disorganized, so nobody really knew who was boss, [laughs] to get it—[inaudible]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you had a—could you ever resolve that?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, sort of, yes, it got organized. It got fairly well organized. So, but that, that was one

of my last—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that was the project that you were plunged into—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —when you rejoined Eero. [00:18:00]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. And, oh, it, it was a challenge in itself. It was fascinating, really, first to dive in to see a big organization like that can be so disorganized that you couldn't believe it! And, well, then, then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: On the other hand, Eero's firm was still fairly small, was it? I mean, you and he could work pretty closely together?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: We worked very closely together.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he still very hard driving and compulsive about details and reworking things?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: At that time, I would say, he was uh—this is beginning, did I say, now to his illness. At that time, he was hard driving, uh, in the beginning, and then there was always this one reason why the office was going to move the east coast, with a constant stream of consultants, you know, engineering, any kind of—constantly flying, and you had to eat—then to—and met with lunch with them, and ship them on and back, and there was a country club very close to the office, and always took the guests over there, and you sat and had lunch, and they went back and walk on floor, and then it started showing up that, that uh, Eero said, "Go back, and let's sit for a bit longer." So we sat for a bit longer, and everyone [ph] understood [ph] it, he was worked out like a dog! He was so overworked, and he said, "Go back," and we were sort of—[inaudible]—thank God, he can rest—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean he stayed working.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, he sat—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He sat at the country club.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He sat at the country club, because we were there, and when, started stretching a little bit longer, and we said, "My God, it's, [00:20:00] he deserves it of anybody," so we were—more of the guests and got them off and so forth, and uh, everything was fine for a long time. And then it was, I thought it over Christmastime, uh, he had a luncheon party. Not a party, it was a private party, in the sauna [ph] suites. We're there and Aline, and then he said, and said, "Where is [ph] Helwig [ph]?" I said, "It was Hendrick." Hendrick was his uh, or is—[inaudible]—uh, his cousin, from Finland, Hendrick Acheland, [ph] who actually migrated, lived somewhere in, somewhere, and he hadn't—anyway, he hadn't seen Hendrick for about three years before this happened. So he looked around and said, "Where is Hendrick?" And we said, "Hendrick, yes, but who's Hendrick?" And then, Aline suddenly discovered it was something seriously bad, so, he got him off to Ann Arbor, to the hospital.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To Ann Arbor.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. And then they got the—all the experts, everybody, and, you know that part of the story.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, then what, he—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No? Well, they got him in and checked him over and saw that it was very, very serious, with his brains. Something was absolutely wrong with his brain. Said it was something that, just had the—that it is a tumor, I think it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, and I uh, [laughs] in the meantime—this happened [00:22:00] just when I had joined the office, because he had promised to move to the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to the coast, and, and he bought a house outside, in Hamden, which is part of New Haven. I was remodeling that house for him, and preparing and going back and forth, and uh, so, he was, after this incident, was in—he was in the hospital. Aline called me, and they had all brain experts coming in, check on him, and said, "It's practically hopeless." They said, "It's no—it's really something bad." It was—fortunately, Eero

had no idea about this. He was just sort of relaxed and lank, and, talking slowly as usual, and uh, I was in the stage of putting the final touching in this, and I came up to Eero, [laughs] there in the hospital, and said, "Hey, boy, uh, I like you to say where you like to have the telephone connections. Here, you like one in the bedroom and the living room, maybe one in the hobby room in the basement, maybe up there—where would you like your telephone?" He said, "Let me think about it." I said, "Okay, you think." Then I came back the next day. I said, "Okay, have you decided where to put the telephone?" And he said, "No, let me think about it." And, and then I came back the third day. He had this drawing, had it—pinned it on a board, you know, so it was simple, and, but did it with the other, and every part where he liked to have a telephone, he drew a miniature of an old-fashioned telephone, with a crank—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and things, in each spot [00:24:00] where he liked to have telephone, and said, "This is that, way I like to live." I said, "It's great. That's where you got your telephone—well, that what you want then." And actually, I gave that drawing, finally, I gave it to Aline, it was incredible drawing. [Laughs.] It was a telephone. And uh, that was about the day before he died. And uh, I was worriless [ph] constantly at that time, and then, but the last thing he said was, to me—his incredible architectural mind is lying in bed and looking at this. There was a window there. There was a light fixture near the ceiling. So he said, "There's something wrong, because the light fixture and the window doesn't line up. Either you have to move the fixture, or the window, so they'll"—and uh, that was about his last words.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Just constantly worked that way. Well, I thought that was good to tell to you about this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes! So his mind would be very lucid and still—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Still, yes, still there. Still like that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he went very suddenly, hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Had you been uh, close to Aline, as well as to him?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You never got to know her too—very well.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, yes, through that period, and—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because she was—they were married after, right after you came, weren't they, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, [laughs] I don't think anybody could know anybody as intimately I know them. I was on their honeymoon.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Laughs.] [00:26:00] But believe it, [laughs] I was on their honeymoon!

ROBERT F. BROWN: As what, an assist—a special assistant?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was a specialist, just in case. [They laugh.] No, no, I don't mean that, but I was on their honeymoon, for Eero was so darned efficient. So he had to go down to Alabama or something. Uh, yes, it's a private house, and actually, I had created the office at that time, because I like, as I said, had my own jobs and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then, there was an eye doctor in Alabama, who—a very strange guy in a way, but he liked to have a residence, a big residence, and he asked Eero to do it, and Eero said he doesn't do residences. So, he said he has to have it, has his wife, for a Scandinavian, so he'd like to have a Scandinavian architect—so Eero suggested me, and said, "Why don't you ask" me to do this, and I said—and he said I was unknown and so forth, but he'd like to have this famous Saarinen name and so forth. So, it was compromised that Eero [laughs] and I could do this and this together, in Alabama. He was an eye doctor. And the timing was just when Eero got married, so they, they—ended up that the whole marriage ended up with, right after the ceremony, we jumped into a car, drove to [laughs] the airport, and flew to Alabama: Eero, Aline and I. [Laughs.] That was their

honeymoon—[they laugh]—working on that house. Oh, God.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which, did she uh, [00:28:00] participate in many things? Did she discuss things ever with you, or, Aline?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Aline, yeah. Well, I would say, if you like to know about the relationship with Aline and Eero—Aline, it was—uh, I'm sorry, your machine. [Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They—uh, I was still talking. The interesting part with Aline, and Eero, and even liked to involve Kevin Roche in this deal—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was in the office, right?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —who was in the office, right—was that Eero, after all, was the creative wife, [ph] and the heart of the soul [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Kevin came in as a quite a poor designer, uh, from Mies van der Rohe's office, and barely made his way to be accepted—was a very bright, intellectual guy, which Eero realized quickly, and, and Aline, as you know, was the architectural critic for *New York Times*, before that. So, [laughs] in a way, if I may say so frankly, Eero was not an intellectual, but a brilliant designer, and, that's maybe why I felt quite close to him, that we would—he did very much by intuition, [00:30:00] and things—

ROBERT F. BROWN: As do you.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. And that then he had to defend it intellectually, and that's when Kevin came in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —for Eero designed something, then came Evan—Kevin in, and said why it was that intellectually. You know? And then came Aline and presented it. It was an incredible team. It really was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And she, in fact, did make presentations, did she?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, she did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: She did, and most of his lectures and speaks [ph] was a combination of Aline and Kevin.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And Eero did it. That's a fact!

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm! And yet, you told me that earlier, before they were married uh, his slow manner was a very effective way of presenting—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —things to clients, on his own.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, on his own; this was very good.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But once they came on board, it became much uh, more professional, or slicker?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, then they—no, kept being slicker and did some kind of a more mundane; he could reach a larger client field.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. But that what actually happened, that when Aline came in—no, I got the truck; we talk here or some—[Audio break]. When, uh, Eero died, I'd been through this and fixing up the end of the building, remodeling it, and so forth, and had a discussion with Aline, what go on, and Aline certainly said to "Collect everything you have in material about Eero; I have to have it published." Well, I said, "Yes, of course, we get all the stuff, [00:32:00] the office, from what I have personally and so forth," and she said that we have to—"I

have to publish it fast, get in the book, and out as long as Eero is still in the picture." She did it. You know that; I don't know even how it work. It's uh—so, I have it somewhere here, but about Eero, a big thing about Eero talking about himself, and, but the—I would say that incredible cynicism in, in realizing—

ROBERT F. BROWN: On her part.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —on her part, in saying, "Okay, make it quick! I got that much money of it and Eero might be forgotten in one year—use it now." She did it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What did you think of it as a publication?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, I think it was quite good as a publication, but of course, it was a little bit too fast, for, you can't—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It could've, could've used a little reflection and better compilation, maybe.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, that's what I mean.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You can't do something like that that quickly after something. Either you go overboard this way or that way; you are too emotional or you are too close; you can't judge it. But she didn't actually care about judgment; she had to get it out, and quick, out on the market, and then, in that moment, I more or less lost my faith in Aline, in that respect.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Was she rather uh, opportunistic, do you think?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, [00:34:00] I don't know if opportunistic is that right word, but uh, do you know the German word *Streber* [ph]? Yeah maybe that's gone straight translated to opportunistic. *Streber* is just, force and you go. Regardless of the cost, you had to go ahead and do it. I think that was, in a way, what is in background of uh, Aline's and Eero's marriage. It was a very combination of forces. Eero was the architect; she was, in a way, public relations, and he really built up his career.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: She did it. And then later on, with Kevin's intellectual approach. That had very much to do with it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you have the—ever have the sense with her that marriage to Eero was uh—gave her a luster? I mean, she felt—she was sort of basking in his fame? Do you think she was sort of—she liked the fact that she was—she'd shared some of his reknown?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, she did. Oh, definitely so; she was very proud to add Saarinen to her name. No, she did that from, coming from *New York Times* and we added [ph] that and she went to CBS or wherever it was, with the Saarinen, in relation to the name, worked very much for her. No, it did. I am very much aware of that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. She doesn't sound like she was someone with whom you could work very closely, very—from what you've talked about your relationship with Eero, or your own—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —liking to work on your own and so forth. You would find it rather difficult.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, no, it was fairly difficult. But I had to work with her, partly because [00:36:00] of Eero, and uh, all sort of a—also I—well, she was quite charming, and uh, bright like anything, and, in a way, when I have these bright people, like her, I'm very humble, because I'm not as fast in brains, like in thinking. But, even this old—this is topic [ph]—uh, for example, about my kind of approach to people, I like to tell you about Alvar Aalto, who was very fast thinking, very bright, and a great talker, brilliant in conversation, and things, and always convincing everybody, partly because he was so quick and smart, and, I had my—I had hours and hours of conversation with Alvar Aalto. And, the funny thing is that they're all completely one sided, just hour after—talk like a waterfall. And everytime he came to a point, and just when I was ready to answer, he had switched, and he started again. So, [laughs] so, we could sit up practically—but after all, he was a very good strong drinker; I was not too bad either. So you could sit up at night, practically, and he talked [00:38:00] like a waterfall. And during the whole night, I practice—ki—and said [ph], "Boo," because I was always too late.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Just when I was ready to say something, he had started on something else, or something. I never got it, and then the rest of the night, I was awake, and awake, and thinking all the things that I should have said! And it's—[inaudible]—my God, why'd I say that, but instead, it was too late.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because you wanted to have some impact on him.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, why not? At least or get a discussion going, instead of having one-sided recital—regardless how good it was, which you could also put in something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: With Eero, you could have uh, conversation, could you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, with Eero, we had conversation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What about with Kevin Roche? Was—because you—they then joined with his firm, didn't you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In '61, he came to New Haven too, did he, and—?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, he came.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then he formed his own—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Uh, do you like me to tell about that now?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well—[Audio break]—well, following Eero's death and you were committed to coming to Connecticut, and, you said Kevin Roche came east too—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —did you, for a little while, was there a work? Did you set up your own practice in New Haven? Or what, what happened?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, when we came, the office was in the middle of the move; part of it was on a truck. I was involved at that time in Eero's office. I had joined Eero's office with promise of moving in, so I was involved with, with the CBS skyscraper, working with that. In the middle of the move, with part of the office was on trucks, on the way, and I was remodeling [00:40:00] the house where Eero was going to be, and partly working on the office building which they had bought, fitting in the office, when Eero died. The whole thing was heartbreak. So it was somewhat complicated, and we had to follow up, and come over, and then, uh, Kevin Roche was next to Eero, to—in the office. There was Eero; and then it was John Dinkeloo, who was the technical guy, the engineer—Doug [ph] or his doctor [ph]; and then was Joe Lacey, who was the manager of the office—office manager, you know, expenses, salaries, everything like that. So, the whole group came over, and Kevin took over immediately in New Haven, of the design and running the thing, and we sort of got organized and got the office going. And uh, I would say at that time, there was, considering all, there was Kevin Roche, who was next to Eero, I would say, as a designer, and, as I said, that's his intellectual partner. And there was César Pelli, who you know.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What, he'd be—come on—had he been with him very long?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, he had been a couple of years—brilliant, and good.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And how had he come to Saarinen, do you recall?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, I have no idea how he came to—well, maybe he came from Argentina, I think, and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:42:00]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, uh, talk about him, I would say very impressive as a human being, because uh—I don't like to criticize the [laughs] American boys that I met here, but he was the first really very, what I felt, very educational, up in the top level.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Educated.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Educated—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —man, he really was one. His English was perfect, and his behavior was, in every effect, and brains—he was educated man. And Eero—[inaudible]—quite all right and he did it right in the office. Kevin, when he—when Eero died, and the New Haven office started, it was some kind of, of course, a vacuum. Eero was gone.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: There was Dinkeloo, structural engineer, uh, Joe Lacey, the manager, and Kevin. And, I think Kevin was extremely bright. He extremely, immediately grabbed what there was to grab, and, because he was closest in design, responsibility to Eero, so he took over. Uh, Pelli had a quite a big job going, I had a quite a big job going, and Kevin immediately sat on us, and took over complete control. So, we thought that this was going to be something else. Three, maybe there was a four [ph] [00:44:00] runned [ph] it. We were—after all, you had guys [laughs] who were doing the work in office.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were what? You thought it would be more partners, working together.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, we thought so, it going to be.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But Kevin squelched that.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Immediately. Immediately.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And uh—

[END OF TRACK 03, SIDE A.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] Yes. So how did that arrangement work then, with Kevin having taken control? What happened then, as a result?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, uh, first we didn't realize—well, you thought that somebody has to run something —

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and thought that we would get credits for what we were doing, and then—that Pelli thought that he was running his part and that, I sort of running my little part, too. And Dinkel [ph] and so forth, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —well, it turned out that nothing could go out without Kevin's control. It was very interesting to see. He was a little pale, little—oh, in a way, compared to us—but his brains were superb, as it is, and he has proved, and is a very good designer; he's a top architect. I give him all credit for that, but it was a very cruel way he put it into that position. So, that why, why Pelli left. Uh, he didn't that way have job or anything; he just quit, because he didn't get credit for anything, what he was doing, so he left and went to California, made his career there, and now he's been at Yale, which he deserves, I feel. I have a very—I have a very high regard for Pelli. Well, I, I kept on there, and uh, worked mainly on the Oakland Museum. I don't know if you know about it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, was that something that Roche brought in, or that was already brought in when so—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, that was the first thing Roche brought in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Roche brought in.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and I finished up [00:02:00] with uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —CBS.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, with—no, with the CBS, and then I did an enormous amount of the—oh, what's it called?

ROBERT F. BROWN: A bank, the bank in Indiana? Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, that was a small thing—the, the Ford Foundation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Ford Foundation, I did the whole garden, all the interiors, and that thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's one of the first things with which Roche made his name.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you actually did much of that.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I did a hell of a lot. No, he did the outside; I did the inside.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that something that Roche brought in, or that Saarinen already had—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, that was, I think that was the first thing that Roche brought in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The—or, no, no, he had—no, he didn't have it there; that was inherited.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was inherited.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The Oakland was the first thing he brought in—the Oakland Museum, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well the Ford Foundation, did you have a great deal to do with the interior, that tall—that great open space inside?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's what I worked on.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's what you uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —that was your idea, and your design.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. Not idea, that was part of the overall design, was that I worked and followed it up and do it. And this—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was a very much publicized building.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, oh yes—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and it led to all those new museums—new hotels, you know, with enormous— [inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: With the atrium in the middle, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, that was the first one, for it was uh, not only the space, but of a—the real problem was actually air conditioning, with our ceiling. It was air conditioning, how to get air to get the plants going, at the same time, how to get air in the room, so you'll open up this—[inaudible]—you can believe it was a problem, it was. It was all air [ph] now they used all the—all—you know, all the hotels have these enormous lobbies now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it was a fairly extravagant use of air conditioning wasn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh boy.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Was that a very satisfactory project for you to work on, with Roche?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [00:04:00] Yes, it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You, you found you could work fairly well with him?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, at that stage and, well, may, uh sort of, what we say, philosophical, for I had my

problems with the Oakland Museum.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, could you just explain that? That was an interesting concept.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was a very good concept, and I had to give 100 percent credit to Kevin Roche for the concept, for when they approached him about this, and say, "Just have a museum," so he with his brains, thought that anyone could have a museum, but just find out the—what a museum like that should do. So he divided it just in—oh, I can't remember the names now—the levels. First, there was uh, three levels of the museum. One was the earth and the ground, which they called a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —natural history, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Okay, natural history.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, it's, it's a combination museum.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was natural history—no, the first, the first was geology.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Geology, hmm, and then natural history?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Geology, that part, and then came the history, and then came the art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the top level.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: On the top level, you know—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —mostly that. Well, all those levels, mm—well, that was established, then we started working on the levels and things. I can show you hundreds of drawings there, for that practically was 100 percent my project. I spent one and a half year [00:06:00] on it, and get it going, and, I said that nothing would have happened without Kevin's brains in back of it. I give him 100 percent credit for that, for he had the overall idea, the philosophical set—like the concept of, do it this way, and so forth, and I worked within that limits, and got the levels, got the whole—after all, I don't ever seen [ph] a museum. The—it's actually an underground museum; the whole thing is a garden—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and, and—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's terraced and landscaped on top of each level.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, on each level. Oh my God, just to go through that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean you had structural problems? You had—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very, little structural problems, it was just a thing to get it pulled together in combination and things, and in those outdoor gardens, each level has its outdoor space, indoor space, exhibition areas, and so forth, and it was a brilliant—that was one of my biggest challenges, except in one respect, that I did almost 90 percent of the work; I never got one word of credit. And, uh, usually, at least you have go out there and check on the job. Kevin never let me go out there—due to why? Because they had discovered that I knew more of the project than Kevin.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah, so you never went there yourself.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I never went there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And once they had a meeting, I had this first presentation was fantastic, ah, because I saved, you know, some of my drawings, and they were—the location of one, [00:08:00] or the first presentation—what I mean, I was referring to my drawings, for they were really very flashy drawings. There were 50 drawings suggesting uh, remodeling or remodeling the heart of Oakland City, where the museum should be, where the town hall was where the lake was—I don't know if you—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and uh, it was horrible and Jack London's restaurant, [laughs] and bar, or things, how to tie them together. I had about 50 studies of that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You'd done these on your own, or at, uh, you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, it—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You thought that you should make this a master plan.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: As a master plan.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And make the museum connect with these Other landmarks.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes, to prove that this is the site for the museum, and how it ties in and what it does to prove to Oakland. I had these 50 drawings, [laughs] and then, that was the first time Kevin went out, and, and unfortunately, it was such a rush. It was one of those typical things where you practically drew 48 hours straight. And it was part affecting [ph] not even talk to the plan, we're also drawing—we never took a print or anything, or left them there, so we never had copies of anything of it. But anyway, that proved it, [laughs] and the museum end up exactly where I said it should go, and then it had gone from there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But he wouldn't—he wouldn't give you credit for—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not for anything. And there was one—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —embarrassing meeting. Usually, all the meetings were bad, and we were very careful; [laughs] usually, you took somebody along or something, but at that table [ph]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —so then [00:10:00] there was one meeting and they came over, the museum officials came over to New Haven, and we had a meeting and Kevin called me in and sat in the meeting, and they asked very personal question, which Kevin couldn't answer. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you speak up?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, I answered everything, and then, one of those, one, or the—except, I was not even introduced. I was just called in on something, and then, one of those museum says that, "Who is that? How does he know so much?" Uh, he asked me, "Why, why do you know all this? Why do you answer this?" I said, "Ask Mr. Roche." Boy, he stammered.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But that was that; that was the closest I ever got to it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Well wasn't—you didn't have any formal agreement of partnership or anything?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh no, no, nothing, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So he, he had the right, if he were willing to take it—if he could have the ambition, he could just take over and to claim all credit. You had no—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh no, he got all credit.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I mean, there was no way you could uh, challenge him.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh no, not a chance; I wouldn't have ever dreamed about it anyway—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You position was a designer. You were—you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh but—ah, no, I was a designer—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You weren't a formal, a formal part of the business partnership.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, nothing, nothing, no, I was just a designer.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, there was nothing. It was just a kind of, I—I'd say moral affair [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, they accepted what you had designed, but you'd designed all this in the abstract, maybe looking at maps and photographs.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this went against your grain, didn't it, because you liked to traverse, as you've said before?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I know. But I had [laughs] studied the maps. I knew it by heart.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But it worked out. It worked out in that sense. I mean—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It should; it did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Must have been a frustrating project though, in that regard also.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you couldn't go out and look and walk the streets.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was horrible. Yes, it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just get the sense of size [00:12:00] and scale better than you could get from a photograph.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Sure, sure. That's why I finally left the office.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you left—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in '64 then—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, then I said this is enough.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[inaudible]—illustration.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you at that time—uh, you made your living, partly, largely from that, I guess, but you also were teaching occasionally too, as a lecturer at MIT in design.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did that come about? Did you—did someone invite you there to come in?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it was partly—well, when I lived in New Haven, and, and I was teaching for two years in uh—at MIT, and that was partly because uh, of a neighbor here, György Kepes—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —who was here, and a friend of ours, and he was connected with MIT, and so forth. He said, so forth, "Why not?" And I had met Anderson earlier—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Lawrence Anderson.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, Lawrence Anderson and so forth, and so he said, "Why?" so, I was invited to teach there. So, I was there for two years lecturing, mainly in, in something in that order about uh, design and design presentations, and perspectives, really in drafting for uh, particular at MIT, fairly technical thing. It was amazing: the architectural students couldn't draw! Yeah, they had—they couldn't draw. [Laughs.] They couldn't do a damned thing. They had no idea of perspective and nothing, so I was there two years, just in that field, not in design, anything; just to do presentation on what to—graphics, just plain graphics.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That had been neglected, and for—it wasn't really taught at all.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It wasn't taught at all. So I was there for two years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Did you find that interesting, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [00:14:00] Yeah, I find it—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —tedious?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I find it quite interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But you commuted up there from your base in New Haven, right?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, I commuted up there from New Haven, and then in New Haven, when uh, I left the office, with Kevin and so forth, and Marianne had a lot of work in New York, and so we were commuting to New York all the time, so then we decided to quit New Haven and move to New York. So, we gave up her apartment, and two days after we had given up our apartment, Rudolph, who was the dean of architecture at Yale, called up and said, "Would you join the faculty?" And I said, "My God, [laughs] I just quit New Haven." So, [laughs] so anyway, so I joined Yale, but we couldn't get the apartment back and we have apartment in New York. So when I was in New Haven, I commuted to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —New York and Cambridge.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to Cambridge, and, and then, we moved to New York and I got [laughs] moved to New Haven—it's ridiculous—for two years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you've said that in, uh—at Yale, you particularly worked with, um, on drawing and again, as you had at MIT.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, I got—I was partly—uh, what's it called—associate professor in design in charge of the first year. It was to me, I felt a very important year, for that's facing all this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And you worked particularly in drawing with them—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes, in drawing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You've said that uh, Rudolph, I guess, didn't emphasize [00:16:00] drawing or didn't do much with drawing, is that right?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, Rudolph—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hadn't been a whole lot—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Rudolph did quite a lot, in a way, but, but very mechanical drawings, very mechanical. Everything went—yeah, man—it—but you can see also his fantastic presentations of drawing, but there's a certain mechanical technique that everyone can do it; you can learn it, how to do it, and back [ph], but there's no soul in it. You see, there's no individual thing. You have a technique, like, if you know how to draw that, you can draw it—a thousand square feet of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right, right. Whereas you were beginning to teach the students what you could do, which was to present something, to—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —as we saw with the uh, GM Technical Center, the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. Oh, right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You could enliven the immense building and make it see—see how it would sit and relate to other buildings.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: To relate, and also—let's see. I had a slogan at that time. Uh, don't—well, I had to think it; now I've forgotten—[inaudible]—don't think of how to draw, on how to draw, but think of why do you draw? Why are—what are you going to present? Don't make a fancy drawing, and show it; draw it. What is the purpose of this drawing? Is it to prove it, something for the construction engineer? Is it to convince a client? Is it advertising? Draw it, for that purpose. Don't just make a drawing, as such. That was my point.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And did that turn out to be a pretty effective teaching device?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very much so. I think also a teaching device [00:18:00]—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I mean—[cross talk]—any of the students picked up on that, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, they picked up—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —their drawings began to show the function, the purpose, for which—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —they were made.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, I thought even [laughs] I went that far, show it, draw it for the jury! Don't draw it for yourself or think how you're going to put it together, that one drawing, but draw it for the jury. You had to convince them, and in this case, you had to convince the jury, as the prospective client. Think you are drawing, but that is one boy who is going to buy your building. Draw it for him! Don't draw it for yourself or something; draw it for that. Anyway, [laugh] that really quite a difference, but they started drawing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The results were good.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, they very good.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Was it a good school to teach in, at that time?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, it was. First, you see, uh, to me, first, at MIT, I had very nice boys, and very nice students. It was all very simple. I teach, and everybody drew, and we had fun together, and it turned out quite all right, on that level. And then I came to Yale, and I thought this was going on like that. At my first class at Yale, I found out one student—we talked about the background—one was a student, architectural history, [00:20:00] somewhere; the other one had actually a degree in medicine, had decided to switch to architecture; and, and uh, other had a degree in art or something, something that nobody had, of course, at MIT. And, and, I was sort of shocked about all this, and I gave him the first problem, something that's very simple. It was a museum for Indian, American-Indian art. It was supposed to be a museum somewhere, here, just a thing showing—[inaudible]—so, we talked together about the whole project. It sounded very simple and nice, and, at really—so, went a week and then I came and shot [ph] the thing, and there came the first boy, and uh, it was a very nice square. I said that it looks fine. He said, "Can't you see it?" "Well," I say, "I can see the square." And there was a little square in the middle. "Yes, [laughs] I can see that." "Can't you see the idea?" "Uh, I'm sorry," I said, [laughs] "I can see the idea, but uh, explain it." "Well," he said, "there is this ex—marvelous space, where you can enter"—there was no windows, no doors. He said, "You can enter every way you like, and you go in, and there is exhibit." "Then that's fine; how you keep it up?" Well, he hadn't thought about that, [00:22:00] that you had to have a roof. [Laughs.] But he said, "It's just final"—and finally asked him, "What is the little square in the middle?" Eh, he said, "Well, you see, I have a very practical mind. I think of everything." "Yeah, I can see that," I said, "but what is it? Was it"—and then he drew a line in the middle of it so there two halves, and said, "One is for boys, and one is for girls."

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] So you had some pretty, pretty uh, elementary students, didn't you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, but that was at Yale!

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, and then I said to, [laughs] to—just said, "Well, [laughs] let's think about it. Maybe it needs walls, and maybe a little bit this, and that." And I started comparing all of their—at this stage, the difference between the MIT and the Yale students, that me, because my English is not my own language—I'm not too good at it—that, I understood everything what the students at MIT talked about, but then I came to the Yale level, there come these architectural historical students, who were high up there. And, they had this fantastic language of historical architecture, all their dreams, what they're going to do—I didn't even understand what they talked about! So—[they laugh]—and one student was just rolling [ph] around about somewhere in the league [ph], league Ital—Mid-East combination of Cyprus, Crete, and [00:24:00] some of the pyramids, and he explained to them he could simplify it and just drop a little small thing. So, [laughs] I said—and I didn't understand what he was talking about! So, the only thing I could say—I took my—[inaudible]—pencil and put it in his hand and said, "Draw it up." Then was flabbergasted; couldn't say one word. And, I learned my lesson at that, for every time those intellect—really intellectual—they were brilliant boys, felt that they knew everything, so I said, [laughs] "Draw it up." But the difference between MIT and Yale, in that respect, was incredible, for the Yale had already a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well could many of them—did many of them develop into very good, uh draftsman, or uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, many—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They did.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, they did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you had to break through this, uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I had to break through it somehow.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It sounds as though they were too intellectualized and too little, uh, with their hands, with graphic.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They were, and they were by far. Yes, they were far—I really had to force them down to the wall. They, they thought they were so bright, didn't need to draw. I had to force them down. No, no—[cross talk]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Rudolph, did Rudolph give you plenty of leeway to do what you pleased?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Teacher?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, no, he was good.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No problem.

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: He was very good.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, and still is too.

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —comparing MIT—

ROBERT F. BROWN: MIT—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to Yale.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So in that—in a sense, it was very exciting, those two, two jobs, one following the other.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, it was, it was, very much so. Well—

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: Are you—[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now this is March 10, 1983. [Audio break.] On our last session, you talked about the uh, ending of your association with the Saarinens, and also with Kevin Roche, and then continued talk about teaching at—in the 1960s, first [00:26:00] at MIT and then at Yale. Uh, you did, in that teaching, uh, do concentrat—you were mainly a teacher of drawing, presentation, and the like.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That is correct.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Correct?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That is correct.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you, perhaps you can, you—one can say something about your drawings, these magnificent presentation drawings you did when you were a member of the Saarinen firm. How did they uh—what was the reason for them? How did you happen to do them?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: One reason why I was picked to do these special drawings, because I loved to draw, and had developed quite a personal technique in drafting. And Eero liked my technique a—and liked to utilize it, whenever it was possible, and in a competition, or a big competition like the one I took part in for the American Embassy in London—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was when, in the 1950s?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, that was in the 1950s and that was an invitational competition and Eero was

invited, and they split it first in two parts: Eero did the outside design; I did the planning, planning of the use of space. And then, in the later stage, I took over and did the final presentation drawings, all except one perspective which is the watercolor drawings, and we had about good watercolorist who did that one. But in doing the presentation drawings period, I learned a lot about Eric's—Eero's and also his father's, Eliel's, approach to competition. They had an incredible stamina in working night and day, and desire to win. At any cost, they have to win. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why? Why do you think that was?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Personal ambition, I think, just to prove it, how good they are. [00:28:00] And as Eliel said, "There are two things you had to do. First, you had to win an architectural competition. After that, you had to start figure out how to make it and make architecture of it," and that happened exactly in this competition. It was graphically so good, so you never knew what was graphics and what was architecture. For example, it was mounted on, on heavy boards—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh, on which, these, the presentations drawings?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The presentation drawings, mounted on heavy boards, and the edges were cut in a 45-degree angle, and covered with gold leaf—[inaudible]—so many tricks, just because Eero knew that in the jury were so, so many non-architects, who couldn't judge so much the architectural part. They were from state department for the government officials. So he really tried to reach them, and convince them, and that, it worked; he won.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gee. It would have a deluxe appearance, the very drawing [crosstalk].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It had a—yes, the drawings had such a deluxe app—that it was, it was practically impossible to see. One of these drawings, these renderings, details, ink drawings, where it took about one hour to cover one square inch—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And those are simply of the grounds of the park and the square in London.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes. Nothing of the building.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you going—was that to be designed by them, or not? Redesigned by the winner? The park was to be designed?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no, not that, nothing, just, this is an existing park, but just to show—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah!

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —the relationship—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —between the Embassy building and the park.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But it was—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then, then in details in—around the Embassy building was more details and more tricks.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But this is part of Eero's strategy—do a beautiful drawing of—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was part his—yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —existing park, as, as well as the building.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Right, yes, yes. And Eliel [00:30:00] had the same ideas, so Eero just followed up on that. And, it was a riot. In the end of this competition, everybody was so tired, could barely see or stand, and Eero was sitting with a dirty one-dollar bill, and a magnifying glass, and drawing the official seal, the American eagle; [laughs] can't believe it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was the last thing he did, on this competition. But it was successful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Were you involved then in the execution of the building?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you joined in uh, 1966, or '68, the Architects Collaborative, which was the group practice set up by Gropius and others in the 1940s.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What attracted you to them? How, how did you uh—how did that come about?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, we lived in New York at that time, and were freelancing; Marianne had a lot of work in New York; we were freelancing—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You moved away from New Haven area.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: We, we moved from New Haven to New York, and I had no practice and no work in New York, but practically all the work I had were right here on Cape Cod. At that time, I had several houses going on at the same time, all the time, for I built about, oh, about 60 houses around here altogether. So, Marianne also had not so much to do in New York, so we felt that, uh, trend [ph] to move closer to Cape Cod. And we couldn't move without having some security in work, so I asked Architects Collaborative if they were interested in me, because I had some good friends there, and they took me with open arms, [00:32:00] practically.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who were some of the uh, people you had known—knew there?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The one I knew best was Peter Morton, who had been in Eero's office. We had been together in Eero's office in Michigan, and he was also a Yale man, so thanks to that, he was close to Eero and so forth. So then, so he immediately—he knew me—also, what I could do in, kind of drafting and architecture and so forth, so that's the way I came, and joined TAC, as it is called.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was it like? What—who were you introduced to? Was it a collegial atmosphere, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was practically—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —congenial, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was, but also, what surprised me, that the partners, the big—the original partners, each had his own group, and worked practically with complete freedom design-wise and every-wise, so they had to have whole crew of draftsmen and architects and so forth for each project, and very seldom overlapped. But then they had weekly meetings where they all got together and showed a presentation, so each worked for the whole group, and then they discussed it overall terms, and criticized each other.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Very openly.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very openly, very openly, and that was something that Walter Gropius established himself, for he was an excellent critic and, and extremely sharp, so in the last years, I, when I was there, Grop—Walter Gropius was still alive and he just exercised strong influence and power as a critic.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really. What did he emphasize, do you recall? In his criticisms.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was very much utilitarian, and also in aesthetics, the typical Bauhaus principles, [00:34:00] after all, he was the father of Bauhaus, and he stressed it. For example, in the first scheme for the building on Brattle Street, if you know where it is, the building, in back of that design.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, the first scheme was really not—it was somewhat uneven and unbalanced, and he had all the partners together and he gave them a lecture like for, if they had been small schoolboys. He was so strong in his critiques, and they all were sat red-faced [laughs] there, and listened to him, and then they ripped the whole thing up and started from scratch.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Even though some of them had been working with him for years?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, from the very beginnings, it was—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, what it—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —it was done.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —do you think that he could give them, or he could get across that they hadn't thought of,

or thought through?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, I think clarity, mainly clarity, that it was, you know, it was—look at a floor plan. You can have it so crystal clear, you can see it, everything relates right; or you can just mess it up with corridors here, and corners there—we didn't have any corners—it doesn't fit together. So it was like a professional purification to leave out everything that's not necessary, and just have absolutely the, almost like the minimum thing in there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this any uh—something of a contrast with your earlier experience?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, no really, not too much, for—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —not too much. No, I liked it. But—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was uh, Gropius like, as a personality? Of course, he was near the end of his life.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, but uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —he was very vital, very bright. He didn't spend much time; he came for about—in the afternoons, but he came every day to the office, and uh, just [00:36:00] more or less as a consultant. Everybody could go and ask him if they needed some advice in design or in some respect. Or, he walked around and gave, gave critics. I had the fortunate fortune, the opportunity to work directly under him on a special typical Bauhaus project. I helped him in design of china for the Rosenthal Factory in Germany—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah!

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and it was a great experience. I worked several months on drawing coffee cups and teapots, and coffee pots, under Gropius's guidance, and for the Rosenthals, in Germany—you might know the name in china, and he had just finished a design, a completely new approach for the china factory, which is quite famous now—[inaudible]—very spec—special ventilations just then because they had this enormous heat problem in these—with these ovens. Gropius had just finished that design, and the Rosenthal got the brilliant idea that why shouldn't Walter Gropius design as like a Bauhaus series of china for him, and Gropius said yes, and started out, but it had started already when I was brought into this project. I don't know why, maybe I could draw well, and maybe because my European background, I could speak German and so forth, with uh, Gropius and I worked together.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what could you describe the process of designing under him?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Uh, there was—how could I describe it? He was, as a person, he was extremely polite with just kind of European politeness. [00:38:00] I was Mr. Hammarstrom and Mr. Hammarstrom up and down, and bowing here and bowing there. And uh, in the drawing, he really required an absolute perfect line, in every set, for whatever you do, it has to be so sharp and crystal clear. So, that's why—I couldn't find; I have a batch of my drawings for him, and I'd like to show them to you—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —but I couldn't find them right now, but I have them. Oh, they're absolutely excellent. I remember, one presentation drawing where it was an edge of a coffee pot, and you could not draw it in freehand; you had to use various tools to get the sharp—and someone had made a little, little, like a blob in the line, but not bigger than the head of a needle. And Gropius said, "You must have to correct this." [They laugh.] You can believe it! You could barely see it, it's all right, but it has to be exact. But then, he was very pleased. Then, what was an interesting experience: Rosenthal had approved everything, and then his sales organization said to him that, "You'd sell much better if you could get some decoration on these pots."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, these were undecorated—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Completely, they're all white and pure and strong; you could either black or white, and nothing else. And then, Rosenthal came, nearly got scared, came to Gropius and said we had to have decorations on them, so decorations—decorations! [Laughs.] Oh no. So finally, he said that, "You can do it, maybe something, just add some colors or something to strengthen the form and the shape, so it's really—it's not exactly a decoration, but something would strength—strengthen it." So he worked out, and [00:40:00] it quite a lot of various designs, for example, lines would follow the shape and strengthen it that way, and it worked out quite well in the end.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Was Gropius chagrined to have to compromise?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, he didn't consider it a compromise—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —because he did it completely differently from what, what they had asked for. I think they had hoped he would put some more roses and things on the pots, you see. Then um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The forms that you used, did you have anything to go on? Had you—did you look at—did you discuss those with Gropius, the shapes that these—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You know, that basically, I came too late in the basically—the shapes were already—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So your main job was—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —more less established, then to crystallize the shapes, but the basic idea for the shape was there, did like freehand sketches of the shape, and I had to pin them down so they could be sent to Germany, and then they made actual models, in porcelain, of them, and then they came back to Gropius and criticized him, and then they went back again to the final. When the final batch was ready, then Mr. Rosenthal himself came over, with a big box with china, and, [laughs] I might add because it was quite funny, for, certainly, I got a call from uh, Gropius and said, "Would you, Mr. Hammarstrom, would you please come to my office?" So I thought, what is loose [ph] now? So I dashed in and there was Mr. Rosenthal. Then, I was introduced and, and they started of course talking, and started talking in German, most of the time, and certainly Gropius got very upset, and said, "I'm sorry that I'm speaking in German, and we could talk in English as well." I said, I said, "It's perfectly fine; I speak German, fluently." And then, after I started talking, I couldn't get one word out in German, because I was not prepared, and I hadn't spoken German for maybe 15 years. I could not—it came in Finnish; it came in Swedish [00:42:00]—[they laugh]—it comes in English, every, every sound except the German sound. So they switched quickly to English, and I said, "You speak German; I understand it, but I can't talk it." But they were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and uh, Mr. Rosenthal spoke the most perfect English, and I think had an education in London.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ha.

[END OF TRACK 03, SIDE B.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] [Sound of running projector.] We're going to talk about several of the projects that you were involved with when you were at the Architects Collaborative. Now, we're looking now at some of the drawings you did for one such project, the Amathus Hotel in Limassol, in Cyprus.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh, what was the job here? Were you in on the beginning of it, uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was your role?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: My role was to do, and study and develop the architectural interiors, interiors, mainly, so that did not include furnishings and things, but actually shaping of space and using of materials for handrails, walls, floorings, and so forth, and create effect of space. And this was in the early stage of the game, so we could present to the client ideas, how it's going to look like, even before it was put down on the drafting board, so it really, a lot of freehand sketches. Also, I drew some exterior perspectives. This is not my drawing, but the perspective part of it is based on my drawing, and then there was an illustrator who did this kind of live suggestions to use the brochures—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I see.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —for, for them. But I just show this for it shows little bit of the—one end of the hotel building, where the rooms are the four upper levels and below are the social areas, dining rooms, and lounges, and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But the general form is that developed by—who, who developed it, uh, so—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Then, this is uh, Peter Morton, was the partner in charge of this.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the client, simply a hotel chain, [00:02:00] or a—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: A hotel chain with the name of Amathus. It's on the south shore—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Cyprus—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —of Cyprus, just outside the city of Limassol. No, this doesn't move.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now this—is this one of your drawings we're looking at?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This is one of my drawings which show on the upper, upper—cu—caper—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —upper terrace, is it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —upper terrace, cafeteria area, and, and the—along the shoreline. This is a lower lobby.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And your job was to develop the interior forms, the partition walls, and the balconies, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. And also, uh, these two, and most of the drawings, show also how it relates to outdoor space, what view you have and what is the impression of it, what, what you can see and how the outdoors relate. This is practically the same drawing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this, uh, the idea of, Morton's idea was that inside and outside should be very intimately—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —related, I mean very visible, one from the other.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, which is quite typical for this kind of a Mediterranean resort.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was there to have been much detailing? And, and these drawings, suggest various textures and colors—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They suggest textures and colors, but no details in such, like, it just indication of seating groups and chairs, but you don't pinpoint what kind of a seating they are. You—it's not itemized in that respect. But just more or less to try to give the background. It's somewhat funny; the first thing there, that, that's a bar, there in back of, of what the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was the, the basic structural material reinforced concrete?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Reinforced concrete, is all the basic structure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was to have been painted or left natural?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was painted—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was painted.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —light, white. [00:04:00] It's practically white, the whole thing. This is also the illustrator's drawing. He just put the tracing paper on my drawing and made this kind of a lively thing, as you can see in my drawings, there were no people; it was just the structural part.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But, but this makes it more lively, and in a way, also it gives more of a scale.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], by the inclusion of figures, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. That's the main dining room, which I worked really, very hard on, how to open it up. It's, so it, practically, from the whole level—there is one higher level, lower level, so from both levels you can see, have the view and the vista.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what was your job to do, to figure out how—what height, at what height to, to place it—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, just to suggest in the first place that it should be different levels. And also it went that far, so I indicated the whole seating, the grouping, where tables should be placed—spaced, and not too on top of each other like most cafeterias, but we give luxury to have various spaces, and variety, and if they're a round table. And table with lounges and square tables and big tables and so forth, so you could get a variety in it. Well—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Audio break.] Okay, you did then a design of uh, Porto Carras in—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Porto Carras.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in Siconia, [ph] Greece.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Sithonia, Greece.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, these were uh, guest rooms for—and so forth, public spaces for a very large resort.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There's a similar kind of—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was similar to, of course, to Amathus, but the concept was quite different. Amathus [00:06:00] in is in—was more uh, in character with international hotel in Porto Carras. We tried to get a Greek favor on it, with Greek interiors. I'm sorry; I don't have any of these slides for—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What, what did that mean, Greek interior? Uh, what did that imply, folk art, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, sort of folk art, and, and in shapes. Uh, have you seen pictures of, for example, of Mount Athos?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very much influenced by that, also with seating, built-in seats. And uh, spaces, in general, for Sithonia, Port Athos—there are three islands sticking out. Port Athos is the easternmost and the center one of Sithonia is the best of those islands, so they are very close, close together, and Carras name is a big—Carras is a big Greek ship's owner, very big, and he had this idea about developing a resort area, so he—it's built something; it's much more than a hotel; it's a small, almost self-containing community, with workers, everything, Amathus was for 600 people, and this for about 2,000 guests, with a—it di—

ROBERT F. BROWN: There again, you did most of the uh, presentation drawings, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Quite a lot of the presentation drawings, and also, there again the same idea, that's to get the flavor of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Would you go out? Did you go out to these sites?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not to this site, not to this site.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you been to the Cyprus site?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you had seen that, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then, yes, and I'm sorry, I have a good picture I can show you. [00:08:00] Can you hold it on a minute?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, certainly. [Audio break.] Okay, so we're looking at a picture of a guest room, with a great enclosed corner fireplace, a banquette or bench-like seating arrangements.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And wood and uh, wood frame—or wood furniture, very Spartan looking, and then roof, sort of a rafters revealed on the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Revealed rafter.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —sloping ceilings.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes. And the flooring is tile, big square tiles, and with very lush rugs on top, area rugs on top.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And this would relate somewhat to peasant architecture and old architecture of that region?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. Both materials and shapes, too, particularly these built-in long benches, that they all floats together, the sofas and desks and fireplace, all, it's like in one unit.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Almost like a unit, one unit.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did this seem to accord with—was Architects Collaborative uh, exceptionally flexible in what it could do, compared with other firms?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Normally not, see, this was, this was something quite new.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Normally it was more of this Bauhaus.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was mostly Bauhaus.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Here, they're adapting to uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Here, they're adapting. So that was, to me, very exciting, and, I can tell even more about this on that theme. It's about the hotel in Yugoslavia.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], the Bernardin Hotel.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The, the Bernardin Hotel, that's also, that's the largest of us; that was 4,000 guestrooms, split in one, large, luxury hotel, and one medium-class hotel, and then a whole village of small individual rooms and apartments, and in two-story houses, all—and always view over the Adriatic. And what was interesting there, it was a Yugoslav architect had drawn up [00:10:00] a scheme; it was what they called international style—it looks really more Bauhaus than Bauhaus, and they asked money from the International—what is it called, International Money Fund? No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Monetary Fund? The IMF, or so—the government had asked for funds.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The Yugoslav government asked for funds. So, and—what is the name? I'm sorry, but it —

ROBERT F. BROWN: Not World Bank maybe?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: World Bank—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —that was the World Bank. And they check very carefully where they give the money, so they checked on the Yugoslav scheme and said that "this is not economically feasible; don't do it." And they started looking at scouting around there, who would be more [laughs] visible for this project and make it economic, and TAC was just finishing the Porto Carras, which led to the Bernardin Hotel came to TAC.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because they thought it would be—it would work more, it would be more successful?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It would be more successful, and more economical. So the economy was a big feature, but also it was more flexible. So, it ended up that we were sitting in Cranbrook, drew up plans which are more Yugoslav than the Yugoslav had drawn up themselves.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who were who were the people in Cranbrook?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That—I'm sorry, I mean in Cambridge.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Cambridge.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Cambridge, I'm sorry.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And so in Cambridge, developed a scheme that was more Yugoslav than the Yugoslavs themselves had drawn up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There was a Yugoslav on the TAC staff at that time.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Two, there were two Yugoslav. Partners, and very good ones.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that came in and satisfied what the World Bank wanted, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But were the Yugoslavs disappointed that it wasn't going to be so uh, international style? Would they have preferred it that way?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, except this one [00:12:00] architect who felt very—

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: Slighted.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —very hurt—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: He was slighted.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, he was slighted, of course.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was that, someone in Yugoslavia?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, he was a professor in architecture in Yugoslavia.

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: He made the first—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, who was that?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I can't remember his name right now, I'm sorry to say.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, this—

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Marianne and I spent the whole summer in Yugoslavia, working on this project, just to make it Yugoslavian, so, we traveled all over the place.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you, you did much more than just drawings in this case; you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Research.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You did the research but you did the thinking out of the forms, what they should be.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So was this the, uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was the same case there, very much.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, you, you were on the site there too?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I was not on the site but we do it—this is uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —in Greece.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But I mean you did in this, far more than you did in the first one at uh, the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, by far, in these bo—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —near Limassol, Cyprus.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, by, by far much more.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were sort of the job captain, you know, something of that sort.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, part of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: But say that part of the aesthetic captain, and then I was the structural captain. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But under the tax setup then, you would go back to Cambridge and submit—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —your thinking to that point to the weekly conference.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not normally, we're there straight. We were there straight, and the partner in TAC, Alex [ph] or Serge Jivonovic, [ph] they came out there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They came out there.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They came out there—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But then presu—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —so the made decision there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then were the ideas then brought back to Cambridge, and discussed there too?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Just for final drawings, really.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, in cases like this, uh TAC opened their own office in Yugoslavia, and hired a lot of local architects in this office, and prepared; most of the working drawings were finally done right on the job, in Yugoslavia.

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: Whenever you can—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now we're looking at uh, some drawings for one part of the project, I gather [00:14:00] a part which was not actually built. This was—what is this for?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This is a, as you said, the part of a project, part of the recreational area down in the harbor, and the beach area, and there was an area designated for uh, hmm, rock—what you call it?

ROBERT F. BROWN: A discotheque or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: A disco—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —a dance hall?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, discotheque. First it was called dance hall, then they called discotheque.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: After all, you had to be up to date, even in Yugoslavia, so it was called discotheque. And there was a square, marked; right nearest square said "discotheque."

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, [laughs] Serge and Alex hand it over to me; it said, "A discotheque." I said, "A discotheque, in Yugoslavia, on the Adriatic, on the water, how do you do it?" And then, I looked at the square and the three-dimensional square. It was still—it was a cube, by then, and then, I couldn't believe that a discotheque could look like that, not on the—this shoreline, and this setup. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who, who had designed this cube? Alex, uh, had, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They just—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, they sketched it out.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They sketched out the cube—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and said, "Fill the cube." So I said, "Uh, okay, I'll fill the cube." So, I did, the thing. It looks like this, in the drawing. You can describe it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], as a large—oops!

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You, you walk in here. It's a tunnel; it's a cave—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh yes, okay, with a winding hallway—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —with floors, winding hallway, with steps down. And it—[00:16:00] come in here to the discotheque area, step down, step down, step down; there is a seating area, and there is a dance floor—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in the middle.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —in the middle, and the dance floor is glass, sheer glass, and underneath is water, uh, preferably small little naked mermaids swimming underneath.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] This was to be a real sybaritic, affair.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, of course, and it goes up again, terraced up on all side, and that is where the discotheque, the—there is there—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —various little pockets sticking off—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —pockets, yeah, some intimate—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —or some seating.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —intimate seating, and so forth, seating. And then, to get the shape of it—it's a section—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah, okay.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —so that's where you enter—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, you plunge down and then—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and you plunge down and then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —overhead—mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And overhead, that like the inside of a wave, where the shape, you had the bars going over right here—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this ribbing we see uh, this is the structural supports—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The ribbing, oh, they're, they're structural, the whole thing—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it was all uh, open to, to allow it to be, this large space to be open.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, the whole thing is open, one big space. That uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Here a section we have.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's, that's a section. That's where discotheque and the music comes out from there. This looks like a lake but that's a dance floor over the water.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, and what are these large members, uh here, these great black girders going up to the —[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, that, the girders, and then you have a real conventional roof on the outside, so you have no idea, really, what happens when you enter into this thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then are these hanging—are these plants and so forth hanging, and vines, and the like?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, yeah, that's a balcony on the end of it

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, and you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And you have vines or—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was to give it some idea of being outside even when you were inside.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. [00:18:00] Oh that's the opposite wall; that's where you enter, from the tunnel in here, and that's a bar in the background, over in that end, and this might be—wait. Uh, no, but this might be more intriguing for you. When you, you saw in the floor plan, how you had the long walk in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —there, and to make a roost [ph] over [ph] the whole thing—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, the prize, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, you walk in here—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, I see.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and there is a pond there; then you walk and there is the next pond there—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Little ponds set into the walls—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, they're set—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —of this tunnel.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —set into the wall, and then you come in there, and then it opens the whole vista.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. So it was very enclosed, and suddenly, it opens out.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then, bang, it opens up to this under—almost like an underwater cave. And as the description for the action. I brought this one; you can read it yourself.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm—kay. "Discotheque nightclub where Neptune Poseidon entertains with Bacchus as bartender, Orpheus conducts the rock band, Aphrodite swims in the pool, and Epicurus is the guest of honor." Ha! Very nice. So this was a luxury area of the development.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was a little bit too much, for the World Bank said no. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, they felt it was too frivolous, or too uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, they actually couldn't explain it. They all liked it, and, and said that, well, they felt, sort of, it was funny that the World Bank would back a project like this. I think that was the reason, for I think they agreed, uh, in area where there was [00:20:00] very little outside this resort—there is an area called Portorož, which is the biggest uh, resort area in whole Yugoslavia, just about one mile south of this Piran [ph] area, and it's very unimaginative. So, this would have been a fantastic success, but the bank sort of—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So no—it came to nothing.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it came to nothing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now in terms of design, was that—had you—what had you in mind when you did it? I mean, had you reference to early traditional work there, or to other contemporary buildings, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Nothing! Nothing. I, [laughs] I was sitting on the Fleindokkenin [ph] border, and Alex, and Serge, came up and said, "We have to do something. The discotheque, the night—this is actually called a nightclub—is included in the program. We have to do something about it." And I looked at this boring square on the master plan and, and they said, "Just fill it up." So I got this idea after me right here, so it came completely from blue sky. This whole packet was drawn in less than one hour, the whole thing, just as it is now as you saw

it, and Serge was there, came up 20 minutes and saw the first drawing, plan, and then I drew this one. I said, "I have to go in, just to have the wrap [ph]." Then he dashed, dashed down to Alex, who is the elder brother, in charge, and said, "Look at this!" When he came back, I had all the rest of the drawings. I never did anything more or anything less. It went—it was less than one hour, the whole package. I mean, some things [00:22:00] happen that way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And at TAC, things could happen like that, could they? They gave you a lot of free reign.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They—completely free range. If you felt like something doing, so go ahead and do it. No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gee.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I had a glorious time, as you can see.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you did uh, this project in Greece, these villas—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The villa—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Cyprus, rather.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh, do you have a brochure?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, I have a brochure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Here, likewise, were you um, somewhat on your own?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I was completely on my own there. In connection with the Amathus Hotel—it was back about maybe, maybe—[inaudible]—years in Cyprus, and it had a lot of—well, a piece of land on the north shore of a small town which, I can't remember its name, but, I don't think the name, Bellapais, it relates to the town. It was just outside this town; I can find it out on a map for you. And uh, they liked to develop it for what they call villas, or some of them there called them bungalows or villas; they'd be one-family houses, for they had a growing upper middle-class clientele, the bank had, and said, "We'd like to develop it." And uh, Peter Morton, who was in charge of the Amathus Hotel, went up there and saw it, and said, "Oh, we will do it." And he came back with some maps and drawings and said, "This is it." So, there was a question of about 25 villas, [00:24:00] and we couldn't, or they couldn't, nobody could, dream of doing 25 individual villas. We had some types, so we decided on three or four types, develop them, and see how they fit in, into a very steep slope, and challenging, and very beautiful. So, to start out with, on the really, enterprising project, uh, I built them on—I got the job, and Peter, too. So I started out building a model then, to see how it fits, and how it climbs up, and then I did it! This is—let's see. There, one—this is the end after.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So they were fairly separate from each other, each villa was.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, each villa was separate.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And they're good—fairly good size, aren't they, each one of them?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, they are fairly good size. They are fairly good—I'm sorry [inaudible]—they are fairly good size. The trick—you see, this is high up and slopes down here, and the idea in my design concept was, so they are staggered on this slope so everybody on top looks over the next roof. There is nothing blocking. And also if there is roof here, you have a view here—look at that one, view through there one through there. So it balances—that one through there, so there's never a building in front. It's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's always a view toward the , toward the uh, sea.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It's always the view towards the coast, but this, that I show you here now, is the front page of this brochure—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], okay.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [00:26:00] That's how it looks like.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I can see how it's possible, because it's fairly—pretty precipitous slope—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, but you see—oh, you how it goes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Again, are these forms, were you looking to some extent at the vernacular architecture of

this region?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were in this case what, just planning the function of the light and view?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You on—just plan the function of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the materials were to be just absolutely up to the minute, I mean—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was more or less up to the minutes, a lot of materials. There is infrastructure, a lot of materials. The main trick was first to make a livable house, and then utilize the land and the view. You could see from here, because the—all of it, this was in the north slope of Cyprus; you could see all—clear days, you could see all over to the Turkish shoreline.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh. Hmm. Were you very pleased, the way it turned out?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I never had time to be pleased, for about three weeks after this was built, the Turks landed on this very spot.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah. So it—uh, [laughs] we don't know how it's gone.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, we don't know. I've seemed—[inaudible]—to have attendance [ph] that you have my jobs burnt up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, was it burnt up and everything, and destroyed?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I don't know.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You don't know.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I don't know; I just know it was a lot of fighting right there. I never heard about it, but this was the one period, [ph] just we had, have it complete that project of my own, this is one of the houses.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You see the slope and the vistas?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And these are the way you sold it—the clients were a group of bankers, you say?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And were they pretty sophisticated in matters of architecture, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think they were.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were they—were these mainly Greeks, or from various countries?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, [00:28:00] I assume they were—I think they were, no, basically Greeks. But they were Cypriots; they had been there for generations.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. It was a local—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, oh yes, it—oh and it's only local.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this one is on stone footings, isn't it, very uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, depending, you see—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —where it happens, and then we—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You used stone in some cases, concrete in others, stucco.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Lot, quite a lot of glass? Or—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Quite a lot of glass, and then tile, tile roofs and tile flooring.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it did, uh, pay lip service to traditional architecture.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes. I mean, that also helps because then the local builders, or the workers, don't have to use, use the material.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They don't—they do, yes—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Otherwise, you introduce something else, you had to bring in the workers, too. But these, they could do exactly just with the local builders.

ROBERT F. BROWN: There's many broken surfaces. There's uh, sloping ones, and cubicle; there's open areas and closed walls, a lot of variety, isn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And with—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes. Just a blind scene with the nature. So each building, after all, it—there were several—I can show it to you, the, just the variety—I'm sorry—because of design. So, for example, this building, here, you enter from below, and then you go up. This building, you enter from top, and go down. [Inaudible] it had living room above, and the bedrooms below. Here, you had to walk in the living room and so forth and you had the bedroom on top. So depending completely on this floor plan, the vistas and the views. So you had this kind of a play there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To what extent did you know what the client wanted? Were they pretty detailed in what they wanted?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They didn't know anything of what they wanted.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, so you had—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —pretty—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [00:30:00] They didn't know a thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They simply were looking for a good investment.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. That was all that they wanted.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And they seemed to be very happy. They immediately added a whole area next to it, to keep going. They seemed to have sold it that fast.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So these—this project took quite a bit of your time, I would suppose, working out each individual dwelling.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, not that many individual—

ROBERT F. BROWN: There are not that many—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: There's several, only several types.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, there were just four types, then you played with variations of how they fitted in the landscape. But basically, it was four types.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well it sounds as though these years with uh, TAC were very good ones. I mean, you enjoyed being with that group. Can you um, perhaps, at this point, sort of sit back and think how would you have

compared TAC, working with them, and the way they were run, with the two previous firms you'd been with, with Saarinen, and Kevin Roche? Can you compare?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, I think I can give some tips, and I think it also could be some healthy tips for young architects and where they are heading, for they're, in a way, two different ways. A Finnish background was one thing, with very small architectural firms. When I left Finland, or before that, Aalto's firm was considered the biggest architectural office in Finland, that was been in the—or before the war; it was late '30s. He had five men in the office. That was big. Next biggest [00:32:00] had three. That was the size of offices there. So, you did everything: planning, consulting, drafting, working drawings, specifications, everything, and then, to take a jump, then I came over here, supervising the—and doing a lot of actually, practically all the working drawings for the final interiors of MIT auditorium.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh, for Aalto's—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Aalto, I'm sorry, I mean—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —Aalto's auditorium.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I find the setup which I never heard or seen about, because the working drawings for Aalto's dormitory was uh, done by a firm here, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —a separate firm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Mm, it—no, Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, in, in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: An American firm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, an American firm—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and a huge firm. So I came from an organization, actually which I had never done; I had never worked for Aalto in Finland, but I came from a small country like that where five was considered maximum to join a firm with 300. I couldn't believe—I couldn't understand anything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because everything was so subdivided, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was subdivided; it was so mechanized. And a step from design, and design sketches, to working drawings, in Finland was practically minimal, for you drew up them—and you still do it, [00:34:00] when you work on details. You try to do a beautiful drawing, and that translated into a working drawing and built. Here, you do a drawing, and then, the next guy, an architect, takes out to make a very technical drawing, and it works, it's—just beautifully. But in Aalto's case, to go back to that, he couldn't believe it, for Aalto was like Eliel was, like Eero was, an excellent draftsman. After he couldn't—you can't believe his beautiful drawing. So, he drew his marvelous details—something, let's say for a handrail, the heavy handrail that goes up to his dormitory for example, he drew up like that. And I said, "What you doing?" And [laughs] uh, the boy who was going to make the working drawings of it. So Aalto was furious, and said, "Why do you need workings? It's here!" I said, "No, they have to do that, have you say dimensions here, dimensions there." Aalto said, "To hell with it! Order a couple of pieces of wood, up here on the job, cut it and we show it, and we show them the shape and the like, and then results [ph]." So, then came the problem, on order a piece of wood. So the guy said, "Should it be two by four? Should it be eight by six?" I said, "The final word [ph]," [laughs] said, "In Finland, every, everybody has words. So, eight by six." I said, "Aalto, just—[inaudible]—get it up here. We can glue it together, make it." And Aalto was so frustrated that he couldn't just sit down [00:36:00] and play like a sculptor, and sit on the job and say, "This is the shape I like to have."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did the Americans want to draw everything out beforehand?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It had to be drawn—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in great detail.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —exactly. Up, so plan later everything, and Aalto couldn't see it. And he really had a problem there, which I later had to face, for uh, I was in between Aalto and the boys who did it, so I had to translate sort of, or put it into paper, that, but we went off the track, with uh, talking about—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And so that, when you got into the Saarinen firm—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —how did you find they worked? And, well, let's compare with Aalto or with TAC. What was the uh, contrast or the comparison?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, with Aalto, there was really not a comparison, for uh, I think they—I think the mentality and approach between the Saarinens and Aalto were quite different.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, were they? Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, they were really quite different, in a way, the Saarinen, and I'm thinking of Eliel, more in this respect—and Eero too, by much more logical and straight—Aalto, also considered what Aalto is, a sort of Corbusier of the north or something.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As sort of a—what was that, nor—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I would say the Corbusier of the north.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah, hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Which, I think he wasn't, but uh, he was a great—first, he was a great architect, and, he was a dreamer, and a very good [00:38:00] painter, abstract painter. I don't know; I have a book; I should show it, if you're interested in Aalto, which shows relationship with his abstract paintings to his work, site plans, floor plans, and things, which had to be at there so one—[inaudible]—and it goes into there, and he worked very much that way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Whereas the Saarinens were much more practical, by comparison?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: By comparison, they were much more down to earth, really down to earth, and going like that, Eero, particularly. Eliel was less, for Eero was uh, sort of very logical, one minded, going on, and had this desire, frankly, he had desire that he's going to be the number one architect of the world. He had the desire, and he was convinced he going to do it, that what he's really aiming for. I know it, because I was one of his best friends. He was really aiming for it, that was one of my tough questions for him, I tell you, that I was—when he was at that moment, I say, "How do you ever find out if you are the number one?" He couldn't answer that question. It was a tough question; I couldn't help resisting it, and was just keeping after it, that's how—just like his aim, that I told you about, in competitions.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But his uh—it was evident; he'd said as much to you, had—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, he said.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But Eliel [00:40:00] was easygoing.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: He was warmhearted and so forth, but then, to come to what we started out with, the difference—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the kind of firm that they ran.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. No, the Saarinen office, and later on the Roche office had uh, what is still, I think, an unusual distinction of playing very much—what you call—very much attention to design. Uh, Eliel started it; Eero inherited it; the design is it. If you're going to—would you mind to go open that? I—if you design something, don't give up before it's good. Keep on going, and do your best, and that's it. So, the Saarinen office had two distinct sections. One section was the design office, and the second section was the—oh, what's that called—the production, which means the working drawings, specifications—the practical thing to put it, more or less, from a dream to facts. So you start out the design, and then it goes over there, so it was so distinct, that both in Eero's office and in Kevin's, same time, that he was running, so it had been same base, there were two completely different parts. So for example, I was in design part, and there was, [00:42:00] one room was just design, and there was a second room, which was specifications and working drawings, the technical part, and they barely communicate.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now this was very different from Architects Collaborative, wasn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, very. So, this goes on, so, also when, for example, when the office moved to New Haven, for there was two floors, the top floor, were the working drawings, specifications; down floor, next to Eero and so forth, was to be the design floor, and there was practically no communication in between. They didn't

even know; I was of course, on the lower level in the design level, and you didn't even know the boys up there, who did the works except that group. For example, uh, I talked earlier I think about the restaurant for General Motors, that was still in there. So, I worked in this, and then, as a designer for this, so I had a connection with the people who did the working drawings, just to go and inspect, and they had to come say that I approve, but the rest what they do, the technical part, and the group of people—I didn't even know them. It was such a distinct thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You think that was a weakness?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I think it was a strength. Later on, I found it—find that it was a strength, for, designer is one kind of people. He can be a dream boy, but he can be also very impractical. But he have—can come forth with certain ideas. And then the technical boy knows the facts of [laughs] life, in a way, as a contrast, and put it down, and uh, I think it's good to have it separated, [00:44:00] for—well, when I started working for TAC, I found a quite a different approach to this particular problem, which to me, I had got used to as the American approach and so I thought that that was the general approach, that you had design with this—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], and the working—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and working it out. So I found out just that there was, here, you know, but in Finland, two kinds of architects. There was designers, and the so-called true architects who really built the thing. And then I came to TAC, and first, I had to figure out what was what. You design something, and then you stopped suddenly and said—and I was—tore it up. And the difference, I found out, was that in TAC, you get area partners, or a sub-partner in charge of the job, mostly, the guy who designed the project, and he followed through the whole thing to the end. There was no difference between design and working drawings, which I felt was a very strong weakness. There is one guy who can be very good in design, but he's not good in organizing and running a really tough business, picking materials, and dealing with plumbers, and electricians, and all that mess. And, in TAC, the same guy has to do the whole works. [00:46:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did, did you find that that sometimes caused real problems?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think it caused a lot of problems, and also, if he was very good in that field, a guy who was very good technically, he might do the next job, pick up one of the pack uh, big boys, take over his job, so there was this technical boy making all the designs. It—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. So you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was very frustrating.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, it was a mixed experience, really.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was a very mixed experience.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were with them until—through '74.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you leave for any particular reason, or did you get a little tired of the system after a while?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I went—well, I get tired of the system, or I got very disappointed in the system, but they—there was a lot of waste of both energy and talent. So there was a guy with a great talent for design, he had to sit in with somebody who didn't know a damned thing about design, and reverse. I was frustrated sometimes because you see a guy who's a brilliant designer, and then had to start chewing over details in working drawings and things and checking on plumbing and things. So in that respect, I felt the Saarinen approach was much more efficient.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why, why do you suppose TAC stuck with that system?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Marianne?

[END OF TRACK 04, SIDE A.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] Yeah. Yeah, we're talking about TAC and why they, perhaps, stayed with the system of the technical or the design person, whichever, having to go through all stages. Why did they stick with that way of doing things?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it has partly also to do with the over philosophical or ethical approach. In the

Saarinen—as I called it, the Saarinen approach, design was number one. TAC, budget was number one. In Eero's case, he didn't give up the project before he felt it was the best he could do. He didn't say it was the best in the world, but that was the best he could produce, and he didn't give up before that. To heck with the budget; he's going to do it. TAC has a normal budget, you know, for every project that's a big project, and then the fee is split, let's say, more or less roughly: 25 percent is uh, design, development, and so forth; 50 percent is working drawings and specifications; and 25 percent is supervision and fulfillment of the same. So, Eero never thought in those terms. When he designed something—for example, General Motors [00:02:00] was an enormous project, with a very low fee, but so much was, almost like run for the mill, you meant [ph]—but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. The—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —it just came—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —execution was uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It came in, so that's why he could spend an enormous lot in proportion of time and money on lobbies, spiral staircase, hanging staircase, for that was a fraction of the overall cost. Then came his next, was the MIT auditorium, the Kresge Auditorium, you know, and he had a very long struggle with that. He just couldn't get it to work, and he worked and worked, and his partner, Joe Lacey, was completely frustrated, because he said, "Eero, look at this! The fee for this auditorium is so, so much, and in proportion, you have spent already more of the fee for design." Eero said, "What the hell? We had to make a good auditorium!" Kept going, so in fact, it ended up that MIT paid the fee, [laughs] for the auditorium. And Eero said, "Go ahead. I am not going to do anything before it's good, or as good as can do." That same thing went for doing this auditorium. Boy, he never stopped. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean, he went way—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: He went way over budget, in terms of—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, in case, sometimes it worked, and sometimes not. I think then the—which actually isn't mentioned anywhere, but I was very involved in the CBS skyscraper—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:04:00] Yeah, for—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and that was within budget and fine. But uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But others, no. No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At TAC, they took—made—paid much better attention to the budget, and how—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Boy, they had weekly reports where you stood, and that made me just furious sometimes, but you work what I call—it's what I call it here somewhere. Uh, you worked on the design, and they checked, weekly, checked how much we had spent, and had over our budget, and then, when you had reached the limit, of how much to spend for design, they stopped and said, "This is it." So I said, "That was crazy!" I said, "Maybe one week more and you'd have something really good," and I felt it's not through. I said, "This is it; go ahead, build."

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it was a pretty frustrating by—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: My God, it—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —experience for you.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Could we maybe—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think that's, quite often you—or I met, right, I have met so many young designers or architects now, but they'd been trying to get in earlier to Eero's, just for any—to get their experience. You follow

through in working on the design, not to do something, let's say it's mediocre, and then go ahead and build it. Not for making money, but for do a really good thing, that's what Eero really taught [ph] the young generation to do; that was why there was on—always a line of young architects trying to come to Eero's office, just for to have that experience. Said, "You find your way until it's good."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, in your—maybe we can turn on your own private work. Did you, [00:06:00] uh, follow more what Eero had done to carry through the design, even if it took far more time than you were going to be paid?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, I [laughs] never even thought of what I'm going to be paid. I design until I am happy myself. Uh, I never even thought of it. Sometimes, I feel it funny that people pay me for something I love to do. Really! I think it's ridiculous, but they do it like, by God. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you were uh—you had a considerable private practice all the time, that you were with these various offices.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, I had.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You listed here several of the things you were beginning to do, particularly down here in Cape Cod.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, I don't know in what order, which few you'd like to talk about in particular, but, um, among the first things you did, ever did, was your own house, for you and Marianna down here in Wellfleet in Cape Cod.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And uh, you've told me how you happened to come down here, how—what led you then to want to have—to design your own house?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, I said two reasons: one was we loved Cape Cod, that maybe, partly, because we remembered certain areas in Finland where I had lived was doing [ph] some pine trees, tied me with that kind of a nature, and, I couldn't think of myself at that stage to live in somebody else's house. I had to have my own house, for God's sake! [Laughs.] Why not have my own house? So, we, actually, the brave girl was Marianne, said, [00:08:00] "We buy this land," and we bought this land, and the land was right here between Gull Pond and the ocean.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Gull Pond and the ocean, mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And, the way I go about thing, before I build anything, I study the land, the surroundings, so I made this, which is actually, believe it or not, a pastel drawing, topographical pastel drawing of the land. See how it fits? And our house is up there, view this way, view that way, and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you showed the foliage, and—I mean, roughly, where the woods were and so forth.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And then, pinned it down to where the house was going to be and the angles—it was partly defined by existing trees. To get the house in there, we cut down only one tree, the same with the winding road. I didn't cut down a single tree that was up there, and built the house. It just was just filling our requirements at that stage, a very small summer place. We lived in Michigan, came here for three months, the whole summer, with kids. I had a glorious time in a simple house. In those days, we felt it was very expensive to build. So, we asked the bank for a loan, a mortgage, and the bank said, "Oh yes, you can have a mortgage." So we called the builder and said, "Go ahead." So the builder started, put the foundations in, and then he called up, [00:10:00] and said, "This local bank here, uh, doesn't have the money. They can't give the money, so they will quit! I said, 'No, I can't quit; I have started the foundation; I am going to build.'" I said, "I don't have any money to pay you." So I said, "Wait a minute." [Laughs.] So we took a plane and flew over to Provincetown, and came out here, and there was the builder. He had no money, and the bank said they had no money, and we had no money, so we made a special meeting with director of the bank, the little Wellfleet Savings Bank, and said, "You had said that we should have money for this; we had talked it before." He said, "Oh yes, but you see, it happens that, in the—I can't, for mortgage loans, we have no money, but we have this for personal loans; we have plenty of money there." So they—[laughs] so the builder and I took out the personal loan and put it in the junk [ph] for the mortgage loan. And that's how the whole thing started.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh!

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And we got the house built. And now it sounds ridiculous; we built the first part of the house, you know, the summer room and the kids' room and all that, for \$8,500. The whole thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Now what—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Then it started growing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Now what idea did you have in mind? You wanted to see the trees, the ocean, the pond, so you conceived a very open plan, did you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It was really not so open—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and certain parts were open, but we like to have—what we liked to have, what we achieved, was a very close, close relationship to the ground. So, there was what they call a breezeway, and there the ground was level with the lingonberries and cranberries all over, and allspice. You barely knew if you were inside or outside. From this one, you had your view over the ocean. This was closed in. I think a good uh, feeling also that you have closed in and not open always.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had two slightly separated parts: the closed in part, and the rather open area of the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —great living room.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, definitely.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Definitely too, so this was open, and this was the one, like in the womb—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you had—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: It had—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This idea was pretty original with yourself, wasn't it, to have this—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was. I never had—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —so elemental, uh, a house, so—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. It just happened that way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can we see the um, views of the house, too?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: There are very few views of the house because you can't take pictures of it. It's on—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, but I mean there—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —in between the trees. These are my drawings from the beginning.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This is the summer room facing the breezeway, going in there. These are this enormous fireplace.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A great fireplace. You felt that was an essential way of expressing the hearth, or the home, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Both the hearth and the home and—and as a fireplace, it was a complete gamble, because it was against all the rules how to build a fireplace. The fireplace, it had to have certain proportions, this opening on the hearth, and the chimney. This was overdone completely.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A very broad [00:14:00] fireplace.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: A very broad fireplace and very short chimney, which uh, didn't work too well, to put it

frankly, because in the breezeway, you had to have those side doors closed, otherwise you got too much air in, so you get smoke into the room. But if you have the doors closed, it was quiet, then it worked. But it was a thing I would never do for a client, but I could do it for myself, because experimental thing, and see how it worked. I find that one out. This shows partly the relationship between indoors and outdoors, and to strengthen that relationship, so, this living room, the summer room, so it's on stilts, and under the floor, I have uh, placed a series of spotlights, which lights the trees here outside, and they had incredible effect, for when you have stronger lights outside than inside, you have no reflections in the glass window. So, it's even stronger feeling between indoors and outside during the night when it's dark. You don't see the glass; you think you are sitting right in the trees. It worked just beautifully.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ha.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: This partly shows—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now did your lives change a bit during the summers, when you lived in this house? Was it different from the way you, you'd—actually, your family—had lived in other buildings, would you say that?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it's hard for me to say that, for I have lived in so many funny circumstances.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, but, this, you felt very comfortable with; [00:16:00] this worked very well for your family.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very well.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think, I mean, for Marianne, it worked perfectly, and the kids, I can see happier kids growing up like this. No, it worked perfectly that way, the design of the house and the relationship to the house to the nature with the kids in it. I think it was very, very well tuned in, in that respect. I never thought of it that far, at that time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. No, no, but I'm thinking, as you look back—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I really—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You've done, oh, a number of other houses down here—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —since then, and would you say that they took off from your basic idea for your own house, in other words, to keep people close to nature?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, I would say that. And also—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned uh, one—you've mentioned also the house for the Robert Leevee [ph] summer residence in Truro, which you did in 1962, and you have these first studies you made, again as you did with your own house, very carefully studied the site. Is that correct, and what were you looking for in that, in the case of the Leevee house?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In the case of the Leevee house, the approach, I would say, was quite different. Our place was such a very wooded area with a fluid [ph] green [ph] sense [ph] of the ocean, and some very important trees. So we had to partly pay your respects to the ocean—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and squeeze [00:18:00] your thing in between the trees. Leevee was different. It was on the top of a dune, bare, blown up with winter storms, but a fantastic view, about, oh, about 180 degrees over the whole bay, seeing the lights of Provincetown, and rolling dunes farther north. So, why not utilize that as the best and the strength of the site? So, little bit, I dug in, part of the house; personally, I don't like to have a house sitting on top of a hill. To me, it disturbs the skyline. It breaks the line of the nature. Can you sink it in a little bit? Can you—we make it part of the nature so it blends, and it's harmonious of it? So I kept it low, and the hilltop had a round sweep—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The house had a round sweep—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The hilltop had the round sweep, and I made the house follow the round sweep, and at the same time, follow the view. I made a sketch and study of the view, what you could see in the various angles—uh, maybe a house, a very simple house, but, each room has a little different view. Each view angles from south, southwest, [00:20:00] northwest, west, west, northwest, all the way to north. So it's never the same. You go from one to another; you look out, and you have different frame in the picture window of what you see.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Did you find that these clients were very understanding, and immediately took to this?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, I do. Uh, I think that one reason might be for they were very musical, in that respect, very sensitive. I've talked of a student and drew a lot, and the lake, lake-like [ph] music and so forth, I think that might help in their understanding, that they were sensitive for that kind of an approach. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you've tried to do this sort of thing in the many houses you have designed here, and elsewhere—be sensitive to nature, to the view, harmony with nature.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. I constantly do that. I always start out with studying the land just forever practically before I start building, or planning to build anything.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well the same applied to, I guess we could call public buildings. Uh, you did a series of churches, and I guess the impetus was perhaps through the late Bishop James Pike.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he a person you'd gotten to know, uh, before you first worked for him?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I got to know him when I worked for him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative], in 1957 is when you got the commission to design this Chapel of St. James the Fisherman in Wellfleet.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did that come about?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, that was shortly after—when was—what year was this?

ROBERT F. BROWN: 1957.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Fifty-seven, yeah, we had had this, our house in Wellfleet, summer house.

ROBERT F. BROWN: About five years by then, [00:22:00] yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Five years by then, and uh, we were friends of the Kepes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: György Kepes—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and his wife, Juliet.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And uh, dean at that time, he was dean of St. John the Divine in New York at that time, had a summer place on Gull Pond, which is next to our place. And he had this Episcopal group who rented a place in a local church here, for they felt that the group was strong enough to build a small chapel. So, so Dean Pike went to Kepes, and asked if he would be willing to design a chapel for them, and Kepes said that he's not an architect, that is not his field, and I think also, he's a very strong Catholic, why not? So he just didn't feel that that was his duties, but he recommended me. So, Dean Pike, who I didn't know at all, called up and came up and saw us in our place, and we were very surprised and didn't know what was all about, and they asked if I would like to design a church, as it was called in those days, a church for him. I said, "I have never been so shocked in my life, and never practically ever in my life been in a church; I never have even thought of designing a church." But I felt it was a challenge. He said that he has two conditions: it has to be a contemporary church, and it has to have central altar, to which [00:24:00] I answered, "That's about the only conditions under which I would like to work."

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he—did he—was he a very direct person, got right down to the point?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, very much so, very strong person. And, so I said, "Okay!" I said okay, so he looked at our house, and he loved our house because the simplicity, and said, "That's what I'm looking for, simplicity. And it has to be these other condition." Said, "Fine," and then about two weeks later, I got a phone call from Bishop Pike, or Dean Pike. He said that, "I know you are not a churchgoer, but would you mind come to my next sermon?" I said, "Of course not, I will come." And, that's one time in my life I forgot, I didn't have a record player, or one of these—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —tape recorders.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —tape recorders, for he gave a sermon about church, not exactly church architecture, but what tradition means, in church architecture and church history. So, he gave this lecture. He said they all like the addition; they all loves [ph] church, structures, monuments, what we see, and have it do, and have it go, and also, inside of the church, the love, what happens, and that's all tradition. It goes on, goes on, and carries on. And the whole congregation, it consisted of about exactly 36 people—they're beaming. [00:26:00] I said, "Oh, they're all dreaming about white steeple church, New England church." And they were all beaming and happy. And then in the end, Pike said, "Now, remember, when I talk about tradition, I talk about 2,000 years back. You talk about 200." And then described what he said, for example, the altar, he called it the holy table. You gathered around the holy table, and it framed the—back to the catacombs and things held together and you hold it—[inaudible]—so, that was St. James—the birth of St. James the Fisherman.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the people then began thinking about that sort of thing.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes. And they couldn't say "boo" after that. And uh, I remember the first time I had a presentation of this scheme. It was not as pure at all as it is now. It's really quite pure, if I may say so. It's really darned pure. It wasn't that pure, and at first for the building committee, we were pretty scorned for there was one man there who said, "I am never going to approve it. Whatever you do, I am never going to approve it."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why? Did he say why?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, he dreamed of the white steeple.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah, dreaming of New England traditional—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes. So.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was uh, not pure about your first scheme?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Eh, it wasn't—mainly in section. The tower was not right—the steeple was—the idea was there, and uh, I think mainly the steep—mainly the section, the steeple and the balance of the thing and the proportions of the things; it was just, there were too many odds and ends.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now you'd not done a church before, had you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [00:28:00] Never, never—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —dreamed of doing—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you uh, thumb through pictures of churches, to try get some idea of the traditional—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: None. I didn't touch a book—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you had no—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —about churches.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —at least, no, not consciously, you made no reference in your planning to any tradition.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You came up with a form that you thought would—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I came up with a form.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —carry out the functions that Pike wanted.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes. It started with actually with the form, and, and the form—we had a long, long, marvelous discussion with Pike about the function, really, the practical thing—how the ceremony, as he said, the holy table, how much space you need for the priests were around, the communion rail, how much for the kneeling, and then for the pews, where is the lectern, all the practical things, and what you see, from here to there and there. I drew unbelievable amount of charts [ph], until I found out that this is about the area which needs for the function. And, and then it came to me, in this particular case, with the backing of him, that what he stressed, that it should be an action of the whole congregation, not as in a normal traditional church—there is more of a stage setting; there is the altar and the priest, and everything in one and the congregation sits in back and watch the show. But in this case, they are all involved.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They're all quite rather close to the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They're all—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —other areas.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They're actually—so, in this particular case, theoretically, it seats 320, and can be overcrowded close to 400, and nobody is farther than [00:30:00] six pews from the altar. And also, there was no distinction between the clergy and the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the congregation.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —and the congregation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No distinction with the congregation and the choir.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean they were all at the same level?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They're all the same level and sitting together. As after the first service then, Pike practically wept, for he said it was first time that so many sat in the church, he could sit together with his family because they sat right in back of him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And to—the priest returned, just sat down on a pew—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —when he was not preaching or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, he was—went back to his pew.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Hmm. You designed it with lighting—very careful attention to the light, too, didn't you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, very much so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: More light on the center, on the center part, and less on the seating areas?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, this design, starting out with altar in the center, everything around it, so everything was site centralized against the altar—so was the light. So, everything was there, so it's a big skylight above, lights right on the altar, nothing on the congregation. There's a secondary light, a lower light on the floor level, on the outside of the chapel, but that doesn't disturb when you look across, because the pews block it. So it's—you have your floor alight, it doesn't disturb you; you can see the source, but all the light is on the center, and it worked.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well you, to think of any element of mystery, or um, [00:32:00] the incomprehensible in your lighting and your placement, or was it all to be clear? Was that light—is that skylight just absolutely visible, one just sees the light that comes down?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, the light in the skylight is blocked in squares; I can show it in the pictures. So it's blocks nothing comes directly in; it reflects too. So you had the light on the altar, but actually, you know it come

from above, but you can't see the source.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. Yes, that's what I meant—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, now you can see the source. That's one thing that I explained later that I had done with other churches. For, to me, they—one of the mysteries you can do—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —is with light.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —I feel, is with light.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, you've talked to me about that before, I know—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, uh, and also, you didn't want simply direct light coming in from some windows onto the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No. No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you feel that that would be too blatant, or too dull, or what? Too—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Mainly, I felt it would be disturbing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The church should be an isolated thing, in other words.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it should be an isolated shape.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And it should have this quality of mystery.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, the Gothic churches, in a way, are doing a fabulous job mainly with very much stained glass, very dark stained glass, and then I felt that the Baroque churches in the Arthur [ph] region particularly, had done a fantastic job by hiding the source of light. They had somewhere; it was some—behind some Madonnas or something. [Laughs.] It comes down somewhere—you don't see the source. And that I—well, the few churches I have done, I've always used the effect of light—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], [00:34:00] mm-hmm [affirmative]—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —to create a certain feeling of—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you did then for Pike a series of missionary churches. You worked on this fairly extensively uh, into the 1960s.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yes. Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: These were—you were doing these things quite actively then, what—before you even came back east, I mean, and then when you were with Roche, and then when you were teaching, as well. You were spending a good deal of time on these private commissions.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, all the time, all through—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —also when I was with uh, Eero—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes. Yes, well I—you were this time.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, and with all the offices, I always had a deal that I could have my private practice, as long it didn't compete with office works. So I worked with offices who had big jobs and were not interested in residential work, or that—[inaudible]—so, so it was with their understanding that I did this kind of private practice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did you feel um, comparing the two? Did you prefer your private practice? Was that where you—did you get more of a satisfaction from it, than you did from um, the work you did in the large

offices?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it was two ways. Let's say some, for example, Bellapais, I got an enormous satisfaction. I do that, and uh, Yugoslavia, I got a great satisfaction; I do that. But in general, I think you get—you had your freedom in doing your own, but you had your—the restrictions too, particularly in doing, for doing uh—like my Cape Cod houses, [00:36:00] are generally weekend—not weekend, but resort or vacation houses, which means they are secondary houses, and people don't like to spend too much money, so they're all very strict budget houses.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very strict, so that you have quite a fight, a budget fight, to squeeze it in, and everybody always asks for too much. They say, "We have to have that; we have to have that and that much more," and then I say, "Well, you can't have it." They say, "I have to have it!" "Okay," I say, "cut down that much—" "Oh no, no, no, we have to have it." For that way, just quite often been very disturbing, to have that fight of budget against design.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But on the other hand, did you take pride in doing things simply and economically?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As you had to.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What uh, role in—for you, played the various work you did—I suppose we could call it consulting work, maybe we could talk about that for a little bit, when you worked under United Nations auspices and the like, in the 1950s. First was 1951, well, '51 when you first went to Japan, and then studied the making of furniture in rattan and bamboo, and then you went on—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —to the Philippines.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did uh, that all come about? Had you done furniture design before, or what was your—how did you come to the attention of, I suppose it was the American government and the United Nations?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think that was strictly through Cranbrook, through Irene Murphy, who—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, who was uh, at Cranbrook, or nearby?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, nearby, and [00:38:00] she organized—she was the head of that, earlier, actually Marianne's part, and she had worked with—is Marianne listening in?

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

MARIANNE HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, she is.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh well, we maybe—[Audio break]—so, you were married to Marianne by what, 1950 or so?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, then Irene Murphy was an acquaintance of Marianne's?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, and she had been in the Philippines before. I think she was the sister-in-law of the last American governor or something, to the Philippines. So she had ties there. Great organizer, and she felt some debts to the Philippines, and felt that something should happen to create the cottage industries, and small craft, handicraft, and so forth. And she was the force and put this team together, where Marianne was in charge of the weaving. She didn't know anything, frankly, about me, except that I could do some good work, which I didn't do at that time. I had designed a few pieces of furniture in Finland, but mainly an architect. But she suggested that I should join the team, and, she had her relationships with United Nations, or knew people there. So she got together with, at least at that time, was unheard of, of a team, where US government and United Nations sent out the team together, for Marianne and I couldn't go together for United Nations, because

husband and wife couldn't, and [laughs] Marianne and I couldn't go out together, for US government as a married couple, but now, I went for United Nations [00:40:00] and Marianne for US government.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah, was that just simply some bureaucratic difference?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, that was a bureaucratic difference.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So we went out there, and I was scared stiff for I didn't know what to do. I didn't know a thing about rattan, or bamboo, or anything, but I was sent out there anyway. I went through some schooling and testing, or whatever you call it, and UN and so forth, that they said, felt that I was qualified, so, off I went.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you went to Japan first.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], and what did you study there, or see what they'd done?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, actually, I didn't do a darn thing in Japan.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Marianne studied, for she went out to the countryside even to all over the place, to study of weaving techniques and their hand-powered looms, particularly, for we were going to, to Philippines through areas where didn't have electricity, so the only thing I studied in Japan of what they do: handicrafts, without power tools, for that was familiar to me, for all my background, I had done woodwork in Finland just as a kid and so forth, but never used a power tool. So that was all right. So, that was our background in Japan, was actually study.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now when you got to the Philippines, was it fairly clear what you should do? Or what did you —

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, I was supposed to design the town furniture and wood furniture, anything that could be done without power tools and build up a cottage industry level, so they could do it in—with ledges [ph] on the various islands and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did they have some, an industry already or not?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, they did not. Just like in the weaving industry, they have had years ago, some generation ago, but they didn't have it. [00:42:00] And the government had a department; it was trying to build up this thing. So, Marianne took part of her, and I took part of my share with bamboo and rattan. And I met actually with quite a lot of resistance, to have an expert come in practically straight from Finland, as far north as you couldn't even dream of, coming to give them advice what to do with rattan—I had never seen rattan before that, practically, and tell them what to do with rattan, for they felt it was just one of those big things that just UN could dream up of, and frankly, I agreed with them. Then, with all this uh, Philippine foods and things, I got awfully sick, for I spent several days practically in a bathtub; I couldn't move anywhere. And, what I had with me, had a small batch of bamboo sticks, sticks—[inaudible]—and then, I started putting this thing together. I bent them. I made legs. I made connections. I made double legs—I had triple legs.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ha. A tripod, yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I made single wrappings. [00:44:00] And just something like that. This original, what I made in my little hotel on the top floor in the bathtub. And then I got well, and then I went to the shop that was assigned to me, and I started doing it. And it worked!

ROBERT F. BROWN: You worked up at the full scale, furniture sized—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah!

ROBERT F. BROWN: —from the small sticks. And then, and you had uh, pupils who came around, or people who were—could learn from you? There were people watching you do this?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, and many of these things I couldn't do myself, but the workers were—[inaudible] —

ROBERT F. BROWN: And these were people who were to go back out in the villages—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and do the work.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Do the work. And, and, and everybody—[inaudible]—for first, they said that nobody—how could I knew—know anything about rattan, that they know everything, because they have lived it for generations and generations. So I said maybe, my strength was start an indoor [ph] dam [ph] thing. So I had a completely new approach to it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, they'd never thought of doing things this way.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, certainly not. No, certainly not, for, for part of it, for the beds—I don't have a chair. You know the stools upstairs, the sofa—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, oh yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —it just partly based on, on laminated plywood, for example. Those vents you open up, put glue in, and bend them in a form—that's what I did with rattan and bamboo. They, of course, never thought of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did this system take off? I mean, they began using it, in their cottage industry?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I don't know to which degree. It was so shocking for them, so they didn't—I left them and said, "Now, you Filipinos, you're designers"— [00:46:00] they have always pride that they had very good designers—said, "No, you design this; take over from here, and go on and do it." I said, "This is it; use this," but I don't know what happened, not much. I don't think they did, really.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really. Hmm. Well you can—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not, not in the same degree like Marianne's, for Marianne's was a roaring success.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Incredible.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But yours, you're not certain whether they carried on or not.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I sort of doubt it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Well you continue though—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: They—no, they carried on in various countries. You know, this brochure that I gave you, [laughs] turned out to be a bestseller in the Far East. They had to reprint it at the UN, for they sold it all over the Far East. So I don't know to what degree—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So it suggests however, that it would—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, and for—into 1953, you continued as a consultant—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in other parts of the Far East—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —uh, mainly on, what, things such as this?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah. Yes. I have some books here.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this pretty satisfying to you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, it was a great satisfaction, with no question about it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why do you think so, you were helping the people, or what do you think it was that—just your own fascination with something—?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I think mainly helping people, uh, and also to get—I enjoyed to get close to that kind of friendly people on that level, for you saw so much in Manila, for example, strangers were strangers, so forth, and then you break through, sort of make friendly, when barrier bre—

[END OF TRACK 04, SIDE B.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] March 10, 1983. [Audio break.] Again in the 1960s, 1966 or so, you went to Jamaica, with Marianna, I guess—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and uh, did a similar, attempted to do a similar thing for its government—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can you describe that work at all? There's some work in design, and also again furniture, using I think this time, bamboo. How did that work out? How did—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, frankly—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —that come about?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —I would say it was, was not as successful as the Philippine experience.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why was—why was it not?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: There was two reasons: first, they were quite arrogant of me being there, explaining things, and then also, it was partly my fault of the raw material, the bamboo and the rattan, that they gave to work—raw material that they gave to me to work with was fresh cut uh, which means it was sap in it, and this, in these areas, the termites are incredible. The only time of the year you can cut it is about just, about around New Year's or something, when the sap is dry, and I didn't know that this material was that bad. It was completely fresh cut, so whatever I did, in half a year, it was practically all destroyed. I made some stools, in bamboo, you have design was pretty good, everything was fine, everything was fine, half a year later, you sat on it and it collapsed down on the floor. And, uh, [00:02:00] then later on, there came a Japanese bamboo expert, and he explained the whole process. I didn't know either; I thought it was all wrong, but he explained exactly when you had to cut it, and how to dry it. I didn't know it, and they didn't know it. So, it didn't turn out well, I would say.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well by that date, they resented Americans or Europeans coming in, do you think, by the mid-1960s, the—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —such people were a bit resentful of your coming?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But the government had thought it might be a good idea.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The government had thought it was good idea but in general, the population did not. I mean, it was that tight already then, after we lived in downtown Kingston, which, not the nicest area, and we worked in the worst part of Kingston in the slums. So we couldn't even go to shopping without a black guard. When we went to the market to buy, buy groceries or something, Marianne always had to have the UN driver, who's a black guy, as a bodyguard. She couldn't go in there alone. You couldn't move anywhere. So there was already that restraint, or so, then it was, my furniture fell apart because of the termites and the bad materials, so that was all put on me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. That was an episode you'd rather forget, huh?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I do.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I do.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No. You did, when you were, at least when you were in Asia, uh, in the '50s, you and

Marianna developed the idea of lecturing—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —on design.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did that come about? Did you think that you could help, or what was your uh, intention?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [00:04:00] Not so much help, I would say. On the lecturing tour, I don't think you could, at least, we couldn't think of helping, but, but maybe open their eyes would be a better description; open their eyes to the West and to the American culture. So what we brought around was slides, not only were, least of us, of our own work, but all the work in United States at that time in our fields, in weaving, crafts, arts, painting, and so forth. We had a Collection of about 800 slides, with us. This, we adapted to what audience we had, just to, in a way, open the eyes, for them, and at the same time, to see what they were doing, for it turned out to be an enormous experience, for we got to know them [ph] for their craftsmen, and artists came in to listen to us, and then they were eager to show what they were doing. So it turned out to be a fantastic exchange.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can you give an example?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, well, let's say in Singapore. We had 48 hours in Singapore. Of those 48 hours, we slept four, because we gave our lectures first, of our work, and then, all the Singapore architects, particularly photographers, and also painters, they were so eager to show what they could do, so they took us all over the place. We were running from place to place to place [00:06:00] to place, to show what they were doing. It was fantastic! Uh, it was an unbelievable exchange of minds, and work, and things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh. Were you confident by what you saw in those countries?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, we were.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did it seem there was any need for outsiders to come in and advise them, or—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Not advise—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I would say not advised; they were advanced there. Singapore is so changed now; you can travel now—since that's in the '50s. It has grown so enormously that I've seen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you gain from these tours, do you think?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think an overall human understanding, and respect for—great respect for people. I can mention one particular incident on the island of Java. We were in Jakarta. We had a friend, a Danish architect who was building hotel in Jakarta, and his wife was very interested in the Japanese Javanese culture, and she was a friend to a prince in the island of Bali, who takes very few visitors. And, she gave a recommendation to us to go and visit this prince, on the island of Bali. Now Bali's quite destroyed with hotels and things; that was before. There was practically nothing; there was a small town. We landed in Bali, and we had the address to this prince in the Villa de Bulud [ph] right in the middle of Bali. So, she had warned us that [00:08:00] "You don't force yourself up there. He takes paying guests, but don't force your—just go up there." She was—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Don't for—what'd you say? Don't—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Don't force yourself upon him, but just go up and pay your respects, more or less. So we took a cab, one of the two they had on the island—went up to this village, and then we met the prince, start [ph] and formal, Balinese, spoke fluently English, German, French, just like that, sitting there. He was sitting on high stool, we were sitting on little bit lower stool—we were guests. All the Balinese were sitting around down there. And so we must have done a good impression for he said, "Would you like to come and stay? Then you could go." So we had to drive back with our cab and then we took our suitcases, then we came back, and stayed one week in one of his palaces on the seventh courtyard. They were all a little bit dilapidated, and [laughs] he was a very poor prince, but incredible. He was one of the most educated men I have met! But just specializing—why not—in Balinese history, and culture—he had a library of every language was written about Bali. And, he had two courtyards, and one courtyard was empty, and there was a string, in the middle of the string was a little bare bulb hanging, and under this string, practiced those Balinese dancers, the girls. And, [laughs] on the next courtyard, which open this, was sitting a band of 30 big boys, [00:10:00] playing *clunk, clunk, clunk, clunk*, for this one little girl were dancing for two years—two hours straight, and you can't believe how beautiful. She was a

girl about something between 11, 11 and 14, and she didn't have, you know, those stick dresses, you know how they are—the Balinese dancers?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], the kind of—yeah—[inaudible]—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, they are almost like a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —looking, uh—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, almost like a harness, she has to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —but, when she was practicing, didn't have anything of that on, so you could see the body as such, and it was so incredibly beautiful. And she was so—[inaudible]—and there was these 30 boys playing for two hours, and we were sitting there. You can't believe it. And the next morning in the market, all the kids were playing around, and there was this girl playing with all the kids, same girl, and the next night again, there she was—all this thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Doing these very, very elegant, ritualized—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, believe it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —motions, huh. So this—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That was a fantastic experience. And he, the prince, I will never forget, for he had one funny comment. He had a guestbook, and uh, a couple of weeks before us, Eleanor Roosevelt had been there. We saw the book, and said, "My God! She was here." He said, "Hmm. I didn't like her." I said, "Why not?" "She kept typing, on the typewriter, and destroying the whole sound of the place. She, I tell you she was fine, but, but she was typing."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Eleanor Roosevelt.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Hmm. Well for you, uh, to see some of these cultures where art forms are so traditional and so revered, and yet, one can then go right back into very ordinary pursuits, I suppose this was extreme, [00:12:00] a great contrast from your upbringing and from what you, your own lives here in America particularly, weren't they?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because here, you said that the ritualized part say, of the Chapel of St. James—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —they were all to be brought down to earth, weren't they? That was part of—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the Dean Pike's idea.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, it was brought down, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Whereas there, they were still kept very distinct and—hmm.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, they were very distinct. But sort of, I think also, I'm that sensitive for that kind of people who are very close to earth and very, very sensitive, because my years up in Lapland, with the Laplanders, I think, all nomad people.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were the Laplanders likewise very—their art was very much a part of their life?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Very much so. And very much part of their life, and they're so incredibly sensitive. So, the Laplanders I was with, and also in the war when I had—all my guides and boys were Laplanders, I never needed to tell them what to do, because a second before I told them, they knew it. They had—you don't know how it works, but I think there is something with our civilization that has dulled our senses, but they have it. Because they live so close to nature, they have it. They always spot something before. If we were looking around

in nature and saw something strange, "Oh," they say, "Oh, I knew it long ago." They knew everything which is in their world.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well you said your own approach to design, has been in some ways intuitive.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I think maybe you appreciate such people as the Laps—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I do.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —for that reason, that you have—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: [00:14:00] I do.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —at least you seek and you uh—to have such qualities in your own work.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Maybe. Also, I think, educated in that respect by the Laplanders.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I think so. I really respect it so much.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you're more interested really then in—that process is perhaps the most important part of your design process, isn't it?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That intuiting, developing schematic plans.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The final, precise arrangement is of not a great concern to you.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: True.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is that true?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, that's true.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that when you were doing the very detailed renderings for Eero, for the American Embassy in London, or the extremely precise drawings for Gropius—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —or the Rosenthal service, that's not in your nature, to do sort of thing.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, not at all. No, no, I agree with you, that was just a mechanical thing to get some kind of a perfection in that, but that's not, that's re—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. And yet, your study, beginning—based in intuition, is sufficiently detailed for, say, a building of yours to be carried out.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I mean, because you do make detailed drawings, but they're—they allow the workmen a little bit of leeway, do they?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you think you've derived from electing to go on into the design side of things, as opposed, say, to the technical? Because as I recall, some of your original education was technical.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Well, it's very much technical. I think all—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what you—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —architectural education is technical.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But what you elected to do is to emphasize the design aspect more, haven't you?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh, yes, definitely so. It uh, it was the natural for me; it just floated in. I couldn't even think of doing anything else. It was never to me [00:16:00] a choice, this or that. It just went that way. And also in Finland, particularly in those days, there was—didn't exist this distinction to—not to the same degree as is here, as I explained. For example, in Saarinen office, there is one group does this and one does that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah. What do you uh—what would you look forward to doing, if you had your options? Well, in—now? What do you intend to do?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: In my field of work?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Have you seen that model for the Saarinen house I'm doing right now?

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, I've not.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That might be an answer.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That would be it.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I have a lot of fun with what I'm doing right now. I enjoy it. I am enjoying what I am doing. I have—think I am extremely fortunate to enjoy what I am doing. I think few people at my age can say that, and hopefully, I think I am creative, at least I'm trying to be, and doing something which I think is good and fun, constructive, and the clients are completely glorious with happiness, what I produce for them. Well, what more can you ask for, in that respect?

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's right, nothing.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Okay. I show it to you.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay. [00:18:00] [Audio break.] So this model of the house at Laurel Canyon, California, for Eric Saarinen, and you say it was such a steep precipitous site, you couldn't, uh, make a drawing.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: That's impossible—[inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had to go around the site—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes, because I have—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and measure.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: If you make it on one level—I'm using all this space, with his requirements—[inaudible]
—

ROBERT F. BROWN: His requirements then, a guest garage, and—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —[inaudible]—been out here, somewhere. They had to be staggered on top of each other.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, no way of—right.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: So, the only thing I could do was to start building—I built a model first, and had the contours things, and then I start checking the levels. And I start pushing things in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This model we see here, you built first, or a model like this.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No, I built this model first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Having measured the contours very carefully—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Having measured the—roughly the—from the topographical map from the city, I got basic contours. So I had that as a base, and then had the program requirements, and see how they could be split up. So I got this number one level, which I call, was the garage and guestroom. Then, number two level with a work area, which is his—he's a filmmaker, movie maker, so that's his studio and work area. Then the third level is the sleeping level, master bedroom—children, and the top level, part of this is existing, so that's what set the whole thing, that's why the angle came in. Also, there is the living room, kitchen, and a porch. And, also to tie it,

in a way, an organic way, together to get this angle, so it follows also the sweep, [00:20:00] you see, the shape of the canyon.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of the canyon.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Of the canyon. So it just like, the same movement as the canyon has, as it grows up that way, and the big problem was, how to get up to this level and out. There's this—[cross talk]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —uppermost level without going through each of the other levels, huh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, no, what, what happens now is that you go up here, and you go in there—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in a passage, yes, on the second level.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —in a passage on the second level, and then you have a stairway here, with a skylight which lights; it's an open stairway, that's what I'm working on—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which leads all the way down to the second level, mm-hmm [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: All the way down to the second level, and then you enter in here, which is dark, and then you see and, which is lighted from—

ROBERT F. BROWN: There's a light behind it.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —lighted from above, and underneath is a rock garden.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Underneath, you mean at the ground, at that level?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: What—what—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Or you look down on a rock garden.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: No! Right on this level is a rock garden.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —second level—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: On the second level—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and then this—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —is a rock garden—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —stairway comes up out of that.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —[inaudible]—and out of the rock garden comes the stairway up to these levels. And so then it comes up to this level, where you have the master bedroom suite with the quite luxurious bathroom and a sauna and so forth, and the bathtub even has a picture window and sauna has a picture window right out there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: My.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And they had a deck here, so staggered back, the roof of each level is a deck on the next one. So then you come up finally up there. This is what I'm just working on right now; it's not finished yet, but you can see part of the stairway, that's where you enter in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: On the second level?

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: On the second level.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the rock garden would be on that level, yes.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: The rock garden would be on that level, and then you come up like this. And there's a skylight here above; it lights down through, all the way down.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:22:00] So in this, you worked extremely closely with the client.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You know what they want, extremely closely with nature—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and you respect nature—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I do.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and uh, you had also to take account here for—of two existing structures, small structures.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Small structures, but the worst part is then to consider the dangers of the site. You have the earthquakes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: You have the landslides, the mudslides; you have everything. I have two booklets now from the town, or the city of Los Angeles, about the conditions. They have been drilling and checking and things so, it's so incredibly complicated. For example, now they say that this slope—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —above the house.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: —above the house, and this existing, and they said that if we build anything here, we had to rip down the existing, and I thought the problem was with builders. They said, "This is all right, that's fine, but we had to rip down this part."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why is that? Because it—

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Because the danger of mudslides from here, so they said we had to have a 15 feet flat area where the mud can pile up before it hits the house.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: I have a solution for it, but this has been going on for months, so that's the problem.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you're happy, this is what you like to do, and yet you're with one of the most constraining set of conditions you've ever worked with.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Oh yes, definitely so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: And the client is just delirious with happy—he loves it. He loves the solution, for the whole thing was so crazy, for uh—after all, I built his mother's house, you know.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], Lily Saarinen's house.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Lily, Lily's house.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, in about 1960.

OLAV HAMMARSTROM: Yeah, and then after all, old friend with Eero. So, so his son [00:24:00] Eric called me a year ago, almost to the day, and said, "Would you build me a house?" I said, "What? Crazy." I said, "Don't be ridiculous. There are great, good architects in California. Why come over here? How far can you go in this country [laughs] from—[they laugh]—Los Angeles to Cape Cod to find an architect?" So he said, "No. I know your work, and I like your work. I like you to have to do my house." I thought it was a hell of a good compliment—hey, I show this one, Marianne—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]