

Oral history of Elmer Beal, transcript

Elmer Beal

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This is the transcript of an interview between Elmer Beal, the narrator, and Joe Edes, the interviewer for the College of the Atlantic Oral History Project. The initial "J" will appear in front of Joe Edes' words, and the initial "E" will appear before Elmer Beal's words. Date of interview was October 26, 1982.

4. Elmer Beal grew up on Mt. Desert Island. He attended school at Bowdoin College receiving his undergraduate degree in music. He also has his master's degree in anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin. Elmer worked in the Peace Corps in Bolivia, taught inner city children in a secondary school, and was director of Maine Coast Heritage Trust before teaching at COA. He is active in the local music scene as a singer and guitarist.

5. About the earliest thing that I could find about your association with COA was the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Is there anything earlier?

6. When I first came back to Mt. Desert Island from graduate school, I came back to take a job as the first executive director of Maine Coast Heritage Trust which was an organization that was just being formed to buy and preserve coastal islands from subdivision and "beach development", and for the first three months I worked out of the National Park Service office because one of the members of the board of directors was at that time the chief ranger, and he provided space for us in his office space. But knowing that they would be much busier during the summer I began looking for office space, and I was aware of the fact because my father was on the board of trustees of the college, that the college which was not yet opened had leased this building and had plenty of space in it. So I got to Kariakou and asked him if I couldn't rent space, and he thought my income was a good idea at that time and there was plenty of space. So I moved into what is now the president's office. That room had no division or partition in it just one large empty room which was I guess once in a while a bedroom of this place, and when I understood in the first months that the Kariakous were here, they actually decided that room as a bedroom themselves. So in fact I occupied that room and the adjacent office which is now Albee Smith's office, and hired a secretary and put my desk in the middle of that huge office and ran Coast Heritage Trust from there. After I resigned from the trust over a year later, I came and worked part time at the college, that fall I guess the college was opening so I moved into the office which I had occupied, and the Coast Heritage Trust moved into the room which was now one of Martin's and Kariakou's offices, and the trust stayed there for about three years after that. Until space got so short that they had to find their own offices. During that time a number of students did projects for the Coast Heritage Trust.

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