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Simon's Rock Oral History Project

Interviewee: **Pete Baumann**

Interviewer: **Russell Miller, College Archivist**

Transcriber: **Russell Miller, College Archivist**

Date: **September 30, 2005**

Location: **Bard College at Simon's Rock, Great Barrington, MA**

Collection: **Simon's Rock College Archives**

Contact: **archives@simons-rock.edu**

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Pete Baumann

September 30, 2005

Alumni Library, Simon's Rock of Bard College (aka Bard College at Simon's Rock)

Keywords: Betty Hall, Elizabeth Blodgett Hall, Livy Hall, Livingston Hall, Carl Tobiason, construction, Jim Hart, James Hart, Library, ARC, dorms, Donald Oakes, Baird Whitlock, Eileen Handelman, Margaret Kendrick Blodgett, upper campus, Richard Drumm, Dick Drumm

“I was working in the paper mill after I got out of the service, had a little time off, and someone told me about this place being under construction called Simon's Rock, over here on Alford Road. [...] It felt so good to have a day job. So this was in 1966. I came here in April 1966 to work for them and Simon's Rock opened in the fall. We had Kendrick Dorm. That was the only dorm, that had to be finished. Then we had just this one classroom building, classrooms one, two, three, and four.”

“Once [Fisher] was being built, [Eileen Handelman] says to me, ‘I think, Pete, now we can say that we're here to stay.’ I never forgot that. That was like, ‘Now we've turned a corner.’

“Those of us on maintenance in the early years, we used to eat our lunch down in the basement, underneath the kitchen. By our own choice. We'd go down the spiral staircase and we'd sit there. We had a couple tables there, and we'd go down there, eat lunch and solve the world's problems, all in a half an hour. Jim Hart used to come down once in a while, and he'd sit, and even if he didn't have lunch with us, he wanted to join in on the conversation, and listen to this, and so would Livy Hall. Here's Livy, a law faculty member at Harvard College, and he took part in this, and I think he really liked it.”

“I said one day, when I retire, I'm going to get myself a lawn chair, and I'm going to come over here, and I'm going to find myself a spot in back of Blodgett, just sit there all by myself and look and say, ‘Son of a gun.’ Because I remember being out here with Carl Tobiason. He was the first head contractor. Carl says, ‘Well, Pete,’ – something like that – ‘I guess we can say we built a school.’ I said, ‘Gee whiz. Yeah Carl, I guess so. Here are the students.’ Very, very small it was, but there it was. A little teeny piece of a library and one little building there. And it's still here.’

“[Betty Hall] had gotten a golf cart once she couldn't drive her car anymore. She would still come on campus with her golf cart. The first person that she would see, that she wanted to take a ride with her, she nailed. So I think some, when they used to see the golf cart come in, I think

people used to scatter a little bit. And she nailed you. ‘Come here, you! Sit down in the golf cart.’ And you would take *le* grand tour of Simon’s Rock, whether you had anything else to do or not. It didn’t make any difference. You rode around, and that was pretty good.”