

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Donald Stull

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Stull, Donald, 1937-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull,
Dates:	December 3, 2004 and January 25, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2004 and 2005
Physical Description:	9 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:23:57).
Abstract:	Architect and architecture chief executive Donald Stull (1937 - 2020) established Stull and Lee Associates, Inc. in Boston. Stull's architecture, urban design and planning have profoundly impacted the physical landscape of Boston and other urban areas. Stull was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 3, 2004 and January 25, 2005, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_246
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Architect Donald L. Stull, was born on May 16, 1937, in Springfield, Ohio. His family moved to Columbus, Ohio in 1949, where he graduated from East High School in 1955. He attended Ohio State University, earning a B.S. degree in architecture in 1961. Two years later, he received a master's degree in architecture from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. For the next four years he developed his skills and knowledge with the Architects Collaborative in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Samuel Glaser Associates in Boston, as a designer and project manager.

Stull, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA), is the founding partner, owner, and president of the architectural firm, Stull and Lee Associates, Inc. Founded in 1966 as Stull Associates, in Boston, Massachusetts, his architectural and urban design and planning firm has been recognized throughout New England and nationally and internationally. Stull's broad experience and contributions include the design of educational, health care and correctional facilities, highway infrastructure, transit stations and multi-family housing. Stull has also been a leader by bringing attention to the unique contributions of African American architects and urban designers across America with New DesigNation. The first New DesigNation Conference was held in Philadelphia in November 1996. Over 500 designers of color examined issues faced by African Americans in the design profession

In the mid-1960s, Stull established himself as a solo architect and planner for both public and private agencies to meet the needs of a "new Boston," as a case of urban renewal. In 1990, M. David Lee, a graduate of Harvard's Graduate School of Design, joined Stull, and the firm became Stull and Lee Associates, Inc. With co-partner Lee and a staff of forty design professionals – Stull and Lee grew from residential design to major building projects in Boston including the Roxbury Community College, the Harriet Tubman House, and the Ruggles Street Station of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).

Stull and Lee's most recent awards include the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) Award for Excellence in Architecture for the Boston Police Headquarters; the American Institute of Architects Honor Award for Architecture for the Ted Williams Tunnel (to Boston's Logan Airport); the BSA's Honor Award for Design of the Williams Tunnel; and the American Planning Association/Massachusetts Chapter Social Advocacy Award.

Stull is the father of three: Cydney, vice-president and treasurer of a Florida trucking business; Robert, a noted comic book illustrator; and Gia, an art school student.

Donald Stull was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 3, 2004.

Stull passed away on November 28, 2020.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Donald Stull was conducted by Robert Hayden on December 3, 2004 and January 25, 2005, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 9 Betacame SP videocassettes. Architect and architecture chief executive Donald Stull (1937 - 2020) established Stull and Lee Associates, Inc. in Boston. Stull's architecture, urban design and planning have profoundly impacted the physical landscape of Boston and other urban areas.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Stull, Donald, 1937-

Hayden, Robert (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Stull, Donald, 1937---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Architect

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, December 3, 2004 and January 25, 2005. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_001_001, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Donald Stull was born on May 16, 1937 in Springfield, Ohio to Ruth Callahan Branson and Robert Stull. His maternal grandparents, who were from West Virginia, owned a farm near Cincinnati and Chillicothe, where Stull spent his childhood summers. Stull's mother was born in southern Ohio and had ten siblings. A domestic, she always provided for her family and emphasized education, which neither she nor Stull's father received. After World War II, she opened a restaurant, Ruth's Place, in Springfield. Stull's father was born out of wedlock to an African American woman and raised by a white sharecropper from West Virginia who settled in Ohio. Stull's father made sand castings in a foundry, where Stull and his three siblings sometimes shared lunch with him. Stull's older sister, Virginia Stull, attended medical school in Galveston, Texas, and his older brother, Robert Stull, was a potter. His younger sister, Gladys Stull, was attacked while serving in the Peace Corps and later committed suicide in New York City.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_001_002, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Donald Stull grew up in Springfield, Ohio where he picked strawberries with his mother and raced on bicycles. His family regularly ate together, and everyone had their own chores. As a child, he sketched and made carvings that evoked African masks. His interest in architecture was sparked while working with his maternal uncle, a brick mason, on construction sites in Fostoria, Ohio. His uncle also encouraged his literary interests. At Fulton Elementary School, Stull disliked his authoritarian teachers and was held back for two years. In junior high school, Stull played football and basketball, and he was selected to paint the school's office doors and his principal's home windows for Christmas. At East High School in Columbus, Stull became interested in geometry, which later influenced his architectural philosophy. Stull recalls his success at The Ohio State University, his brother and jazz musician Johnny Lytle's collection of memorabilia in Springfield, and his sister, Gladys Stull's, death.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_001_003, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Donald Stull was valedictorian at East High School in Columbus as well as a gang member. He was arrested after he broke into his school. His maternal uncle, a law student at The Ohio State University (OSU), encouraged Stull's literary interests. In 1956, he entered OSU's architecture program where he collated architectural historian Perry Borchert's international slide collection and helped develop cues division, a method of architectural analysis. Stull attended Harvard Graduate School of Design in Cambridge, Massachusetts from 1961 to 1963, when many influential architects, like Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus School, were on faculty. After graduating, Stull worked for The Architects' Collaborative to design Boston's John F. Kennedy Federal Building. Stull also recalls the lack of African Americans in the field when he began his architectural career, The Ohio State University 1969 Alumni Award ceremony and Dean Josep Lluís Sert kindly escorting his mother at his graduation ceremony from Harvard.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_001_004, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Donald Stull worked with Walter Gropius at The Architects' Collaborative in Cambridge upon graduating from Harvard Graduate School of Design. With

Sam Glaser, Stull designed Castle Square Tenants rganization in Boston’s South nd. He worked on projects, such as redeveloping the Sears’ Crescent building, through the Development Corporation of America, which funded his first office. His firm, Stull Associates, Inc., initially did not have any employees of color. As he gained more recognition from the field’s majority-white firms, Stull grew disconnected from Boston’s African American community. Stull then hired and promoted M. David Lee, a black architect. His white senior associates balked at the promotion and gradually left his firm. During this time, Stull designed schools in New Haven and the South End, pioneered community planning principles and developed the infill housing system. He also describes how Reverend Dr. artin Luther ing, Jr.’s assassination led him to reevaluate his racial identity.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_001_005, TRT: 0:24:35 ?

Donald Stull, with The Architects’ Collaborative and Boston Redevelopment Authority, designed open-plan schools in Boston’s South End and in New Haven, Connecticut. When Governor Francis W. Sargent issued a moratorium on Boston’s highway development, Stull’s firm, Stull Associates, Inc., studied alternatives to a proposed Interstate 95 extension. With federal funds for highway expansion redirected to public transit, Stull and others on the project oversaw the relocation of Boston’s Orange Line to the Southwest Corridor. Stull’s participation on a Design Advisory Panel for the City of Baltimore acquainted him with fellow panelist Robert C. Embry Jr.’s concept of value capture, which identified uses for developing vacant land. Stull’s firm designed Roxbury Community College and the award-winning Ruggles Station. Stull describes how Southwest Corridor Park, designed by his partner M. David Lee, won over residents despite initial resistance, and the environmental and economic impacts of superhighway development.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_002_006, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Donald Stull attended Harvard Graduate School of Design when its dean, Josep Lluís Sert introduced urban design as a discipline. Stull’s interest in the discipline and his partner, M. David Lee’s, studies of urban design, influenced their plans for Roxbury Community College. The urban campus incorporated structures resembling the area’s historic mill architecture. In Roxbury, Stull also designed Ruggles Center, a transit station, and Boston Police Headquarters, which was relocated from the city center to facilitate community policing more effectively. Stull Associates, Inc. pioneered the use of prefabricated products in housing development, as well as infill housing. As a result, Stull’s firm garnered urban design opportunities nationwide. At the international design conference New DesigNation, Stull delivered his paper, ‘The Being in Blackness,’ to address cultural conceptions of beauty. Stull also talks about his son, HistoryMaker Robert Stull, a successful comic book artist.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_002_007, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Donald Stull joined Black Grove, Inc., an environmental organization founded by animal rights activist Julia Allen Field in Coconut Grove, Florida. Stull and Field co-authored ‘The Zoo Is Dead: Let Us Build a New Place for a Living City,’ to oppose the revitalization of Boston’s Franklin Park Zoo. When Stull returned from his travels in West Africa, he was approached by painter HistoryMaker Paul D. Goodnight about a collaborative project to represent the Middle Passage of the African slave trade. The pair developed designs for the Middle Passage Memorial, which they hoped to locate on Spectacle Island. Stull incorporated elements of Gestalt psychology, theatre and water in his designs. Stull explains how the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, France’s Ronchamp Chapel

and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum use design to facilitate emotional responses. He also describes the gallery at Stull and Lee, Inc. that displays his art collection and the firm's awards.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_002_008, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Donald Stull received many prestigious architecture and design awards throughout his career, including the Boston Society of Architects Honor Award for Design Excellence. Additionally, Kingman Brewster, Jr. invited Stull to serve as dean of Yale University's School of Architecture, a position which Stull turned down. His firm, Stull and Lee, Inc., received the Presidential Design Award for their development of Boston's Southwest Corridor Park. Stull describes his goals, which include writing poetry and traveling. He also reflects upon his life and legacy, and describes how he would like to be remembered. Stull concludes the tape by narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Stull, Section A2004_246_002_009, TRT: 0:30:32 ?

Donald Stull narrates his photographs. He also shares his scale model for the Middle Passage Memorial on Massachusetts' Spectacle Island.