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Interview with David Milholland, Part 1 (audio)

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Portland State University

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Portland State University Center for the Moving Image
Oral History Project

Narrator: David Milholland

Interviewer: Heather O. Petrocelli

Date: May 3, 2011

Location: NW Film Center, Portland, Oregon

Duration: 2:04:38

<http://archives.pdx.edu/ds/psu/10157>

Transcribed by Carolee Harrison, August 2022

This interview is part 1 of 3 with David Milholland. Heather O. Petrocelli interviewed individuals affiliated with PSU's Center for the Moving Image as part of her Master's thesis, Portland's 'Refugee from Occupied Hollywood': Andries Deinum, his Center for the Moving Image, and Film Education in the United States (2012) <http://archives.pdx.edu/ds/psu/9138>

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HEATHER PETROCELLI: This is Heather Oriana Petrocelli, interviewing David Milholland on May 3, 2011, in Portland Oregon at the Northwest Film Center. David, do I have your permission to record you for the Center for the Moving Image oral history collection?

DAVID MILHOLLAND: You do.

HP: Would you please state your full name, date and place of birth?

DM: David Marion Milholland, born October 19, 1946, in Greeley, Colorado.

HP: And would you give me a little bit of your education background and how you wound up at the Center for the Moving Image?

DM: I went to public schools in Lakeview, Oregon, as a child, and went through the ninth grade, so I went from K through 9 in Lakeview Oregon. And our family then moved to Moses Lake, Washington. I had really loved growing up in Oregon and felt there was something special

about this place, and of my four siblings—I'm the oldest—I was the one who came back to Oregon for college. So I went to Lewis and Clark College.

I went overseas, went to Peru; by the end of my junior year I was essentially pretty bored with the difference between what the overseas experience was and being on a campus. So I joined the Peace Corps in Guatemala, and I was there from 1967-1970, came back to finish my senior year of college at Lewis and Clark, from which I graduated in 1971. At the end of my winter term, I was told that I was short a single credit and that was then an art credit, so I came to Portland State to take an art class. They had film classes at Portland State, and so by the end of that time I took my class—I really thoroughly enjoyed it—and up to that point, I really hadn't any idea that you could make movies. I knew they were made, I really liked films, but I hadn't any real sense of that being something that you could do. My focus had been a lot more on writing and the spoken and the written word, and suddenly there was a new opportunity to do interesting things in a medium that I had been interested in for a long time. I distinguished between film and television; I had really stopped watching television after the Kennedy assassination, but I really had continued and spent more time watching movies; I'd watched them since a child. So when I finished my class in the spring, I kept taking classes at Portland State essentially to keep building my skill, but also because I got involved with projects there and I also wanted to have access to equipment. I stayed a student on a very part-time basis after my college graduation in 1971 at Lewis and Clark.

HP: Can you talk a little bit about your orientation with CMI? Was it that you worked with [Andries] Deinum? Did you work with [Tom] Taylor? Did you work with both?

DM: Many people that I know well were deeply inspired by Andries Deinum. I met him on several occasions, primarily in social settings, but my exposure to him was very minimal. I didn't have any hunger to take classes, and I basically... from him. I knew he was a good teacher; everybody was extolling him to the highest. But Tom Taylor was somebody who really had a hands-on approach to filmmaking and he really worked very well with a lot of people. I think he was very focused on bringing out each individual's skills as well as their interests, and giving them a handle on doing what they might find interesting. So I basically took an introduction to filmmaking class and just kept working at doing what would ultimately have been sort of not as much taking formal classes and turning in papers as well as just working on projects that were affiliated with CMI, working on my own films that were also credited to CMI as one of the elements of the production.

My experience was with Tom, and then very quickly, Tom really saw a giant role of being both a professor and a community member, of being part of a creative universe. He always invited his

students—or many of his students, I think he invited everybody and some people chose to come to parties that he had—he lived up in the hills up on NW Thurman. Over time, I also became a good friend. That doesn't happen too often with teachers; you can get to know somebody well and really like their approach to teaching, but it's rarer where you transition from having a friendship in a classroom to just becoming a human friend that you have no necessary link to the institution that was your instant connector.

HP: So you were more production-oriented in CMI. Can you talk a little bit about Taylor's instruction style? Do you have any particular memories of how he taught production?

DM: Like I said, he was really focused on having... he would demonstrate something but as quickly as possible he moved you into doing the very thing he was interested in having happen. We worked initially in this beginning class with little Super 8 cameras. There was already home video. You had half-inch video and you could shoot and do things, but he thought that film had several benefits, and he extolled those in a repeated way: that it required more discipline; you had to actually think through what you were doing; that you actually worked the camera to become not only an eye but also an element of how you thought of what was going to come out. That you worked toward an end rather than just simply shooting footage randomly. That basically film was as much the idea behind it and the personalities behind it as it was a silver nitrate roll of stuff rolling through a machine.

Within a short period of time—I would think maybe even by the time we were in our third class—we were already doing exercises. Maybe they were initially going out and shooting a roll of Super 8 film around the PSU campus, but for people that were interested—and I was interested, and several people in the time I was there got quite engaged with that process—he encouraged us to either singly or as part of a team to go out and shoot little ideas. My girlfriend at the time, Lan Fendors, had been studying mime at Lewis and Clark College with Frans Reynders, so she was really a natural on camera. She also, then, because of the way there was a social universe that Tom created, was immediately part of a network of friendships. So the friendship and the connection to other art forms happened pretty naturally there.

Through her I became involved with theater at Lewis and Clark and then theater in the Portland community, and one of the things Tom encouraged—and many people who were part of CMI got involved with—was not just simply seeing film as an isolate, but working to use it to catch stories about all kinds of things. It could be about fishing, it could certainly be about any other artistic discipline. It also really was his orientation to talk about community, and there was a community that had something to say, and it was our job to figure out what that might be. Or

we had something to say and we had to figure out how we could reflect this community that we were a part of.

That seemed to be a through-line for Tom all the way, in the whole period of time he was at CMI. When he went out of CMI and the organization closed at PSU, he continued to do films with seniors and with other people; he also worked on a lot of people's films. He wasn't at all reluctant to be a hand, as opposed to this need to be constantly treated as a signore of great consequence. He didn't mind playing that role, but as much as possible he tried to enfranchise people.

Remember that also I was a person who had been out of college for three years in the Peace Corps time, so I came back just a little bit more mature. No one wants to make a big case for that and many would claim that's a complete misstatement, but I actually had operated in a larger world, in another language, and I had been overseas now for the second time, so I was very comfortable in another cultural context. I just wasn't intimidated by things that maybe people would be if they were just a student finishing up or taking classes. You could take... I don't think there was a requirement for doing any filmmaking that you had to be a junior or a senior, so there were people across a pretty big age range. Also at CMI, because of the way that Portland State works, different than Lewis and Clark which had primarily students that entered as freshmen right out of high school—a few people transferred in, but not many people were of an advanced age. Rarely there were students who were in their mid-twenties or older. That may be different now, but it was the case when I was there. CMI had lots of people that were across a pretty big age spectrum. So that was interesting, to teach students who had a variety of expectations. For the most part, the people that were there—and certainly if they stayed for more than one term—they were there because they wanted to be and because they were made comfortable there. Tom really gave... he certainly didn't hesitate to give you a pretty clear critique of your work, he wasn't trying to just simply operate on the basis of praise, but he also was... he tried to find ways to help you engage further with what you were doing as opposed to just simply sending you back to square one every time. There are some teachers who really have a hard time expecting anything but perfection, and out of beginning students you don't get that necessarily.

So as a result, I think a lot of students that were there advanced pretty quickly. Again, some of us were just a little bit older, so as a result we were able to fairly soon get involved in projects that were not just simple exercises of continuity. We had to learn how to do that: how do you carry this apple to this spot, to this person who is going to eat it? I mean, you have to do that, and if you don't know how to do that your stuff will always be... you don't have to do that in a film, but essentially most of film has a continuity element, that if it's thrown away or if there's

something confusing, if a person has a shirt on and then in the next cut they don't have a shirt on, it doesn't look right. They don't seem like a big deal, but ultimately everybody has to learn how meticulous you need to be about the camera angles, working with sound. All those things came along with just a few classes.

I guess what I really experienced was that it was a welcoming place, that it was something of a home, and that as—especially the social world that was part of what Tom felt very comfortable in, not just being part of but staging—as that happened, you got to know other people that were doing film. And inevitably, given the scale of Portland especially at that time—not necessarily that distant from what we have now—you could know people across a pretty broad spectrum. You could know people who were talented in other disciplines. If you worked with people over very much time, pretty soon you needed a narrator, you're probably going to have better luck if you have somebody who is experienced in voice work or the dramatic arts... and it just goes on from there. Pretty soon if you're creating costumes you need to have somebody that can do that well.

So, I didn't do, in that context, a lot of fiction film, and that wasn't really as much of a focus for Tom as it might have been in another program. He really was focused on the documentary form. But the documentary form is a great way to learn, and it also is an appropriate thing for people to learn how to cut your teeth with. You have to basically really be very observant about what might be of interest to others; you have to be able to communicate very effectively with not only yourself, with a crew, but also with people that are going to be in scenes, and not necessarily have everything scripted; you have to learn how to take from what you capture and create something that has, again, concept continuity as well as visual continuity. So I thought Tom was somebody that made that happen very effectively. There were some people who basically just wanted to do silly things, and there was room for that, but essentially he was more interested in people that at least had some concept of a bigger purpose than just doing something for... purely and simply entertainment.

The other thing that came along with the CMI, and it became an element of the education right away... it's like people that are in theater go to see theater. You should do that; if you're a musician and you don't see live performance, you don't get that much better; you need to see how people are doing it. So there was a very active film committee at Portland State, and the film screenings took place at Lincoln Hall in a basement room that was literally right across the corridor from the Center for the Moving Image's basement... to call it a "suite" would be insane, but this small, clotted-up set of rooms. It was a finite space. Not that Portland State needed to have built a massive center to have this activity happen with little Super 8 cameras, but, you know, it was... you could tell that being in the basement of a building, there were other

departments at Portland State in plenty of places that that's where they'd find themselves, but it isn't the penthouse. In any way. So you could tell that it was also... that there were people that would be production assistants that would be working to check equipment in and out, and basically sell you rolls of film when you needed splicing material, etc. But it was a very tightly-held organization, and Tom really kept it... you didn't come in with the sense that you were always going to be encountering broken-down equipment and "I can't buy a roll of film this week because nobody thought to order it." It was pretty organized. Tom basically saw it being a vital role for this to happen easily, relatively naturally, and I think that as a result, he basically was inspirational to quite a few people in a world where there wasn't a truly active creative film community of any consequence. Many of the people that worked at CMI as students, and especially people that did a little bit more substantial role there, went on to do work in film or at least in some kind of creative arts that drew on that education that we got there.

HP: How large of a class do you recollect at any one given time... were these large classes of students?

DM: No, since it was hand-on, my memory is probably they were something like fifteen students; you worked in teams of two or three. Different projects had different... and there was a finite amount of equipment. It was basically akin to working with Play-Doh before somebody hands you a set of marble to start carving. You know, you're working with basics. But essentially the same basics are capable of capturing things perfectly well. Not something that can be shown on a major motion picture screen, although some of the home Super 8 movie footage that people have pulled into other settings, for just a brief scene it does capture the motion and the excitement or the revealing moment. So it really is a legitimate platform to begin building this discipline. So there was a finite number of equipment, a finite number of tables or places that you could do editing. Before you've taken more than a single class, you're not going to go off and... maybe at this point in time lots of people would walk into a class already owning a reasonably decent video camera, but at that point in time I would say that very few people had shot... if they'd done anything, maybe they'd shot some home movies on an 8mm or a 16mm camera, but for the most part home video didn't quite exist yet.

So we were raw. But everybody had seen some movies, and certainly everybody at that point in time had seen a reasonable amount to a lot of television. We had a sense of what it was that we liked. I don't think everybody necessarily went into the thing saying that I was going to become a documentarian, but nonetheless having a focus on something—and again, a focus on something that is pretty immediate—you don't have to raise a budget to shoot a documentary film, on something like a major budget. You can do something very simple. You can work with actors, but again, everybody has a story to tell, and everybody is interesting if you capture their

specific story of interest. I think it was a very respectful setting for that. Then, because we were doing... I got involved with the film committee, pretty soon we were able to make specific choices about films we'd like to see.

Portland, from that point and on, was actually a very good community to see film. Portland had and still continues to have a high ratio of screens per capita compared to other cities, and there were multiplexes, but they were really... the first multiplexes like Eastgate and Westgate were four-plexes, they were three-plexes. They were not massive multi-screen. Despite that, there were lots of community and neighborhood theaters still operative, and at that point the Clinton Street Theater was still a little... it was operating; the Guild Cinema was in place right downtown, and when I was—I'm trying to think whether they had already gone to *Deep Throat* already at the Aladdin, very possibly—but nonetheless, while I was a freshman, sophomore, and junior going to college, the Aladdin had had the—I won't say the company that featured those films—they had all the Fellini, all the Bergman, all the Kurosawa, [...], Antonioni. So we were seeing already, by the time I came back, it was the start of... at the time you had both the French New Wave, German filmmakers Werner Herzog and Fassbinder and others were starting to do really exciting stuff; there were exciting things happening in Czechoslovakia, and it went on and on. Any period of time is exciting in film. People are consumed by boredom about things they think are not very interesting all the time, but in reality there are always people doing intriguing things, and it was possible to follow up and see a vast amount of film in this community, and thus really learn whatever it was to build on your interests and that kind of thing.

So I found that a very nurturing thing. I had really been very visually focused as a child, but I wasn't skilled with the art of putting things on paper or canvas. I was rebuffed as a kindergartener! And I thought, that's a fine howdy-do, because I liked at that point in time to do essentially chicken-scratch things, but I observed a lot. My father had been a cameraperson in World War II, so I inherited his Argus C3 camera at some point in time, and learned how to take and compose still images. So I had already done a lot of still image work before I came to the CMI. Thinking about how to actually capture images is dramatically different in film than it is in still photography, but it's not totally different. So as a result, if you know what it is that pleases your eye, you will continue to do that.

I also had grown up in a world prior to having anything to do with CMI where I loved storytelling. In my family, there are many people on both my mother's and father's sides of the family—and we got together quite frequently in the Northwest for family gatherings, primarily around the holidays, sometimes summer vacation—and inevitably I found myself really attracted to hearing my seniors, whether it was my parents, my uncles, my grandparents,

hearing them tell stories about the real worlds that they inhabited. Sometimes they were made-up; they really were more just life accounts, but I was really excited about that. I also had, in the Peace Corps, been working with a wide range of people—from leaders, the mayor, the county... the treasurer of the community I was in, the commander of the police, the head of the military garrison that was stationed in my town—so I'd been dealing with people, all the way to a large, large group of people I was assigned to work with on agricultural projects and a credit union. So I was working with *campesinos*, farmers, peasants. So from the most humble people all the way through the very sophisticated, at least as sophisticated as you'd see, and then we worked on a national basis in Guatemala. So working across a big spectrum of things was something that really intrigued me. I wanted to know how x connected with y, and what responsibilities x had to y and vice versa, that kind of thing. I was intrigued with the idea of telling stories, as well as capturing social reality.

HP: Can you talk a little bit about the films that I can find of yours? I was only able to see one of them, but *Blackjack's Family*, *Thorne Family*, *Poker Night*, and *Living Together*.

DM: Sure. Well, *Poker Night* is hardly a film of any consequence, but it was a fun thing to do. When I was there at CMI, I was living with my girlfriend Lan Fendors in an apartment—I just went by it on Friday—and it's right on SW First just a block and a half south of the... hm. The Ross Island Bridge. It was an old building, basically a rental place that had a cheap room, and we were living in a room that was the size that the two of us lived there comfortably, but there was not an extra six square inches of space in the place. It was part of a community of an amazing number of people who were doing creative work who had found that neighborhood, which is very close to the center of the city. You could get from that neighborhood on a bike or walking, from there to Portland State was fifteen minutes' to twenty minutes' walk, the same thing to immediate access to downtown, not to speak of going on a bike or taking a bus. So being part of that world made it an attractive thing. Several of the exercise films that happened were done in that little Lair Hill neighborhood. Lair Hill Park is right on Barbur Boulevard, but the neighborhood right there is Ross Island/Lair Hill. The neighborhood included quite a few people whose populations had been moved south to that area as the old Italian/Jewish neighborhood that is right where the Forecourt Fountain and the Civic theater and those kind of things were located. As they moved these Italians and Jewish families, as well as other people that had really been attracted to living in the very core of the city south they had jumbled in there. There were still people that were actually just slightly displaced by urban development in that neighborhood. There were a few African Americans, and then all these artists that had found there, and students from Portland State. So it was a natural place to shoot these things.

Poker Night just included people that I had either met in the Lewis and Clark context in the theater department—Lan and my friend Doug Olsen were both in the film—John Weinberg was somebody that I had been in Peace Corps training with, and he lived... I ran into this guy who I had only met in this brief period of time, I was in the first stages of the Peace Corps, just living three blocks down the street on SW First. It was a pretty tiny world. The other person, I don't remember at this point. I haven't looked at that film for a while, and I really want to get that. So that film was just a little... it was a fun film, and again somebody spotted... Tom Robinson found it in a swap meet kind of setting, and he paid ten bucks for it, and I gave him twenty bucks to get my film back; it had sort of disappeared when I had some stuff in a storage locker that I didn't keep paying the fee for at a certain point. They saw it as a 1950s film when it had been done essentially in the spring of 1971.

The next film, *Living Together*, was a project for Good Samaritan Hospital for a national sociology conference that took place here. I believe that was in the spring of 1972. And so I kept taking classes and learning and building skill, but the classes stopped being as much turning in exercises as they were just being able to be part of the team that did that. It didn't cost a lot to go to CMI. I don't remember the actual fees, but to have access to equipment was really the wonderful thing. Once you're interested in something, pursuing it in a semi-obsessive way seemed like the logical thing to do. I had other work that I was doing; I had graduated from Lewis and Clark with a degree in economics and another degree in literature, and I was doing—fairly soon after college there was no work casually available—in between taking classes and doing that, my friend Len and I got a job working for a magician, and we traveled around the Northwest from here up through around the state, all parts of Idaho, Montana; we went to Victoria; just this sort of regional circuit. Really a grubby little job. But a wonderful job—who doesn't want to go off with the circus? And by God there I was. Because there was no other work. In 1971, graduating from college was sort of like graduating in 2008. You know, what the fuck. You don't have anything. All you do is have something that you've got out of your responsibility list.

So as a result, those things came kind of naturally. And this film that we did, *Living Together*, basically we—Tom, I don't know how he was invited to do that, but he got an invitation to have our class—they wanted something done on something less than a shoestring. I stood in... it seemed like a fairly good experience, we'd have a chance to produce a finished documentary film. We brought ideas to the project, we found the people who would appear in the film, I brought friends to be one of the four groups of *Living Together* people. I actually pulled in two of the groups that were—of the four—a woman who was raising a child, a single woman raising a child on welfare whose partner had skedaddled. And then the couple that I brought to the film lived in Seattle, but they were raising a pulled-together family: the children of two different

previous marriages that she had had, as well as the friend that I had been in the Peace Corps with. He had trained with me in the Peace Corps and had been in Panama before... at the same time I was in Guatemala.

So that was a really exciting opportunity; we did essentially a thirty-minute film. I think that to go from just doing continuity exercises and having fun with the camera and thinking about what it is that you might do, to actually doing a truly finished product that actually had an immediate audience—we actually had the film shown... again, let's say it was April of 1972, it's something like that... to an audience of about 3000 people that were here for the sociology conference. Margaret Mead was the guest speaker and the conference essentially opened with the screening, for the very first time, of the film that was just literally out of the lab the night before. We had to work under a tremendous deadline. When we got it finished, that was it. We didn't really feel like we had a lot more work to do. We had a finished film; it just was that tightly deadline-driven. None of us were paid, but on the other hand we had a chance to be involved intimately with the entire thing, including having a good soundtrack. The stories were presented, and then Margaret Mead riffed on the film for the next period of close to two hours, two and a quarter hours. So it went essentially... if the film showed at nine-fifteen, right after a set of introductions, and then at 9:45 she stepped forward and talked about that film literally for the next, I would say, two hours. Having never seen it before, and since none of us could have seen it before, it wasn't a truly finished film until that time.

It was fascinating to watch this very perceptive woman who had some of the most distinguished credentials in the world of sociology/anthropology talk about what you had been intimately involved in shaping. At a certain point in time once the thing was over, we had asked and had put our request through to see if Dr. Mead would actually do an afterword for the film. I was one of a team of eight—and Tom was part of our team, but essentially he wasn't the leader of the team, he was just... he did some of the shooting; one of the social groups that was portrayed was included, his former wife who was living with two other couples; she was living with a partner and two other mature couples with children in a setting. So he brought that subject to our thing. I don't remember who found... but we also had a group of three lesbian women living together with children. I don't remember exactly how the pattern worked out, how the children were brought in, but they were children of some of the women. It was an interesting mix of living groups, none of whom were formally married in the sense. The couples in the house of three couples living together were married, but they were not your standard nuclear family that we had been told was the be-all and end-all of families. It was an interesting exercise to look at that change. This was a very dynamic time.

Anyway, I was asked by the group to speak with Dr. Mead before we recorded this five-minute thing, to tell her that we had been in conversation with one another and that we were really excited that she could work with us, but that we thought that she'd made some mistakes in what she had said. So I said, before we sat down, was it possible for me to just talk with her for four or five minutes just in dialogue about some of the things that we had observed from our two-hour session earlier in the day? And she said, Well, of course, and—this was later in the afternoon when we met together—and so she listened to me and meticulously processed what I had said. I said I'm speaking on behalf of my team, and we're thrilled and obviously you only saw it for the first time, so anybody would make... but we don't know some of the things that you said to be true, and perhaps you'll want to take that into consideration as you talk about what you do.

Then we had a camera set up, we had lights set up, and boom, she sat down and said, I think I have my ideas prepared. I said, Well, we want to get it exactly in at five, can we give you... and she said, why don't you give me two minutes and thirty seconds, and a cut? She sat down; she processed what I'd said. And boom, she delivered a beautiful afterword. It came in to the point that we were within a second or a half a second of a perfect little five-minute summary wrap-up and a warm conclusion. Not only, then, did we have this film, but we basically then had a film that we could learn about distribution with, which was a really exciting thing. I was then—two or three days after this whole thing had happened, because we didn't attend the whole rest of the conference, this was just a project we did for the hospital—I was summoned in via phone call to the office of the guy who had been the project coordinator from the hospital's part. Dr. Meagan was somebody who was used to having... supervising people or whatever, and he called me in and he really wanted to put me on the carpet for having not treated Dr. Mead in an appropriately professional way. She was obviously a superior human being and somebody that I was way too familiar with, especially as a college student. I said, I respectfully disagree; I had been asked by my colleagues to talk to her and I talked with her, from my point of view, very appropriately, and we got what we wanted, which was a result that didn't require a second take, that didn't misrepresent what was in the film as far as we understood it. I'm sorry that it bothered him to see me talking with her as a human being, but that's how it came down. I said, What about you? How did you get along with Dr. Mead? I had a terrible time with her, he said, and proceeded to tell me how many different ways that she had not met his expectations. He expected to have some kind of meeting of the minds, some kind of comradeship that was not exactly what... she was happy to receive a check from him, she had been gracious to meet him, but she wasn't interested in exploring ideas or whatever he'd imagined. That was an interesting thing, to have this notion that I was still—and I was not old, but I was certainly more experienced than many people just graduating from college, having had this independent life in the Peace Corps.

That's that film, and in that film we learned a lot about distribution. It's a really hard thing to take a single product and get it into distribution. Gary Hood, who is a name I put on the list of somebody you might contact, took those film classes, was a member of that team, and we worked with Gary—I have his phone number on the sheet there—to do that. Gary went on to have film-related stuff and video-related stuff be part of his career definition for the last many years. Totally different than a creative filmmaker, but somebody who this had a big impact on.

Out of the film *Living Together*, the next big product that came up, I did some TV spots and I could talk about those, but I did have some opportunity to do some television spots for political candidates, and... I'm going to have to stop and think for just a second of... one of the candidates was a—it doesn't matter what his name is—one of the candidates was a person who asked the Center for the Moving Image if there was somebody who could work with him to do a television spot. He was running for the District 1 seat for the U.S. Congress, a seat that he did not win. He basically had no money—which is not untypical of those things—and he expected the miracle worker to step in and create something that was as good as would be done by any Hollywood or New York house, with a penny on a hundred dollars being the budget. We turned out, and I was asked... Tom suggested that I would be a person who could make something like that happen. And, indeed, we shot him in a couple settings, and he liked it. He thought he looked good on the screen, he was quite excited and immediately went on television, and then he didn't win the election. He had no budget to run an election, not to speak of having a television spot. He only could play it a few times because he didn't have a lot of money. And immediately, you know... he hadn't paid us. I'm working a variety of odd jobs including working for a magician—I mean, I'm not making a lot of money! To have him stiff me for the money he owed me just struck me as being completely egregious. So, at a certain point in time, having billed him two or three times, he said, well, I didn't win the election, so why in the world would you expect me to pay this? I remember taking him literally to small claims court. So here was a man who, again, was a distinguished Portland State professor, against a guy who was basically a young 25, 26-year-old at this point possibly, a recent student. It was a fascinating thing. He was there with one of his officious underlings, who was a political... somebody getting his grooming. We went to small claims court, and at a certain point in time, having a brief hearing, the judge said, You've got to pay that young man as quickly as possible or your name will go down in history! And boom, he didn't want to do it, but he did indeed. He realized he literally was now up against it.

There was no real money moving around in this. There weren't a lot of opportunities. I didn't immediately look for work at a television station, which some people did. There wasn't a

company who was immediately... we didn't have a Spielberg or anybody else really doing things. It was just a lot of independent people.

Another thing that happened in that early period of time is that as we were doing that, we did all of our film lab work at an institution called Teknifilm. Teknifilm had been created by Tektronix to do film work; Tektronix was a company that was doing a variety of computer-related oscilloscopes and hardware related to the world of machine design and computers, etc. So they were a pretty big employer at this point. They created this film entity Teknifilm. At a certain point in time—and it had to do with the completion of that film—we were in and out. The sound mixes took place at Teknifilm for the *Living Together* film; we learned how to do that. They had a complete service and you ended up with a brand-new, clean print. Then they stored your originals, your masters, negatives, and everything were there at Teknifilm.

So when we decided that we wanted to keep going with film, and my friend William D[...] and I, Buzz D [...], decided to make a film that was an extension of *Living Together*, that's what became the film *Blackjack's Family*. Blackjack's family in *Living Together* is a six-and-a-half-minute episode, something like that, and in *Blackjack's Family* then it becomes an hour film. *Blackjack's Family* was possible for a variety of reasons. We did continue to use some equipment that was at Center for the Moving Image; I received, or negotiated with my father to use, a camera that he was inactive with that was a Bolex 16-millimeter camera. We bought some equipment to make it a sound camera, some [...] and other things, and in addition, we continued to use some of the facilities for editing. They had Super-8 as well as 16mm editing, but slowly but surely ended up with equipment to be able to do that separate. So this was a period of time.

Tom, again, shot two or three scenes in that film. It wasn't really as much a CMI project as it was still an extension of this documentary focus. My friends Eduardo Brau Landsner was a guy who had been in the Peace Corps with me, we befriended each other in Camp [...] in Puerto Rico because both of us were pretty fluent with Spanish. His mother was Panamanian; he'd spent many years of his life... his father was an American working in a—I think he had a soft drink distributorship or something like that in Panama. But he'd grown up bilingual, with maybe even Spanish as his first language. So in the course of our training, I was capable of speaking Spanish well enough, not 100% fluent, not great grammar, but I had already lived in Peru as a college student and so I was more facile than other people. We got to know each other because we were taking these advanced levels of Spanish instruction in our Peace Corps training. I had visited him in Panama as part of a project in the Peace Corps. So now we were doing a film. And he had lived now with this woman who he had no children with, but he was raising—helping to raise her four children, two from a first and two from a second marriage. That was a different kind of a family, somebody that never planned to, at that point in time—I believe at one point

they finally did get married, but there was no—they were not trying to add... they had thought about having another child but there were plenty of kids already.

Eduardo had come back from the Peace Corps before the time he was up because he came back while he wasn't technically allowed to come back to the 1968 convention activities in Chicago. These are known as the "Days of Rage"; he had been a member of the Students for a Democratic Society back in Cornell; he basically was very politically connected and focused, and for whatever reason that didn't stop him from going into the Peace Corps. I had been outspoken already about vigils against Vietnam, etc.; that came with the territory in that time. So here he is, he leaves the Peace Corps—I believe he just didn't go back, I think he just simply sent a letter saying that "I'm through with that experience"—he'd had a good time, but he'd already lived in Panama, so he'd gone back to a town he was familiar with. He just felt that what was happening in the United States was more interesting than what he was going to experience there.

That was exciting, to make a film that actually had more content around a more finite number of people: mother, father, four children, each of whom at an age range could enunciate their stories. I was really intrigued with trying to capture the political context in which they were operating. They were both continuing to be active politically. The community they were part of in Seattle—they lived on Capitol Hill—and how they were all raising their children, and how the children, obviously, of two different fathers, with a separate father raising them, how different those children were going to turn out to be and how different they were already. They ranged in age from a babe in arms to... Jamie was probably fourteen. So that's the age range.

That film really did, because I had an entry point already, I had visited them before this film ever came up. The first time I visited Ed and his wife Pat, they were unmarried at the time that I visited them. I came from Moses Lake, Washington, where I was during the summer before I came back to finish my senior year of college. We were pretty good friends, and so I was happy to know that he was living in Seattle. I knew that he had communicated with me that last time I was in the Peace Corps. I came from Moses Lake to Seattle—I believe I just took a Greyhound bus to Seattle and then took a municipal bus out to Renton, which is at the south end of Seattle—and I showed up and I told the kids when I walked in that I'd flown in on a kite from Eastern Washington. And they said, "What? Where is this kite? I want to see this kite." I said, "I sent it back." I said, "It'll come for me when I am ready to go back." Oh my God, where is this kite? We've got to see it. It's big enough to get you... So immediately there was certainly a story line developing with these kids, and they really really were interested in somebody that could do something that absurd.

I managed to carry that on—it came up in conversations on subsequent... *Where is the fucking kite?* You've never shown us this kite. I said, "It'll come around if you're... if our relationship develops well, then of course I'm going to have you go." "We can get a ride?" "Of course you can get a ride on the kite." So in any event, we had a joco-serious relationship from the beginning. I found them very lively, and I've always liked kids. When you're... at this point in time, 24 I guess? You're not a million miles away from that... the distance isn't great.

So that film, I think, really was a pretty interesting twist on what we had already been learning at CMI. It certainly came out of a CMI project. When the film was finished—I think we're talking 1973? 4? Right in there, it probably was '73. We entered it in the Northwest Film Festival and it was a grand prize winner for having been a... Because the film was easily followable. It showed here at the film center three years or so ago. It hasn't been seen a lot. And again, now we had two films to distribute. This film basically has some lively scenes in it, there's just a lot of interesting things, but one scene I remember specifically that was... you never know what's going to happen when you're out with a camera. And there weren't many people shooting. Lots and lots of people now can make their phone into a feature film, but at this point in time there just weren't many people out using a motion picture film. I remember in a scene shooting Pat up on Capitol Hill in a fountain area that's right in front of what was then the Seattle Art Museum. The Seattle Art Museum is now downtown, but it was, and that building is still an adjunct building for the art museum. So I was there, she was sitting right in front of the fountain, and I was there fifteen feet... and I shot most of that film. My friend Buzz did the sound work, and we basically scripted and edited it together.

But while I'm there, all of a sudden, we were having a conversation; she was talking about what it was like to create this family and what it was like to live in Seattle. Pat has great gesticulation and she was just lively, and all of a sudden she was just more and more lively; she just continued to try to stay on target because film was expensive—we hadn't made a big point of that, but still—she was there, and all of a sudden she goes... And I looked around, and here was a guy who has a large 64-ounce beer bottle, waving it around just this far from my head. And he's ready to club me over the head, just because I'm doing whatever I'm doing. And I go, "You've got the wrong guy! The guy you want to club is over there around the corner." "OK..." and he went off around the corner to find somebody to club. It was like, you kind of get into a zone, and one of the things that was neat about the way that it worked was that I wasn't the only person who did interview, but quite often I did the actual interview while filming, and sometimes—we didn't have a steadycam at that point, they existed but we didn't have that kind of budget—we were able to... I was able to have the person speak directly through the camera to me. So some of the scenes are better as a result of that. They aren't just simply

always looking at you whereas the camera's [over] there. It really is interesting how that effect would be.

So anyway, it was exciting to have the film festival respond to the film. I can't remember who the judge was that year, but he was somebody who recognized documentary as a legitimate form and found that the people had great vitality. Before that—and I'm trying to remember if the screening that we had... it might have literally been at the film festival, but a major screening of the film—I believe it was a premier prior to the film festival that took place at the Swan Auditorium at the art museum. It's been significantly reconfigured since that time, but it's in essentially the same place in that building. We were there for this premier, and the family came down from Seattle. So this was mother, father, these four kids, and then three or four friends that were in the film regularly. As they were there, the kids were young. Blackjack, as I said, was a babe in arms, he was no more than six months or eight months, he was not talking yet at the start of the film. The filming took place over 18 months to two years, so he was already wandering around and speaking and has opinions by the time he was two, two and a quarter years old. But Blackjack and his mentor, John, the next brother older than him—John named his own brother Jack—he'd said, "Well, why can't I have my opinion? I'd like to call this boy for myself." That's the kind of family it was. They were clearly cultural anarchists, I would say. They saw themselves in that... that was a definition that was being thrown out. So as a result, these children were running back and forth across the stage, and people in the audience were getting really upset! "Why can't these people control their children? I don't want to have those children." And the next thing you know, I introduced the film and told the children that they needed to behave, and the next thing you see is that same pair of boys that were just causing mayhem, in front of an audience, on the silver screen. It was kinda neat, because for them, it seemed as natural for them almost as me flying in with a kite. They didn't say "This guy is completely crazy"; they just said, "Now he's bringing a camera around." It was a very familiar kind of thing.

Another film that happened in that time, and again, there was a linkage to Tom Taylor, not exactly to CMI at that point. At this point I have my own camera, I have the sound capability with that camera, owned a [...] tape recorder, not the fanciest but was an effective tape recorder, and we went over to stay at his cabin on the Oregon coast. Tom built, with his children, a cabin in Cannon Beach. Quite often, the social events that happened at Tom's stage took place at his cabin. At a certain point in time, I borrowed his cabin to go off and spend a week of winter retreat; I just thought that would be cool and he was perfectly fine with that. I gave him fifty bucks or something, but it wasn't even... I'm not sure there was anything more than just learning how to turn all the switches off, it wasn't like a punitive price, it was just... he saw that as... Because I was still doing this kind of work.

So the film that we shot was entitled *Coronation*, and *Coronation* is a film I'd love to—I haven't seen it for a long time, it's one I would love to have out again onto a DVD platform. Basically, there was a couple that I knew from my connections at Lewis and Clark, Valerie had been one of my friend Lan's colleagues in this mime program at Lewis and Clark. Frans Reynders, who was a Dutchman who had studied with Marcel Marceau, who had studied with Jacques Lecoq who was a famous mime teacher there, and Valerie had gone over then to study after working at Lewis and Clark in the program. She had studied further with Jacques Lecoq—I know it's a crazy name, but that's the name of the guy—and anyway, she met this Australian fellow that was studying there and... Richard... marries, and they become Richard and Valerie Hays-Marshall. They had three children. Valerie has subsequently separated from this man; he's lived in Australia for decades and that isn't a relationship anymore, but during the period of time when they were together, we saw each other socially. I had known her from that year that I'd come back to college for my senior year, and again, I had gotten to know a lot of people in the world of theater.

So we go out to the Oregon coast, and they created a... essentially, the film is called *Coronation*, but it's a procession through the sand dunes right there very very near Cannon Beach. We made it a timeless film. It's shot in color, a sand-dune world in Oregon's proverbial gray makes it sort of like you don't know if this is happening in the... it feels very, very medieval. The mime troupe that had been studying with them basically was really... some very very talented people. Richard and Valerie had been professionally trained, they were taking the same extension of the Marcel Marceau, etc., school into a community here that had people that were excited about it. As a result, it's a maybe six- or seven-minute film; I don't remember the exact length. But it takes you through the appearance of this troupe of people. It's sort of... one might say it's a little bit Bergmanesque, a little Felliniesque in the sense that it isn't something that... you never understand exactly... it's kind of a clown king rather than... there's nothing about it that is... [pauses]. There's no punchline; it's just the observation of this procession and coronation out of the middle of *what?* I like its abstractness. It could be plenty of other people.

But at this point in time we were watching a lot of the people who were part of this film community, everybody who had seen pretty much every Bergman film had come through the various film programs, including here at Portland State. Everybody had seen... all the Fellini films came around, and there were lots of things that I was really interested in, not just doing documentary film. So this was a project where for a very pittance of money, we made that film for a total of \$800 dollars or \$1,500, and that included paying Tom a hundred bucks for the use of his place for the night, two nights; I think maybe we stayed two nights. He was quite amenable to having that kind of thing happen. It's not a great shakes of a film, but on the other

hand, it was definitely an extension and far more evolved than anything I had done as a beginning film student.

During this period of time, I ended up doing television spots for several more political candidates. I had been doing public opinion—one of the jobs I found I was able to get that fit into my desire to have control of my free time was doing public opinion survey work. I worked for a group called Dave Yeadon and Associates, and they had contracts with a number of clients that were almost all Democrats, but not exclusively. They were people who were on the progressive side of the political equation. And there were people who, in many cases, were actually winning their Congressional—the gentleman who didn't win his race and who I had to take to a small claims court to the side!—because I had done that, and people knew I could do this, and because I was doing this other public opinion work. We did public opinion surveys for, among other people, Senator Wayne Morse, Senator [sic] Barbara Roberts who became the governor... Bob Duncan, who was a congressman, who was a candidate that I had less desire to represent. He was a liberal Democrat, but he was also caught up with being an advocate for the Vietnam War, which I completely wasn't. These were difficult... The war was basically wrapped by that time, but here was somebody who... And that's what you have to sort out. How do you make sense of these kinds of things? And of course I'm doing things for Barbara. I did two spots where I used a crew, basically I directed the film and I had a professional quality crew of two people that I'd gotten to know through an extended period of time here. The third of the three spots I did for her, I wanted to have a woman crew. I thought that if we were doing a spot for a woman who is running for political office, why not give people an opportunity to be paid for doing television work? In that case, they used my camera, and Brooke [Jacobson] was one of the people that was part of that crew. That just seemed to me like that was fair enough to do.

Those were pretty fun projects, because again, a little... a 25-second or one-minute television spot is just a little film. You have to make a convincing case. I got involved with another project that was quite exciting that came out of this world of my political connections that were happening with the survey work. One of the projects we also did was the initial survey to decide if there was an actual business market for *Willamette Week*. I actually was here before *Willamette Week* existed, which is a fun thing.

HP: Let me switch the tape real quick.

DM: Sure. OK.

So anyway, one of the films that came along during this same period of time was an extension of working in the world of Yeadon and Associates. One of the people that worked with Dave

Yeadon was a gentleman Roger Bachman who had an advertising agency. For the Duncan spots and the Barbara Roberts spots I worked for Ted Halleck, who was also an advertising agency, and he was also a state senator, so he was a state senator. So I was working in the world of liberal democratic politics, primarily.

The connection that happened for the next project was through some of the things that happened during that same period of time. One of the things that was happening here is that Portland during that while—I'm just going to step back a little bit, back to the Tom Taylor thing—one of the things that happened fairly soon after arriving in Portland—I'm here from the fall of 1970, graduating in 1971, and immediately I was living in the Lair Hill/Ross Island Bridge area—then I moved to live in Northwest Portland in a building right on NW Everett and 22nd Place, an apartment building. My friend Lan and I were there at that point and I was continuing to do these projects. I was working... I can't remember exactly how the timing works out... when the magician thing happened, for the better part of three months—and I could go into great detail about that, but no film came out of that—it was a chance to try something that was pretty free. That required control of your time. You can't get a job with an itinerant magician unless you have some control over your time!

Another job we tried to get during that period of time, just to talk about this, to step back a hair, is that we were trying to find work. I remember trying to go to a job interview at a place that was hiring somebody to do drivers' instruction. I had driven a variety of vehicles in Moses Lake, Washington summer jobs; I drove a [...] for the Forest Service two years when I fought forest fires, and I had been driving since I was sixteen. So I took the test, went to the place that was offering the job, and I passed the test making no mistakes. It wasn't a hard test; it was simple kind of stuff that you have to teach that will get somebody through it. And the guy said, "Well, thank you for coming in," and I said, "Hold it a second. I didn't make a mistake on this test." He said, "Yeah, but you'll never stick." I said, "Hold it a second. I need a job, I didn't come in here just to take a test. If I get everything right I probably know the area," I said. "I'm going to be an excellent... I like people, I work well with them." "But you won't stick." I said, "But you don't have to *train* me. I can work right away and there'd be no problem." Well, that's a fine kettle of fish.

So another job came up. We were looking at want ads; there was no internet out there to find jobs out of; the *Oregonian* and other nickel ad type things were out there, and that's what you'd look for, and then you'd hear about jobs from people sometimes too. The next job that came up was working for people that were doing something a little bit like Club Med. It wasn't Club Med, but it was somebody's B-league version of Club Med. My friend Lan and I go in to do the interviews, and the people said, "What are your hobbies? What do you like to do?" I

described a variety of things that I did, I liked to hike, certain experience fishing, that I did this film work, etc. And Lan had her theater experience. A very attractive Chinese American woman, lively people, and people that were not hard to... So he looked at her, because we were both being interviewed to do this together, the possibility was that we would go to a place—I think that their operation was in Baja California, maybe it was on the land side opposite Baja California, someplace in northern Mexico on the coast—and so I remember him looking at her and he says, “What do you know about taxidermy?” [laughing] And I said, We’re outta here... you’re not gonna do taxidermy. That’s the kind of thing. Those are the reasons that finding this kind of work, and part-time work and piecing it together, was sort of what it took to make it doing this film-related stuff.

Out of the survey work and all these political connections, and doing television spots, etc.—and I did surveys for a couple dozen campaigns, statewide campaigns for governor, for U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, a couple local elections—and then a variety of people wanted information having to do with commercial purposes like at *Willamette Week*. One of the clients that I got a job doing was for a guy who was running as a Republican for a seat that was open in Washington state, and this gentleman was a county commissioner in Clark County. He basically was running for a seat that was all the way into Yakima; it might have gone over as far as the Tri-Cities and Yakima. I was given the job of actually running the entire survey, so I’d actually created a questionnaire, traveled out—I had a couple of people interviewing for me, etc.

In the course of that project—and this guy was in Clark County—the people there, the Republican party here had some very conservative Republicans, but primarily this was before we are dealing with the Tea Party kind of mindset. We had as our previous governor and U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield; we had Tom McCall as governor during the time that this was happening, so there are people who are—often times they’re called “Rockefeller Republicans”—they basically were getting their money from business interests, but they weren’t necessarily draconian in their approach to the way that politics would work. It was an interesting thing.

Out of that, I ended up getting hired to make a short film about Clark County government. That’s called *A Quiet Renaissance: Clark County Faces Change*. A half-hour film, contract with the county, and there’s some nice stuff in that film. Clark County was picking up on what was happening in Oregon—we were a laboratory for a lot of interesting stuff—we were doing really very sophisticated planning, a lot of this was happening under our then-mayor, now-disgraced Mayor Neil Goldschmidt. In this period of time he was one of the most progressive mayors in the country; he had been elected in his very early thirties, mid-thirties no later than 35, and all over the place he was making interesting things happen. He popped up all the time. He was one

of the most active politicians that I've experienced in my lifetime in Portland. Not totally dissimilar to the way that Sam Adams sort of pops up like a meadow mushroom here and there about things. He was really trying to make things happen. A lot of people had come to Portland to work, especially in the world of planning, and so some of the friends that I had made over the course of this period of time were working suddenly for elements of the Goldschmidt world. Planning about housing, about transportation, about neighborhoods, and all those kind of things, lots of developments happened during that time period that were very exciting.

They were watching this happen right across the river, and so Clark County was actually modeling for the state of Washington and some of the money that came was a pass-through from the state. They were a model of how a government could deal with rapid growth of population, of zoning and development, of anticipating growth as opposed to following growth, and any county governments that did that, of providing human services. To a significant degree, Clark County was a reflector of things happening in Oregon. Not exclusively, but to a large degree.

So that was a wonderful project, because essentially it was actually a project in which money could be made—not a dramatic amount, but I ended up the project with twelve or fifteen thousand dollars in my pocket—as opposed to just doing things because they were things that I was interested in. It was also a project where people could get paid for their work, and it actually was a film that people were really pleased with at the end of it. It showed them as a public entity, a county government, that was really on top of their game. It wasn't—I don't believe it misrepresented anything. It also gave me a chance to do historical research, work with old photos; there's a montage at the beginning of the film that is historic photos from the Clark County Library and from the historical society that actually is very exciting. It takes you into a quick... It was a neat thing to integrate the roots of that culture. Clark County was the first settled Washington county; Fort Vancouver—that became the name for the city—was there under the Hudson Bay Company. It really is the first long-standing political entity of our region. So their roots are really deep there, and making some visual reference to that was fun.

That was a nice project. It was fun to have that happen. I didn't immediately set myself up to try to do those kinds of things. I was really still far more interested in ideas that had to do with things that came out of my head rather than a client's. There were quite a few people that were doing work here where they were just looking for clients, and there's nothing wrong with that; it's perfectly important that everybody who wants their story told, whether it's a small or mid-sized corporation, some entity—the Rose Festival wants to tell the history of the Rose Festival—somebody has to make that movie. And there were several people doing work here that became part of trying to tell those kinds of stories.

In this early period of time, we also then are trying to create a community where film is woven into the integrity of things. So my saying that the film *Blackjack's Family* was a winner at the Northwest Film Festival, well, part of the thing that's going on there is that there was no Northwest Film Center until it was organized. And Brooke Jacobson and Bob Summers created that; both had been studying with more focus from Andries Deinum. As I believe I told you in another conversation, I literally had membership card number one, and they were not even in the core of the city at that point in time. The first place they had was a center up in the northwest hills—I can't remember the name of that, but Brooke will tell you—where the Northwest Film Center was first located. It'll come to me. It was a former school that was suddenly an art center up in the northwest hills.

It was exciting that we could suddenly have a program that was for the whole community. The PSU film committee—anybody in Portland could come to the programs, and I remember having, among the people that you would see there during a certain period of time—and again, we are bouncing back and forth a little bit in time—one of the people that was here relatively early in Portland, in this creative period that I'm referring to a lot, was Bill Walton of the Trailblazers. They won the national championship in 1977. He was here from '74, '75 on; he'd been a giant star at UCLA; he was the successor to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar at UCLA. He was part of this community of talented people here. I remember seeing him at the back of this room, hunched down, watching Bergman films, or Fassbinder films or what have you. That was a time when even being part of that sports world was woven into the fabric of this creative Portland.

Tom I remember having one of the earliest fundraisers that I'd heard about for Neil Goldschmidt. So Goldschmidt wasn't just simply somebody that popped up and won an election and you knew nothing about him. He was somebody that was here tapping into all this energy, and one who was really focused on planning as a critical component of the way that a culture worked was Andries Deinum. Brooke and the program we did in the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission on Deinum focused a lot—because that's something that she was aware of, more than I was at the time—he had planted pretty well the deep seed that resulted in this focus on planning as an intelligent way for a city to grow itself. I think that what happened in that period of time that Goldschmidt was mayor—he was mayor for two terms, if I'm not mistaken, so that would be eight years—the roots of that went right back to the CMI. I mean, is that peculiar or what? This notion that you needed to have a responsible citizenry, a citizenry that was involved, that had its opinions being heard. One of the earliest things that came out of the Goldschmidt period was creating an office of neighborhood associations. There had been some neighborhood associations in existence, but suddenly they were platted from pillar to post. Every neighborhood had an organization, some of which were being created. There was a

center for neighborhoods, and there was funding that was flowing from the city to make these... every neighborhood had an ability to represent itself even without... there were still the city council of five city councilpeople, but it was a thing that came, again, with this peculiarity.

The CMI was a little bit of a laboratory for that kind of activity. That's how I remember having Tom host a couple fundraisers for Goldschmidt, and also Mr Jordan... what was his first name? He became a city council... to my memory, he was our first African American city councilperson. He went on to be head of parks, I think, in Houston. There were lots of talented people here, and there was an attempt—Goldschmidt had gotten his grounding by working as a legal aid lawyer and by working in the world of the greater Albina community, so he had been plugged into the notion that African Americans hadn't been represented properly, that that was an important thing that could happen. Goldschmidt had been president a year before or two years before my own cousin had been president in the University of Oregon, in the student body, and I believe had also gone to law school in California, in the same Boalt law school that my cousin went to. They were coming out of the ferment of this period of time, and the ferment was happening with issues around feminism, Black power, minority power; Native Americans, Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans all were part of trying to have a better chance to represent their needs and ways of expressing themselves. Some of it was revolutionary; some of it was using sort of classic democratic politics, and peculiarly enough, in this particular state, even Republican politics was sometimes relatively progressive compared to what you'd expect. Anything we've seen in the last twenty years has been off the map disappointing compared to what was happening here. One of the Tom McCall initial appointees, the head—one of the major positions in his cabinet was a labor leader. That just hasn't happened for quite a while. So it was a period of a lot of excitement and ferment.

Out of those webs of connections, one of the people that I got to know that sort of suggested the next film was my friend Margie Lundell. Margie was working for the Goldschmidt appointee Ernie Bonner of the planning department, and Margie was his executive assistant or one of his executive assistants. She suggested that we should think about doing or I should think about working with her then-boyfriend—or ex-boyfriend, I can't remember exactly what their relationship was—Everett Thorne, who was a member of a large extended family. That's who I got involved with in discussing and exploring the Thorne family film. Everett was raising a family, Everett was an insurance agent, he had lots of stuff to do, so we were co-directors, but at a certain point in time we weren't. I was the director, he was an assistant director, in a sense. But there was an immediate connection to this extended family. He had been interested... initially, he suggested that we do a film—because he thought it would be fun, we'd gotten to know each other socially—because she had grown up in the world of Pendleton, the Thorne

family film starts a bit centered in Pendleton. My friend Lan had grown up in Pendleton and she knew Margie.

So there were a bunch of people that I know here—and Portland has been not just a place that people have come from Vermont and Chicago and Minnesota and you name it around the country—there's always been a feeding phenomenon that happens: sometimes it's the college setting, sometimes just for job opportunities, for people from the outback of these regional states. Good friends of mine have moved in from Butte Montana. Chuck Palahniuk came from central Idaho. Lots and lots of the talented people that are the hub of the creative culture here have come from places for whom—this is one of the two cities, three cities that you could choose. I think that's been one of the reasons that this has been an interesting place; it's that we aren't as disconnected as some people have thought from our outback.

As a result, I had grown up in Lakeview, Oregon; as a child, as I believe I've stated, for ten years, kindergarten through the ninth grade. Lakeview was a town of around 3,000 people when I was there. It was its own little universe, and having lived there for those ten years, I grew up really, really in contact with, and spent much of my time in the natural world. We lived right on the edge of town in the longest-term residence that we had. At any point, anybody that was young and energetic and not otherwise caught up with things could often go fishing, could go with friends—before we had vehicles or anything—out to kill ducks or fish nearby or hike in the woods or whatever. I was very attracted to that life. I was enjoying living in Portland a lot, but it was quite possible to leave from here and be hiking in the gorge in forty minutes; to go off to Pendleton three hours away; it was easy. My girlfriend, with her parents there, I went off with her quite a few times to see that world. If I'd ever wanted to make a film—like most everybody thinks they should make a film—about Skid Row, and I go, I'm not interested. I just don't think those people need to have another camera thrown into their faces unless there's a great story involved with it. I said, I don't have that story, and I don't see any reason to be involved with that. But I said, I've heard about your family; and that does interest me—a large extended Eastern Oregon family that is spreading now to further pastures—that strikes me as being potentially an interesting film.

So we talked about it a little further. Again, now, I had several connections into the world of Pendleton, so that film started right on the heels of *Blackjack's Family*. The fact that we received awards—*Blackjack's Family* was a finalist in the New York Film Festival—we'd learned how to do something where an audience was engaged with watching this. The audience that came to several of the screenings of both of these films that were longer films, even the little *Living Together* film, taking it on and essentially four-walling it, taking it to show at various clubs in various community settings, etc., was really quite exciting, and people responded. It wasn't

necessarily that we were getting massive audiences, and there wasn't... public broadcasting at this point did not have a documentary focus, so there wasn't a television audience just casually waiting there. To show films, you kind of had to take them out to people. Occasionally they were being shipped too, and we had some colleges that were actually booking the films. There were other organizations that got the films' interest. Margaret Mead was a handle for doing this.

So this notion of making a film that was a real exploration of a deep family, a family of multi-generations, that was grounded in a place but inevitably, given the late 20th-century, they were starting to show up in other places—we explored that, and I was encouraged to try to get a grant from the Oregon Council for the Humanities to help fund that. We had had some private monies that helped with the funding of *Blackjack's Family*; we invested our time, basically. It was not a project that was driven by an immediately-make-back-the-money market. That's what I began understanding: that you not only had to make the films, but you had to figure out then out to get them out to an audience. That was just the way it was.

I had conversations with the director of the Oregon Council for the Humanities; we had this film about a radical, anarchist, leftist family in Seattle—why would the people in the Oregon Council for the Humanities want to have anything to do with people who were making films about... This other film with Margaret Mead in it was a... But the film had won awards. And winning awards and actually being out with something that people were responding to was an important step. Finally, Chuck Atley—if I have his name correct—was the director of the Oregon Council for the Humanities, but it was centered at the Oregon Historical Society, and essentially—although there was a committee that made decisions—essentially it was an extension, at that point in time, of the Oregon Historical Society. Finally I was told: if you really want to get money to do this film, you need to go talk to Tom Vaughn. He's the director, he's somebody that you could [talk to]. So here I am again—now I'm 27, 28 years old—still pretty young, and still coming off as young at that point. I was ushered into Tom's office. It was in the basement of the Oregon Historical Society. Right outside his window was a courtyard with a little... it was like a fake Japanese garden or something like that. He was clearly running the show from this basement place.

I knew that to do that, I would want to do more historical research. I wanted to place this family in the context of Pendleton and the development of eastern Oregon. I had gone to the Pendleton Roundup several times, so I knew that needed to be in; Native American stuff needed to be addressed in it. I knew that there was this wonderful footage at Oregon Historical Society, so that was going to be part of the film. I wanted to do a lot of research, and I wanted

others to work with me doing research, at the OHS. It wasn't just out of the blue that we were making a film; it was actually linked to that.

It turned out that also, in the family, there was a political figure, Mike Thorne, who was at that time a Democratic state senator from Pendleton, from Umatilla County. And Mike Thorne basically was from the best-off branch of the family, the one that ended up with the original homestead of the 1880 settlement of the Thornes in northern Umatilla County, up on the wheat plateau that is a little bit to the west of the valley that is an extension of the Walla Walla Valley. They were in the Holdman area, and Holdman is a place that had been settled, and over the course of time, as mechanization continued to develop, etc., holdings got larger and larger. Less numbers of families got larger holdings. So the Mike Thorne branch—Glen Thorne was his dad—had a large piece of land.

Mike was also, like all people coursing through this period of time, was a product of the times, and he'd been deeply influenced by Bobby Kennedy. So here he was a liberal Democrat, or a semi-liberal Democrat, from a rural place in eastern Oregon. The Democrats, historically, in Oregon, had come out of that early notion of what the Democrats were—it almost comes as an extension of the Confederacy, the Dixiecrats and whatever. So Democrats were out... the East Oregonian newspaper, which was the voice of that community, was a Dixiecrat paper before there was such a thing. There were lots of people that settled throughout the eastern and southern branches of this state that actually came here from Missouri and from the South. The kids I'd grown up with down in Lakeview were often times—and I've learned to my own chagrin—they weren't people that were hungry to be called Arkies or Okies, that's, however, where many of them had come from: from those Southern states, northern Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, some from Mississippi. Mostly white people that had come up following the timber trade.

As a result, there was a lot of history in the film, and I thought that would be interesting. So I sat in Tom's office, and Tom had it set up so that he—who was, I think, exactly my height—he had it set up so that he was higher when he was having a conversation. He had pads or whatever and I was sitting in a seat... it was almost like I was sitting in a children's seat, and I'm going, Huh. This is how power really works. You've got to just lay it right out. And Tom basically listens to my thing, and my interest—I wasn't making up my interest in using the resources of the Oregon Historical Society; I said, I think this will be a significant film about a phenomenon that is not just set in Umatilla County, Oregon, but that actually reflects on the development of the West. Statewide, there are members of the family in Newport, there are several members in Portland; there are people as far away as Salt Lake City. I said, We'd like to include all these people. But first we need to get started. I think we just want to make a preview film that

captures a sense of what we are looking to do, and we need five or six thousand dollars for that. Not a lot.

Welllll, he said, we'll find some money for you, young man—and by God, just like that, instead of applications and writing grants or whatever, that's how it worked. That's how it does work, many times; you have to find somebody. With that piece of money, we were able to go out to shoot—there was a reunion of the family happening that was for the very extended Thorne family. Branches of the people who came out on the railroad—they came out in the second or third year the railroads reached the West—they got off the railroad at Walla Walla and took a wagon down and got settled on this rural land in the Holdman area, 18 miles slightly north-northwest of Umatilla. Families were large in that period of time—both my mother's and my father's families had been larger than our four-person family, and now people have two-people families—there's plenty of larger families still out there, but... I think we had 12 or 13 Thornes in the first round that the couple settled on the land with. And they went all over the place, but mostly they lived kind of nearby.

We managed to get this first bit of film shot; we shot the family reunion, if I'm not mistaken, which was a gathering that was attended by perhaps 120 or 130 direct relatives of the Thorne line. The Thornes had been in that community, and many of them had stayed there, or they didn't go very far—there were people in La Grande, etc. So we managed to capture just a flavor of the film. There's a great picture that's in the film, but also is a centering device for thinking about them. They actually had enough members of the family, and they happened to have height as one of the sort of requirements to be in the family—so there was a Thorne family basketball team that featured several people who had played on the varsity teams, not just at Pendleton High School, although primarily, but in a couple of neighboring... a person or two had played on the Pilot Rock team, which is a town just south.

Anyway, we captured enough of a flavor, and then took this little film, the short film—I don't remember how long it was, but it was perhaps 12 minutes, something like that, a preview film—to another meeting of the group that makes the formal decision on this thing for the Oregon Council for the Humanities. At that point, we got another 15 to \$18,000. But we're talking a very... there had been *way* more money available to make this half-hour film for the Clark County government. That was a project that, again, I turned it out in... just according to the schedule we determined, and it was a nice little finished film. Here was a film that initially I thought of, the initial version of the film, that finally emerges as an hour and 35 minutes; so it's a feature. I just didn't think we could tell the story of a six-member family, *Blackjack's Family*, in an hour; I didn't see any point in trying to tell the story of this larger-than-life clan—it's a clan—in that same amount of time. So that's what the initial film was when we did this.

It meant going off to Pendleton many, many times; going to neighboring communities—one of the Thorne family members lived in Walla Walla with his wife, a teacher; some others in the family had gone on to college education, but many of the members of the family, for a variety of reasons, had stayed. They'd gone briefly to college. These are very capable people that were not exactly... the family's strength wasn't that they were all following an intellectual course or something like that. They were very happy to be handymen repairing mill equipment in a lumber mill, working doing survey work, running a drive-in, blue-collar style jobs. But very articulate people; people that came out of our public school system here, even if they aren't—and many of the members of the family, of course, did go to college, and that's continued to evolve over time. Essentially, although the grandparents weren't alive, many of the second generation were still around. At that gathering that happened in the hills above Pilot Rock, the Thorne reunion, many of the members that were there were the husband and wife, one of whom was a member of the second generation of the Thorne family. So we were still looking at that. And then some of the people in the third generation were already in their fifties and sixties, because their parents had been some of the older members of the family.

It was fun to actually go around and capture this flavor. One of the people that I captured had been a "buckaroo," and he was living in a downtown nursing home in Baker City. It wasn't a nursing home; I'll take that back. He had ended up at a nursing home, but before he was at the nursing home, he was living in just a downtown transients' hotel. He had been riding—this was a man who was in his last years of his 80s—but he was only one dream and two leaps away from riding a horse as a buckaroo. He saw himself as a buckaroo. A buckaroo is not necessarily a rodeo cowboy, although there had been several members of the family that had done some rodeo riding. It's just somebody who makes his living on the back of a horse, herding cattle, potentially herding sheep, that kind of thing. So it was a chance to look at the real West, to look at a throughline through several generations; I think that the family at that point spanned into the fifth generation, so it had that much range, from the 1880s to... the first showing of the film that we had was 1975.

That was a period of time, the year before the bicentennial, when history was on the rise as something that people were interested in. In the course of things, I developed a pretty good team. Tom Taylor came to shoot for me three or four times. There were some times when I felt that I could do—he came out to the family reunion, with 120 or 130 Thornes gathered—in that case, we had two cameras; so Tom was one of... and we had enough money to pay for the raw stock to do this. He also came out to shoot a scene that was—I remember him specifically being there; it was fun to work with him collegially. I had done that already before, but it was more of that. Clearly I was the person who was driving this film; at a certain point in time, Everett, who was a family member, and appears in the film—he didn't have the skills and he didn't have the

time freedom to go do this. I remember we shot a film sequence that's right by the freeway, which is I-84, the second exit, the one that goes right into the center of town. And one of the branches of the family had a dairy right there, and a dairy that had been put out of business by changes in the sanitation laws. This family story was that the change in the sanitation laws, from their point of view, was knocking out small family-owned businesses. That is one of the things that happens, doesn't it? There are reasons for sanitation laws, but they required more capital expenditure than any small family business could do, and boom, they were out of the business. It was right there by the freeway. I remember Tom being there and being a stable person that would end up with getting the right shot, and knowing how to—I was learning from him as I was watching him. But I was shooting most on that camera during that period of time.

This trick of being behind the camera as the interview was done really worked to become a great device for capturing really excellent scenes with people. To some degree, because the family included a lot of people who were themselves living... what I would have to call rural to meta-suburban lifestyles... there weren't many people that didn't... there was still this hunger for being on a piece of *land*. So three or four of the characters that were in the film were basically people who I thought carried through that linkage, even if they weren't able to make their living as a rancher. Ranching life was a really attractive one. The numbers of people that do that just keeps dropping, and that's just the way it goes. You can lament it or you can observe it, and I was more interested in doing the observation part.

When the film got done, we had a premiere at what was then a premier location here, the Movie House. The Movie House doesn't exist anymore, but it was a great location. We did a tremendous amount of publicity and worked really hard to try to capture and make it into a big event. We sold that place out before... there were no tickets available the day of the screening. Maybe it held 250-300 people, but it was enough to really make it seem like a gala thing. There was a gala event. Part of the flavor of that was to really honor our linkage here in the center of this city to the world of the outreaches. The actual premiere of the film happened at the Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, and we had a large audience there too, and a friend who was involved with some of the work in the film, who did some design elements, Daniel Hoyle, did a beautiful poster. My daughter still has it on her wall; it's an exceptional poster that captures it. It has a picture of this... "Thorne" written across the young men's jerseys on the team; it has pictures of all these... and the film shows the way that cultural roles were evolving even in very rural, very traditional settings with women. It talks about white and Native American relationships, and just observes them. There was one member of the family who was married to a woman who was at least half Native American, but that wasn't something that she was acknowledging. So there's all kinds of things that are undercurrents in the film. It shows a little bit of the Pendleton Roundup and the world of the Native presence in

that. It's really about this family. One of the things that was part of our agreement, then, for getting the second grant, was that the film would then tour around the state. So I took it to screenings that happened in 20 locations, perhaps, from Klamath Falls and farther east; I took it back to my childhood home in Lakeview; I took it to Paisley; I made incredible arrangements to show it in Paisley, and I got there and it was like nobody had ever shown a film in Paisley for fifty years! They weren't even ready. They couldn't believe that anybody was there. So that was only one that didn't happen. You couldn't make enough arrangements. I literally would have had to have been living there for a while to show it. But I ended up taking it, four-walling it in a way that lots of filmmakers had done historically in our place. It was a real exciting project.

At the same time, it was a world that was so traditional, to a significant degree, that it was at odds with the world I was living in in Portland. There was something about the film that was both thrilling to bring to completion—it felt like a really good product, and I'm very proud of it—and at the same time it was a world that was basically still living on the fumes of this land ownership from the past. There were issues that hadn't been sorted out between the Umatilla Indian people, whose reservation had been slowly but surely reduced; one of the family members lived on a former element of the reservation at a larger state. Nobody was doing anything that was completely horrible, but this was a period of time where we were all still processing what in the world had gone on with the Vietnam War. So I was essentially exhausted by the end of that film at the same time.

Then a little film that never really became a film, but I just shot it during this period of time—this was one of those things where having money always helps, and if you don't, you learn what you should have known before—Lan and I went in the year 1973, I believe? It could have been '72. I think maybe it's more like 1972. We went back to the town of Todos Santos Cuchumatán, which is in the hills of Guatemala. I had visited Todos Santos, as it's known, before, and had seen this incredible horse race that took place as part of Todos Santos' all-saints, the Halloween weekend. It's an event that took place there while I had gone there while I was in the Peace Corps; I met a poet who was there; many people came to see this, because it was one of those cultural things that happened. It was something that only happened in that town specifically. It was an amazing race that wasn't a race at all; it was riding from this point in the town down a cobblestone street on the back of a horse, wearing an amazingly lavish costume. The costumes in general are lavish; all kinds of ribbons and stuff were there, and the people who rode got incredibly drunk and rode. Part of what you were watching was something that was essentially medieval. At a certain point in time, between the time that I saw that—I ended up seeing it twice there—and the time that I went back with my Super 8 film to go shoot this, this was while I'm still doing CMI stuff and still taking classes. I basically had seen something that was just unbelievable, and I didn't know that anybody had... the word was out, but only two or three of

my Peace Corps friends had made it there. It was a pretty big trek to get into Todos Santos, and one... I can't remember how. A bus went in there, but there was only a single one a day. It was a big deal to get there, and in the Peace Corps we didn't have our own vehicles or whatever. So we were moving around in that period of time, doing interesting things.

I went back with Lan; I wanted to show her the Guatemala that had been a really exciting place for me, and I wanted to visit the women that I had lived with. I was a resident in a room that was part of complex owned by a woman who had her aunt and her aunt's daughter and a Native American/Native Guatemalan maid living in the building, because she didn't live there, she owned it. She was the daughter of a relatively wealthy man in the town of [...], so I wanted to check in on them. We'd had a really good relationship in the time I was there. I lived in their home for just a little bit over two and a quarter years, so we were friends.

We shot this incredible footage, except that between the time that I had seen this event in the past and my arrival two years later, the priest in the town, a [...] priest with the best of intentions in the world, no doubt, had moved—he just said, This is too savage—because one of the things that happened is, drunken men riding horses down a cobblestone street... sometimes they fall off and get hurt, and that's kind of it. It's a risky, daring thing; it's like the running of the bulls at Pamplona. You don't take the horns off the bulls before you run the bulls, you just do it. It isn't a blood sport; you aren't there just to see it... visually, it's exciting as all getout. He moved it, instead, to the edge of town, on a piece of trail that left town heading to a neighboring village. It was just a dirt path. Thus, they weren't running on cobblestones; they weren't crowded between urban buildings, and it wasn't the same thing. However, it was still visually very rich; however, it was all done in the middle of a giant dust cloud; however... one thing after another. It was a crazy thing to come back to. I had to literally all but smuggle the film footage—I mean, I didn't, but I had an amazing incident at the border where they wanted to charge me massive amounts of duty, and I didn't feel like paying it, nor did I really have the money to do that. I basically walked and talked my way through that encounter with the people at the [...]. It was an adventure. But then I got back, and I had this great footage, even if it had a lot of dust in it, footage of the people riding. And I had brought enough rolls so that I shot it from every imaginable angle. There was no sound; this was done when I was still in and out, so I'm shooting... I'm borrowing a—I don't believe I bought a Super 8, I think I was using a CMI camera for that. When I got it back, I didn't have money to make a master set, and slowly but surely, editing it and showing it a few times, the footage just sort of disintegrated. It was crazy. It was one of those things where I learned that shooting—even though it looked really good and it projected well, showing it on a bigger screen, that Super 8 stuff—Super 8 is basically a wider version of 8. By the time you throw it up into a large projection format, it isn't as good as it needs to be. So that was a painful thing: to have great stuff and know that the visuals were

really good; to have it not be as exciting when I shot it, but also to realize that just having footage is not enough. You have to actually have a budget. Raising money for films was something that was a challenge. There wasn't a public television setting for showing stuff. What I began to understand was that to do the stuff that I was really interested in, it wasn't possible to easily make the money back. Winning a prize and doing films that audiences responded to wasn't enough. During this period of time, one of the things that happened is that there were a variety of things that evolved with the Film Center, and at a certain point in time, people who were doing films—and again, constantly our paths were crossing in various social settings, one of which was Tom Taylor's place. Tom was a model for a lot of us. I was somebody that was very comfortable with having people gather. I liked to cook; my girlfriend and girlfriends in this period of time basically were social in that same way. There were a lot of gatherings, and filmmakers were gathering not only just with each other, but were gathering with people who were fine artists; people who were... if you wanted somebody to do a poster, you got to know that person, and if you wanted somebody to actually do some set design. So the world of the arts swam around each other. Filmmakers weren't a little isolate. I've found in other places they tend to be more of an isolate. Or maybe even some people don't know other people... but here, people around the state would have to come and get their film processed. Very few people didn't process their film at Teknifilm. I wanted to say something else about that that was really important, but...

In the very early stages of doing this work, right at the time that we did the film *Blackjack's Family*—*Blackjack's Family* flows right out of that CMI project *Living Together*—I went in and said, We're going to do this film *Blackjack's Family*, but we're going to have the money coming to us in pieces, and we would like to have credit to be able to do our lab work and whatever. You should set a limit on it, anything you need to do. No problem! Here I am, 26 years old or something like that—my partner in this process is younger—and we immediately have working credit at a professional lab. That's incredible. So there was also a lot of investment being done, and they had to do that to some degree, because essentially lots of projects are reimbursed after the fact. Even commercial projects where you're doing a film for Jantzen swimwear or something like that, it was being done a little bit on the come, as it were. I thought, what a terrific thing, that you could actually—without any... I didn't own a residence of any consequence; my vehicles were always used vehicles; there was nothing there. They were basically investing in the notion that this person would keep turning out work and and renting. And they needed it. Portland was a film community where there was more and more activity happening, but essentially for them to run a lab, they needed to have somebody there dropping off film every day. They needed to have the sound mixes being done in their facilities. Then they needed to turn out prints. So it wasn't an unintelligent thing for them to do that, but it was kind of a measure of a film community emerging.

At a certain point in time, the Film Center—which had this film festival—essentially, it wasn't really set up to do what I had already taken on with my trips around the state to show the Thorne family film, and a certain amount of the same thing had happened with the predecessor films. A bunch of saying, there's nothing wrong; we like having this film series here, but it isn't actually able to take care of the needs of filmmakers. We need to be able to get our films out; we need to basically have a way that we can maybe get things in common, including possibly health insurance... so there were various reasons why it seemed...

So on the heels of this—and Brooke [Jacobson] can tell you whatever story she chooses to about this time—there was a little bit of turmoil. She wasn't working for the Film Center anymore. So we created a professional organization, essentially. That was the Northwest Media Project. And the Northwest Media Project continued to be the world... I kept going to just as many films at the Film Center; there was no rupture there; it was just that we needed to have something that really brought this activity to pass. During this period of time, shortly after creating this phenomenon, Brooke decided to go down and study film at USC to get her doctoral degree, as she should have. We ended up hiring a woman to be the director of the program who is somebody that I had gotten to know before she applied. There were several talented people that applied for the job. But Martha Gies, I wrote her phone number down, and Martha, although she was not involved—at this point, I don't remember the exact timing on it—but the Center for the Moving Image, which I am now much less involved with, is still going on, and I taught some classes there; I taught some basic classes there. The Northwest Media Project, among the people who are on the board of directors of the Northwest Media Project, are Tom Taylor; I'm on it, Jim Blashfield's on it, Will Vinton, who is doing a lot of exciting stuff, Tom Chamberlin. I know that there were... I'm trying to think of... I don't think Carol was on the initial board. There were a couple of women, but women weren't as active yet in doing films. Part of it was not that it was like an exclusive club, but this whole thing of raising money and having that idea happen was a challenge.

The community that was here, that was emergent during this period of time, to some degree, spanned a big spectrum. So you got involved with other people's projects. Occasionally I would end up doing the sound for somebody. Harry Dawson and I—and I bought them specifically in the time... one of the first ones I bought to be able to do *Blackjack's Family*—I extended the equipment that I owned to have lights, to be able to light inside scenes, to shoot parts of the Thorne family film. There was some money available to buy things like that for the *Quiet Renaissance* film. So at a certain point in time I had a bunch of lights. Harry had lights that he had purchased, so we kind of pooled our lights together, and that became a pool that people could borrow. There was a sense of the community basically being there for each other, and

that you didn't have to necessarily have everything that you needed to make a film. You had to rent things, and there were things and cameras for rent, but as soon as you start renting an Arriflex every day, and renting a professional tape recorder, your budget just goes to hell. There were various people that would be gracious enough to lend stuff to somebody else, or you could borrow from somebody. Over time, there was a sense that the community would grow the more we shared.

It was really interesting to see the difference between what seemed to be happening here—not just in Portland, but in Oregon—one of the people that was on the initial board of directors in the first round of the Northwest Media Project was Ron Finney, who was a filmmaker in Eugene. I don't remember how he became a filmmaker; he was always a still photographer, and he continued to do that, but in reality his film was being processed up here. We created this organization, and pretty soon we had a catalog of films that become, essentially, the distribution catalog of the Northwest Media Project. We were meeting—and in a sense most of the films that had been done to that point, not exclusively but most, were documentaries. They were about the plights of Native Americans; Harry Dawson did two: he did a film *Little White Salmon* on the Columbia; he did another film with the Siletz people that was part of their retribalization process.

Tom Chamberlin, during that period of time, was doing a variety of things including a wonderful film on William Stafford, *The Oregon Message*, which is a poem that made into a nice film. In that film, the characters that are in it are two of the people that are the primary, initial figures of Storefront Theater—so bang, there's a linkage to that world. It just continued like that. There were lots of people doing projects that reflected the changing times of this place. Several of us got involved in and excited about the possibility, but nothing ever came of it, of doing a film on the early roots of film activity on "Film Row" here. Louis Clark Cook, who was in the basement at the Oregon Historical Society, with whom I did a tremendous amount of research, and we introduced a lot of the footage that was from early combines, both horse crews and early mechanized combines, harvesting wheat, early roundup stuff. Lou was sitting on all that stuff. And still around was a man who had been a predecessor of his, Jess Sill, who was famous for four-walling and had gotten Lou to be a person that took films around the region. They shot every year's Pendleton Roundup, and sometimes in the run-up to the next Roundup, they took it around and had a regular, over-and-over trodden path, I guess I would say, where they took films to be shown. They knew where they could do it. They did "baby" contests, where they would shoot babies in their mothers' arms, or wandering around or something like that, and then they would come back two weeks later and show the same footage that they'd assembled of these doofy babies; and people would vote to see who was the baby of the century or something in Newberg, Oregon.

So that's kind of primitive activity, but on the other hand, that is how this stuff started. If you look at early developments that happened in Hollywood, they aren't all that different. Portland was the more significant and the older market town of our region. Seattle booms in the Yukon and Klondike gold rushes, but the roots of settlement were longer here. Fort Vancouver is kind of the key to that. So the film thing... we became interested, and we'd staged a wonderful event during the same period of time, while the CMI was still here, down at a theater in Sheridan. They had an old-fashioned, an old formerly silent movie theater, and we showed and assembled a bunch of films from Louis Clark Cook's archive of stuff that was from the... with the notion that it was a fundraiser to do a film of his work. Eventually, OPB has recently done something with that footage, but those were ideas that were being explored.

Jim Blashfield was also somebody that was part of this period of time, and Jim was doing far more theatrical-focused films, very dada, and very eccentric, to the point that some people just could never understand a single thing that he did. I loved what he was doing, and we became very good friends in this period of time. Eventually, or not very long after the organization got going, the two of us became essentially the co-editors and producers of the Northwest Media Project newsletter. I learned a lot in that process, and Jim and I went on to do other collaborations in a variety of ways. One of them was that I basically shepherded stories through—and he did, too—but to a larger degree I was the person who wrote and edited stories. We both had really a strong visual sense. He's the person who did the final design and layout of the newsletter. I would find over and over again that suddenly things were just *gone* that I knew were the very heart of the story! I learned that that final design was the true measure of what's going to be out there.

Tom and the CMI, I think, reverberated—and Jim had worked at the place as a lab assistant; had gone from growing up here, living and working in the world of the Fillmore and making rock-and-roll posters for Bill Graham—when he came back here, he had already lived a rich life as a visual designer. So his visual thrust was slightly different, even as he came in. What was exciting about CMI, as we were there for a period of time, was CMI, these social gatherings, then this Media Project, they were all slowly but surely helping us to capture a sense of this place, and these very diverse visions of what was really happening.

Did that click? No problem. So we're at two. Do you want to just keep going, or are you... ?

HP: Well, let's find a tape real fast...

[recording ends; continues in Part 2]