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T H O M A S J . H A Y M A N
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Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Interviewer: William H. Wilson

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Approved: *Thomas J. Hayman*

(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Thomas J. Hayman

Interviewer: William H. Wilson

Date: December 4, 1989

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Dr. Wilson: My name is William Wilson, and I'm interviewing Mr. Thomas J. Hayman at his office in the White Swan Building in Dallas. I'm interviewing him on the subject on the background of Hamilton Park and his role in the development of Hamilton Park.

I wonder if you could begin by just saying when and where you were born and your account of the establishment of your activity in the construction business.

Mr. Hayman: Well, I'm a native Texan. I was born in Coldspring, Texas, in the Big Thicket on December 31, 1914. I was reared in Huntsville--around Huntsville. That's where I went to school.

After school, I studied business. This was in the Depression days, so since I was lucky to get to go in at all, I went to Sam Houston. That's where I met my wife-to-be--at Sam Houston. We married in 1937.

I was fortunate, after my schooling, to get a job

with Humble Oil and Refining Company, which was almost unheard of unless you were an engineer graduate of Rice, Texas, or A&M. I had some friends in Huntsville who had known some Humble people--a banker--that helped me greatly in obtaining a job. I was with them two years. There was a profit participation in Humble at the time, and at two years I was fully vested by then, and my drag-up check would be around eight hundred and something dollars. Instead of going from roughnecking back into the office for the business for which I was educated, I liked the field so well that I left Humble--resigned--and moved to Grapeland, Texas, where Humble had brought in a new field.

I went in the oil field construction business and supply business for supplying rigs. I went to Grapeland because my wife's family had been in Grapeland since 1848. They were established and had good credit, so they offered me their credit--no money, but their credit--to go into business. I entered the construction business there in the Grapeland Field. I had already built a home there when the war came along. How long do you want this to be?

Wilson: Just as long as you want it to be. While we have a little break here, could you tell me what year you graduated from Sam Houston.

Hayman: I left Sam Houston in 1937. I did not finish. I left school to go to Humble. My major was business. Frankly, I got married and I didn't have any way to make ends meet

without working, so I went to Humble in South Louisiana, out from Lafayette. I liked roughnecking. It was great, and they were wonderful people to work with. One interesting thing is that we were on an experiment--an experimental test hole, wildcat--below Lake Charles, down in the marsh. It was the deepest well at that time that had been drilled except on the West Coast--anyplace east of the Mississippi. That was 13,000 and some-odd feet. That's a shallow well these days, but then it was a record-breaker.

At any rate, I left the Humble company and went into business for myself in Grapeland, backed by Mr. Beazley--Herman Beazley--my father-in-law. In the war years...I had learned enough in construction...I went to Galveston, where the Corps of Engineers had its southwestern division headquarters located, to see if I might bid on some more work. They laughed at me. I was so small to come to bid a war job. (Chuckle) The smallest jobs they had were to build a camp--an internment camp--or to build an airfield. I was about a twenty-six-year-old boy then, so I wasn't ready for that kind of work.

But they found that I could estimate with pretty good skill. I had applied myself to what I was willing to do quite well. So they wanted me to come back to Huntsville, where they had determined to construct an internment camp for 3,000 German prisoners. They sent me up there to take

all the materials for that camp, and I did. I took off all of the needed lumber to build that camp for 3,000 prisoners. I did well enough there, I guess, so we built one at Hearne, Mexia.

Then about August of 1942, a hurricane hit the Victoria area, and the Air Corps had just about finished with a training field at Matagorda Island and one at Matagorda Peninsula, which were maybe five air miles between. The storm made such a damage that they pulled me out of the Hearne office to go to Matagorda Bay. I stayed in Victoria and traveled out of Victoria there--Port O'Connor--to help the Corps of Engineers settle the storm damage with Brown and Root and Tellepsen. Those were the two big contractors that were doing the job.

An engineer officer whose name was Waterhouse and who was a lieutenant colonel at the time was in charge of that project or that solution. We got along well enough with it, I presume. They told me that my job would not be back at Hearne; it would be closing out contracts for the military. So for any military contract between Brownsville, Texas, and New Orleans, before that contractor was paid his final payment, I had to go out and check the contract and see if he had completed and had done all the things for which he was expecting pay. I had engineers under me then, fortunately, because if I didn't I would have had a hard time (chuckle). I got my

education then. And it was tough. It was tough. I worked every night. I worked like a dog to be able to know what to do the next day. But I stayed ahead, and I spent two more years at it. Then I got drafted. I knew I was going to get drafted, and I told the colonel down at headquarters, "Now when I get drafted, wherever I am, I'm going home to Grapeland because I have some unfinished business I have to do before I go into the service." Well, I got a call one night--I was in New Orleans--from my wife telling me that I was ready to go. I caught that night train out of New Orleans and came right on into Grapeland. I switched from the Southern Pacific at Houston and rode up on the Missouri Pacific to Grapeland. We traveled then by train all the time, and it was great traveling, too! I traveled nights on the pullman and worked days on all those fields between Brownsville, Texas, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

Anyhow, I got home and Colonel Smith called me from Galveston and asked what I was doing, and I told him. He said, "Well, look, don't ever leave an office until we have told you to leave the office." They had called my draft board already and told them whatever--I don't know what they told them. Anyhow, they sent me...the guy told me to get back on the train and get back to New Orleans, and I did. I spent the war years in there, which comes to why you're here and why I'm here now.

I came to Dallas in early 1945 to build a yeast plant to manufacture dry yeast that could be used by our troops without refrigeration. Standard Brands was the contractor to make this yeast. I came to Dallas to build the plant to make the yeast.

Wilson: Were you working with the Corps of Engineers?

Hayman: The Corps of Engineers! I came here as project engineer, don't get me wrong. The contractor that I had on the job was Inge Construction Company. Mr. Henry Inge came here in World War I to build an airfield. He came from Boston, where he was working for Lane Brothers--contractors. Henry Inge came down and to take over the construction. That's why he was in Dallas. He made a very successful career in construction, and his family is still here. They are wonderful people. He built such things as the original Republic National Bank Building, Florence Nightingale out at Baylor, Dr Pepper plants, the big Coca-Cola plant out on Mockingbird. That was the work Mr. Inge had been doing when I came here.

To my great surprise, when they dropped the bomb--and I was near the time when I could jump away and go back to Grapeland and reestablish my business--he talked me into coming here. I thought he wanted to hire me. I told him I wanted to run my own business. "No," he said, "I'm not thinking of that. I thought we'd organize a company." And, by Jove, we did! We organized the Inge-Hayman

Construction Company. It was Inge-Hayman until Mr. Inge retired in 1960. That's enough background for you to see why I'm in Dallas.

To get around to the subject in hand, a great leader in Dallas at the time was Carr P. Collins. He was controversial, but a leader. He owned an awful lot of the Dr Pepper stock; he was in a bank. He was in everything in Dallas. He took a liking to Mr. Inge, and that's why Mr. Inge had built the Dr Pepper plant. So when they were ready to expand the Dr Pepper plant, Inge was picked as the contractor. That was before the war was over. So he had that job to go when we started our new company. So Inge built the Dr Pepper plant. Mr. Collins was the director of the Dr Pepper Company.

Mr. Collins got ready to build a home office for Fidelity Union Life Insurance Company--a company that he founded in 1926. He got Texas Power and Light to take half of that building because Fidelity Union at the time was not strong enough to build a twenty-story building. So they took half--ten floors--and Mr. Collins's Fidelity Union took the other half.

Mr. Inge and I built that building, so Mr. Collins got acquainted with me during that process, you see, and he sort of took a liking to me. After Mr. Inge retired, well, I did all of Mr. Collins's construction work for as long as he lived, and he lived to be eighty-five. He's

been gone about five years. But he was a wonderful friend of mine. When he believed in you, he fought for you. We don't have very many people now that are that way. It's a changed world from the world I lived in in Dallas during the first forty years.

Mr. Collins was a backer, or he felt very strongly about minorities--their treatment and opportunities. He got involved with Bishop College in Marshall. I don't know how or why, but he did. He gave them money down there to meet the payroll. He decided to move Bishop College to Dallas. There were a lot of people in Dallas at that time that didn't share his thoughts, but he was strong enough that he put it over, and he moved Bishop College to Dallas.

I was by that time very close to Mr. Collins. Even before then, in the mid-1950's, I suspect that we had just finished the Fidelity Union Life Insurance Building and were then planning for some more building with him and were doing other work with him on different things. He was on the board of the Baylor University Medical Center. We built that--we did all of the work at Baylor University Medical Center for twenty-eight years. We did Truett and we did Hoblitzelle Hospitals, the Collins Hospital, the Johnson Hospital, the Wilma Bass Nursing School, the dental college. We did all that work for a long, long time. So I was very close to Mr. Collins in the mid-

1950's, and he was very close to all of the civic organizations in town.

Would you excuse me. I'm wandering a bit. My wife is a nut in keeping records, and she has scrapbooks of my construction projects. I just happened to ask if number one--that would be the first one--might have some Hamilton Park notes in it. I find that it's pretty well documented, as a matter of fact. I'm searching now because I don't remember just where it is, but it is in this book, I know. The reason I'm looking for it is that I want to give the correct name of that organization. I'm not sure that it...it was the Interracial Committee, but I'm not sure...

Wilson: The Dallas Interracial Association.

Hayman: I will see if that is correct, sir. Let me tell you what, I'll see if the March 7, 1954, information used that same language. Just a minute [Refers to scrapbook]. The Dallas Interracial Association is what they referred to it as.

Wilson: There was a "Citizen's" in there, but often that got dropped out.

Hayman: Well, at that time it was headed by Jerome Crossman.

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: There are numerous articles in here that you might look at and review to see if you want copies. We are fortunate that they are not pasted in. They are in jackets. So all

the pictures and all of the write-ups or whatever is in here and is available to you for reference.

Wilson: Thank you.

Hayman: As a matter of fact, if I told you at first, you probably would have said, "Just let me have the articles, and you keep quiet!"

Wilson: No, no, not by any means (chuckle).

Hayman: At any rate, there are some little inside things there that you wouldn't know. On behalf of the Dallas Interracial Association, Jerome Crossman had called the main home builders here in town to tell them that the Interracial Association wanted to establish this housing project on North Central Expressway. The boom was relatively at a nice pace then, and the builders had just about all they wanted to do with white housing. In fact, they just didn't want to get involved with Negro housing at that time, so they were turned down by all the "know-how" and "well-to-do" house builders of Dallas at the time.

Mr. Collins called me up to see why we didn't build those Negro houses. I said, "Mr. Collins, there are two or three reasons. I'm not a home builder; I'm not a member of the association. There are two basic things that I think would be involved in this. One is obtaining the money to build those houses, to finance those houses. You can get an FHA loan, but people still have to work for

those loans. You don't want to build something to turn back to FHA; you want to build something for success." "Well," he said, "let me see if I might can handle that."

He checked around with his own organization--people in Fidelity Union Life--and then he hit on an idea that was a good one. Mr. Inge was active then, also, and I had another partner whose name was A. W. Bryant. A. W. was an old Robert E. McKee engineer, estimator, management man. He'd been with with McKee for, oh, twenty-something years, but he wanted to make a change, and he came to me to see if we wouldn't figure something with him. We decided that we would organize another construction company with Bryant so that he could bid small work and maybe make a go of it. We organized that company--33 1/2 percent per each of us--Mr. Inge, A. W. Bryant, and I. We named it Associated Construction Company. Bryant did a few jobs. It was difficult for him to bid big enough jobs to get profitable work, so he was struggling along. Mr. Inge and I decided that we would give Bryant the opportunity of building these houses. So we turned him into a developer/contractor rather than just a commercial contractor.

Mr. Collins wanted to be part of it. He had three children--Ruth, Jim, and Carr, Jr. They each formed, or had already formed...and I think they did not. I think they formed those corporations to do this job.

Mr. Collins was not in those corporations. Ruth had one with husband Charlie Sharp. Jim had one. I remember they had unique names they thought up for the names of the corporations. I can't think of all of them, but I do remember Jim's was Southern Industrial Investment Company --something like that. Anyhow, he kept that corporation and operated out of it as long as he lived. Carr, Jr. had...the three of them formed half of the joint venture, and Associated was the other half of the joint venture to develop Hamilton Park with Bryant in charge of total construction.

Mr. Collins, for earning his part of the keep, would finance them. He would seek financing for us so that we wouldn't have to worry about finding the money to finance those Negro houses. Mr. Collins was a humdinger of a dealer; he was a real sharp dealer. He hit on the idea that he would go to the insurance companies of the area and impose on them or give them an opportunity--let's word it that way--to be part of this great move to furnish houses for those Negroes. He had a formula that they would participate in the lending in direct proportion to their capital structure, you know, their net worth. Well, that gave (chuckle) just a small portion of this to Fidelity Union and a large portion to Southwestern Life (laughter). Mr. Collins came out pretty easy.

Wilson: (Laughter)

Hayman: But all of the insurance companies did it. They did it and it worked that way. We built a thousand houses out there, and we made pretty good money for the times. It took us about three years to do it, nearly four, but we did make about \$1,000 a unit profit.

Let me go back. Let's go back considerably. Mr. Hoblitzelle, a very wealthy man, had formed a foundation that was already doing great private work for the area, and the Interracial group talked him into buying this 1,000 acres of land out there. Maybe it wasn't 1,000. Maybe it was 700--whatever it takes. I believe it was 1,000 acres because there was some left over when we got through. So the land was bought by the Hoblitzelle Foundation, and the Interracial group bought it from Mr. Hoblitzelle, or he gave them the land.

Wilson: He financed it. They apparently went through the paperwork.

Hayman: But Hoblitzelle's land was used.

Wilson: He loaned the money. They couldn't have done it without him.

Hayman: I wonder if they ever paid it back.

Wilson: I think they did.

Hayman: You know, I'm sure we did because we paid...

Wilson: You paid cash.

Hayman: When we got ready for another 100-house block--100 houses --we bought that much acreage from...I thought we bought

it from the Interracial group. But they, in turn, had bought it from Hoblitzelle.

Wilson: No, they had bought the land from a Mr. Majors.

Hayman: A. J. Majors.

Wilson: B. "Hick" Majors or something like that.

Hayman: "Hick" Majors!

Wilson: "Hick" Majors.

Hayman: Yes!

Wilson: However, they got all of the purchase money from Hoblitzelle.

Hayman: Yes, yes, he financed it, but as we bought the land...let me tell you the rest of our story on the building now. We worked with the First National Bank on the same basis. Now this is a civic thing, and First National gave us a very good rate of financing. So we'd go to the bank to get the money to buy the land, and we'd go back to the bank to get the money to build our houses, and then we retired that as we sold houses. It was a first-rate business operation, and we had it all. Associated Construction had it all. These others were quiet. They were not even known to be in it. The Collins family was not known to be in it at that time, other than Mr. Collins making the financing available to us. Now in his book that later was written, it might give him credit as being...I doubt if it does. I think it just tells how strongly he worked to get it through with Mr. Jerome

Crossman. Do you have this book?

Wilson: I don't know. I'm not familiar with it.

Hayman: Well, I'll give you a chance to read what little there is in it about Hamilton Park, and you may have copies of it if you wish.

Wilson: Thank you.

Hayman: Some of the fun things we went through was learning people. We had one of the greatest fellows on the Interracial Committee--a black--that you could imagine. His name was Ezell. Ezell was a Negro of the Old South. He wore spats; he was dressed fit to kill everytime he walked into that pulpit. He dressed that way. He was a great character and a sound man. I don't mean to be making fun of him. He was sound and was a leader of the Negro people and the whites there, too. He was pastor of the Good Street Baptist Church. All of them took a great part and pride in Hamilton Park. We were just absolutely covered with interest from the Negro community. It's the first time anything like that had happened. We were visited by people all over the United States! They didn't believe it could be done. We had several people like that. John Rice was the executive director of the Negro Chamber of Commerce. He was a very smart man and a very likable fellow. He worked with us very closely. Jerome Crossman was a dedicated man to the cause, no question about it. It was a privilege for me to get to work with

Jerome Crossman--I'll say that.

Wilson: Did he ever tell you how he came to be president of the Interracial Association?

Hayman: I don't believe so. He might have, but if he did it has slipped my mind. I got to know Vince Rohloff pretty closely because he was Jerome's "Man Friday." A lot of the detail work was done by Vince and me. Vince and I did the work, but Jerome was back there with the power and the stroke all the way through. He was really effective, too. I know you'll see his name prominently mentioned in the press at the time.

Wilson: Can I show you this? This is a letter that you wrote to Mr. Crossman in August of 1953 in...

Hayman: ...signed when I was with Associated Construction, yes.

Wilson: Yes, as vice-president.

Hayman: [Reads the letter] I certainly can understand it. And one of the things that we found so true is to grade our "purchasers to be." They came out in droves on Sunday. That's when we had our big day. We had a salesman out there who was financially independent to do this work even if he makes something or if he didn't make something. His name was Matt Critchlow. He was ol' J. W. Lindsley's man. So he was our salesman. We would laugh about it because they would come out, and most any Sunday out there you could sign up fifty or sixty applications. The biggest problem we had was knowing who to even attempt to qualify.

You'd go through about ten to qualify one after you decided that the ten weren't qualified. You've already eliminated forty or fifty just by saying, "Come back whenever you do so-and-so." They just thought that this is a place they could buy a house (chuckle). Another thing, if they drove up in a new Pontiac, forget it! If they drove up in any new car, forget it! Chances are nine to one they owed every nickel on the car that they could possibly stand, and they had not one nickel in the bank. If you wanted to look at the prospective purchaser out there, he's going to get out of the car with two or three little children following him--he and his wife. It's going to be an old, worn out car like practically all of us were driving in those days. They would be neatly dressed, but there'd be nothing floozy. You could say, "There's a family that you can check into."

Wilson: I just finished a long interview with Charles Smith, who was a pioneer and still lives there, and he says that he was screened.

Hayman: He was what?

Wilson: He was screened.

Hayman: Yes (chuckle), well, you had to. I guess Eddie Blair had one of the first houses out there, and I think he is still there. Eddie worked for Metropolitan Federal Savings and Loan at the time. He made his career there until he retired. I was doing work for Metropolitan at that time;

I was doing all of their construction work. I knew Eddie very well even then, that far back. He was one of the first to build there. I later went on the Metropolitan board and served on it for twenty-seven years. So I knew Eddie all the way through, and they always had a great pride in Hamilton Park. It's been very disturbing what's happened in Hamilton Park the last three years. It's tearing those people to pieces out there. It's just tearing them to pieces.

Wilson: If we could go back to this letter for a minute, given the fact that you had so many people coming out and you knew that the demand was there, why are you so cautious?

Hayman: If you'll look at that date, you'll see that that's before we got far enough along to be able to judge. At that time everything was talk; nothing had been done. When that letter was written, we just had the idea: "We will do it, but we've got to have some way out if we see that the potential is not there." So that was the agreement that we raised. We would go out there and build two samples. We weren't asking for profit. All we were saying is, "If we get the two samples up and we do not have the potential we think is there, and we can't sell them or we don't believe they'll sell, then we'll ask you to take them over and just reimburse us our actual money out of hand, and do as you see fit." Of course, it didn't work that way; it worked quite the opposite. There was a good demand.

Wilson: These houses that went up--720SF and 900SF--what kind of houses were those?

Hayman: I don't believe we put a four-bedroom house out there. I think they were all two- and three-bedroom. They were nice houses. They were all concrete slab. We had a real good inspector from the architect. We knew how to build. We are builders, and we know what's good construction, whether it's an outhouse or fifty-story building. So we knew what we were doing, and we did a good job. I don't mind telling you that they were good houses--very good houses.

Wilson: They are all there.

Hayman: They're still there! If you look at this aerial view in the newspaper, all you see are houses and streets. Now you can't see any of it because the trees are grown up.

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: They were proud people. And another thing they had, subject to ratification with Jerome's committee, was the privilege of naming streets. If you'll drive through Hamilton Park and look at the names of the streets, you're going to find the outstanding blacks of the day.

Wilson: It's a curious thing. Why is there such a name as Willowdell or Towns or Benares?

Hayman: I think those are names of people or places that the Negro had a real pride in.

Wilson: Galva or Schroeder?

Hayman: Oh, well, Schroeder is an old road. Schroeder Road was there from way back. That was there, so we didn't change it. Hoblitzelle was picked because of him doing it.

Wilson: Oh, yes.

Hayman: The rest of them, though, have some connection, and there's one man still living that could help you on that score if you want to find out, and that's Caesar Clark. He's in his eighties now, and he's another one like old Ezell. He's a rompin' stompin' preacher. But he was involved in this, and I understand he's still living. I talked to him about a year ago.

Wilson: I'll sure talk to him, then. I'm curious about the design of the houses. Why did you pick those particular designs that you did? Was this on Hoblitzelle? Was this on the south side?

Hayman: Willowdell or Oberlin or wherever. I don't remember where we built the two buildings. Oh, no, they were on Forest Lane. They faced Forest Lane.

Wilson: Oh, yes, yes.

Hayman: And the reason for facing them on Forest Lane was because that would be the easiest transition into some other use if this didn't go the way it did. As a matter of fact, if you'll note, there were exceptions in the plan and in the land use that we had nothing to do with. We did not build any apartments, and we did not build any commercial buildings. Jerome built the shopping center with

Interracial Association involvement in some manner. I don't know how. I wasn't a part of it, but I do know that the acreage was excluded from residential use.

Wilson: Yes, yes.

Hayman: Up on the hill was some other land that was excluded for apartment use, I believe. Maybe they sold it off and never did use it.

Wilson: For park use?

Hayman: No, for apartments.

Wilson: Oh, apartments. Well, that is in the section...there are some down near Willowdell. That's the southernmost street on the west side of Schroeder. Down here, approximately, that land has never been developed, but that is apartment-zoned.

Hayman: Yes, that's right.

Wilson: But then up...

Hayman: Up in this area...they sold off to the school. That's one thing.

Wilson: Yes, they sold some to the school, but the school's right north of Towns. Then up here they have apartments in the new section.

Hayman: Yes, but we knew about the school, and we built around it. You can see our construction in here from the aerial photo.

Wilson: Yes. Well, were you considering to bid this set of plans because you believed that it was tailored to the needs of

the people who would buy?

Hayman: Well, number one, we had to have a house that could cost less than some amount of money, but I've forgotten now how much. It probably is in this record somewhere, or I could dig it up. I don't have it at my fingertips. But we had to produce a house with payments of less than \$100 a month. I think that's one of the things we had to do. We had to build down to find a market. If those people can reach the market, there are plenty of them there; but if you get above that market, you're wasting your time. If you are selling something out of their market, you are wasting your time and their time because they cannot meet it. So we did a lot of research before we settled on these plans.

Wilson: Did you work with this Charles Armstrong, the local architect?

Hayman: Yes, and we didn't work with him too long. I have forgotten who took over. Someone else took over. He got kind of...I don't believe he wanted to stay with it too long. I'm not sure. I can't remember that, but I'm pretty sure I'm right. Another firm that had been doing mass housing took over. I don't believe Armstrong stayed with it. I think he did our two models, and that was it. But we did work with the architects that were involved...that was Jerome's committee, and Jerome's committee was made up of...I'm trying to see if these

articles might...you probably have the name of the Interracial Committee.

Wilson: Mr. Rohloff gave me what survived of their papers, and that's pretty complete so far as its composition goes.

Hayman: I bet it is, too. With that committee working with us and working with the other local Negro leaders of the Negro community--Rice was one of them, too; he was really helpful to us out there--we determined what size house we could get and with how much money, and we stayed with that.

Wilson: When you say "helpful," what was he doing?

Hayman: We would have meetings. We would have meetings and discuss, you know: "Now the average family has so many children. They can get by with a three-bedroom house, but it's got to be within a certain amount of money." That's the input that they gave us.

Wilson: I see.

Hayman: It was up to us to try to design and build something that would fit that, and we made a good stab at it.

Wilson: You were in charge of the sales, also.

Hayman: Yes, we had the total. We were in charge of everything.

Wilson: So the man who worked as salesman was...

Hayman: ...worked for us on our payroll, yes. Associated Construction Company was named the seller.

Wilson: Here's another letter that was actually written by Mr. Rice to Mr. Crossman, and what they are talking about--A.

Maceo Smith and some others are in on this--are the slow sales in Hamilton Park.

Hayman: Well, you have one from John here.

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: You were familiar with him before I mentioned his name, then.

Wilson: Yes, well, I looked in the records of the old Negro Chamber of Commerce that survived in the public library. There are quite a few of them.

Hayman: I don't know yet what A. Maceo Smith was, except he was a Negro government employee.

Wilson: He worked for the FHA. He was racial liaison director. He was very active in the black community.

Hayman: Very, very. He spent his whole life in that sort of work here. He worked very effectively with us on this and was in all of our meetings. He participated greatly with us along with Rice and the preachers and the others of the community, white and black. This was really an effort of white and black. When we had a committee meeting, you'd see both just about the same. In this letter the third paragraph that Rice is talking about here was a real problem--a real problem. I don't believe the FHA had ever had a concentrated demand for total attention that we gave. We had a thousand homes to build for needy people out there. I don't mean needy in the sense of beggars, but they were low-income people. They had some blanket

restrictions on their qualifications that just...it would take a real super clean person to qualify. Rice is right. We were having all sorts of trouble, and Maceo was a great help to us in that, too.

Wilson: We would go back to the FHA and relay your thoughts.

Hayman: Yes, he would. And we would give him the back-up of anybody in town. If we called on Jerome or Jerome called on Mr. Hoblitzelle to go to Washington, Mr. Hoblitzelle would go to Washington. That's how the community got around this thing. I haven't read the letter, so I'm just saying, though, that I do remember what he's talking about when he's talking about houses going slow because of qualifications. Now we did have one year that was a slow economy that slowed us a little bit but not much. But this was a fight all the way through--qualifications. That's a good letter. It sounds just like John would sound.

Wilson: Did you think it would help any if you hired a black salesman?

Hayman: No, no, no. That would have been a very bad move at that time. If it were done all over today, it would be a totally different thing. You have to remember, Hamilton Park was built long before Alabama, long before the bus ride. You wouldn't have any way in the world to qualify that black to be your salesman unless you went to Washington to get him. Then he wouldn't go in with these

people here. I don't think it would have worked at all. It wouldn't have worked any more than trying to obtain a Negro developer to put it over. Those weren't the times you have today. I think it did as much for the Negro in this community as anything ever could have--Hamilton Park. It opened a lot of doors for a lot of people in a lot of different ways.

Wilson: At the Hoblitzelle Foundation, they are a little put out by some contemporary comments that it never should have been built in the first place and that it was white paternalism and all that (chuckle). I asked Mr. Smith, "Did you think when you were moving in there that it was white paternalism?" He said, "Heck, no!" He wanted a place to live. He needed a place to live because he'd been living in a Quonset hut.

Hayman: Well, there was talk at the time. That wasn't anything new. There was some snide remarks made in the community. I don't think the newspapers picked up any of them particularly. There was feeling that you were trying to integrate a community out there with blacks. The fact is that that was a black community that we moved into out there where Valley View is today. That was a strong black community at one time, and this was. We visited with them out there. They still lived out there--a lot of them did.

Wilson: There was the Anderson-Bonner School across North Central. There's mention, too, of a couple of black churches.

Where were they?

Hayman: White churches?

Wilson: No, black churches.

Hayman: Oh, they were there! There was one where Central Expressway is now, where the medical community is on Forest Lane over close to Coit Road--Olla Podrida.

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: Right down toward Forest Lane from Olla Podrida was a white-painted, black church--well-attended.

Wilson: And they mentioned the shopping area or at least the shopping stores.

Hayman: I don't believe I can remember much about there being any shops to speak of, but there was certainly a lot of Negroes that lived out there.

Wilson: How long were you involved with this? When did you build your last house?

Hayman: Four years. I think four years. I don't know that we built that long, but it was four years from start to finish.

Wilson: Were you ever approached, or did you ever think, about getting involved with that second section beginning north of Towns north of the school?

Hayman: In back?

Wilson: In construction of the later stage of Hamilton Park.

Hayman: Of Hamilton Park?

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: No.

Wilson: I'm speaking of Campanella and Glen Regal.

Hayman: Now, we built those.

Wilson: Oh, you built those!

Hayman: Oh, Campanella and all of those. I don't believe there's any sizable building that has been done since we were out there. I don't know of any.

Wilson: As I understood it, the original Hamilton Park only ran to Towns. If you look at the map, here's Towns right here. There's the school and the athletic field and all of the rest of it.

Hayman: Here's the school up here, I think, maybe.

Wilson: Well, no, sir.

Hayman: Yes, that's right. That's a school. You're pointing to it.

Wilson: Here's the schoolyard.

Hayman: Yes.

Wilson: And Towns cuts across like so [gestures on map].

Hayman: Yes.

Wilson: Well, my understanding from Mr. Rohloff and the others was that the original purchase involved this area [gestures on map], which would be...

Hayman: ...would be this corner here. That would be our northernmost place.

Wilson: Yes, at Towns. Then somebody else developed...well, this is out of the picture on this, but over here somebody else

developed this section.

Hayman: That part? There are four streets in there.

Wilson: Yes, I can't name them all right now, but Rialto is here, and it runs up to Bunche. Then they extend...

Hayman: Let me look at my Mapsco a minute. It will help me on that score. Why don't we just lay this out and take a look. Have you seen these?

Wilson: I have probably not been over those clippings.

Hayman: Why don't we take a quick look.

Wilson: I've seen references to them.

Hayman: Oh, sure.

Wilson: You were there for the...

Hayman: You bet!

Wilson: Well, see, they have two actually. They have one in 1953, which was the dedication, and then they had the formal opening in 1954. So you attended those?

Hayman: Yes. See, Jerome said that "the Associated Construction Company would act as an independent developer in this development," and that's quoting him.

Wilson: Back to this Mr. Majors for a moment, do you know why he bought the land?

Hayman: He was speculating. He was just a good investor--speculating--and real estate man. He had no reason in the world to buy it other than that.

Wilson: What was he doing with it?

Hayman: Exactly what I said--speculating.

Wilson: So there was nothing happening on this land?

Hayman: Oh, no, no. Just about this time a contractor in town named Montgomery--"P. O'B" (P. O'Brien) Montgomery...his son now is one of the major professors out at the medical school. He's a doctor. "P. O'B." was a successful contractor during the war and made a pile of money. Just north of the freeway here, he bought, I think, 1,500 acres in there. Mr. Inge's son was in the real estate business with J. W. Lindsley--young Charles, just out of school -- and he sold that land--Mr. Montgomery's land--to TI to build a plant out there.

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: That's how things were done in those times. People had money, and they were investing it or something. Ol' "Hick" Majors had some money. He might have had silent partners in there, though. He may have been fronting for a group. It is real likely that he was. But there was nothing unusual for them to buy up the land.

Wilson: So there was no one living on it.

Hayman: No, no, it was pasture land. Lisa's father--my son--was rabbit hunting out there when he was a teenager, yes. In the early fifties, all my kids went out there to bird hunt and rabbit hunt. There were fields out there, nothing more.

Wilson: Were there any trees to speak of?

Hayman: Oh, mesquite--sorry mesquite--and hackberry. No cedar.

Nothing worth keeping.

Wilson: So you put in the landscaping.

Hayman: Oh, totally! There was nothing out there except outcroppings of white rock in places. It was not a good soil cover at all; it washed away. The topsoil had long since washed away from farming.

Wilson: At one time it had been farm land?

Hayman: Oh, it had been a farm. Sure, it had. All that land had. It belonged to the Armstrong's or the McKamy's--some of the names still in town.

Wilson: Do you know anything about the other sites that they were looking at? There was a site for sale...it sounds impossible now, but there were 150 acres at \$8.50 an acre, they said, in the Vickery vicinity. They were apparently looking at that at the same time they were looking at the Majors property.

Hayman: Yes.

Wilson: I wondered if you...

Hayman: Yes, I'm familiar with it, fairly. It turned out to be a country club. That's the reason the Interracial group didn't have anything to do with it.

Wilson: Was that the so-called Hexter site?

Hayman: I don't know.

Wilson: Just a few more questions, Mr. Hayman. Were you involved in any other black housing subdivisions before this came up?

Hayman: Oh, no, not at all! Not at all, no! No, we had a lot of blacks work for us. Our work crews consisted of blacks-- mostly laborers, though. It was before we had any black crafts. We didn't have any black crafts in 1950. In this area? No. Pretty well all of our construction crews had a lot of blacks.

Wilson: This is building construction?

Hayman: Yes, building. My business has been commercial building. I got involved in real estate from time to time, and still am, but my main work had been construction work.

Wilson: Did you know any of the people who were trying to locate black housing subdivisions around town before Hamilton Park?

Hayman: No, none other than the ones that we work with now. No, there were no independent...

Wilson: There were several efforts to do that, but they all fell through for one reason or another.

Hayman: Well, financing was one of the big reasons. There was nobody jumping up and down to finance that sort of project. The banks wouldn't take it on unless you had a lot of good signatures on it or a lot of good collateral behind it.

Wilson: So the whites who lived anywhere near or around it would object to this?

Hayman: Oh, they definitely would. Sure, they would. Sure, they would.

Wilson: Why was it that they were able to buy that property that you developed when everybody else was fussing about it?

Hayman: Well, there are two reasons. One, as I've said before, there were Negroes already there. Number two, when you have whites like Fred Florence, Karl Hoblitzelle, Dr. Levi Olin, Carr P. Collins, and Ben Wooten, you were talking about powerful people in that day. They determined that it was right. They were the ones that started this Interracial Committee. They thought it was right, and they were strong enough people to say, "We'll do it." By the time we came along to do the developing, well, it was not a scary thing with us at all. We weren't hesitant about it being black, because we'd been working with them enough in the committee work that we saw the need. I didn't think that it was an infringement on white people. I don't see how you could move into a place that was already black and say you're contaminating something (chuckle). It just doesn't make sense. There was a black church out there, black schools out there, black people out there. Some of my working people lived out in that area. It was sort of like some of the Indian lands we have nowadays.

Wilson: So you didn't know Roland Pelt?

Hayman: I knew Roland Pelt. Surely, I knew Roland, and I knew the Smith boys, James and Vernon. They were good friends. By the way, I think...I don't want this in quotation, please.

This is off the record.

Wilson: Do you want me to cut this off?

Hayman: Well, you can if you want to. Just don't use it. I don't care, because I'm going to qualify it such that I wouldn't be offensive to either one of them because they are very good friends of mine. I think Vernon and James looked at this thing after it was already organized. I don't think they turned it down because it was a Negro project at all. I think they turned it down because they didn't think, frankly, that they could get the financing without it being more trouble than it was worth. We didn't have any better sense, you see, because (chuckle) we weren't developers. They were smart developers and successful developers. We never had developed anything like that. So we just waded into it. Mr. Collins had confidence in it, and I was already at that time--and to his dying day--thinking he was one of the greatest men I've ever known. He was controversial as all get-out in this community. I know that, too. And I will go off the record. But I had confidence in his judgment. He said, "Let's go," so I was ready to go. Mr. Inge didn't have all that much confidence in it, but he didn't oppose it. By the way, now there's a case when Mr. Inge was as genteel a southerner as ever lived in the world. He had just bought forty acres across Central Expressway from Hamilton Park. It didn't bother him. He made a killing on that forty

acres when they later developed it. It's Joe Lambert Landscaping place out there. Do you know what I'm talking about?

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: It's a beautiful place. He built a fine home out there. An old man had a forty-acre place with a house on it. Mr. Inge bought it and had that house rebuilt into a very beautiful, lovely residence, and he moved out there from Highland Park in 1952, somewhere along there. This was in 1953 that he participated in Hamilton Park.

So all of them didn't see it as bad at all. Those that saw that as bad would see it as a problem no matter when it comes to the Negro. Now the very bad problem with Hamilton Park--and no one can handle it, and I don't believe it can be straightened out except by Hamilton Park--is the drug problem. That same thing is true with South Dallas, and the same is true with Highland Park. The police are not going to clean that up. It's got to be the people who clean that up. And people will clean it up.

Wilson: Well, they have other problems, too. They are so close to that commercial development all around them; they are boxed in.

Hayman: Well, as a matter of fact now, the very bottom line is that Hamilton Park will not exist too long. That's not my saying anything against Hamilton Park. They are being

encroached upon by the commercial elements. It's going to get to the point where they will be able to be better off selling than staying. That's what will take Hamilton Park.

Wilson: If you don't know, could you speculate on why they didn't buy--that is, why the Interracial Association didn't buy--up to Valley View, didn't buy over to North Central? Why did they stop a considerable distance away, because then Hamilton Park was subject to the Annie's Hub Caps and all the rest of it that grew up there?

Hayman: Well, I can tell you why, and it is just as logical as it can be. Within the time period of our building Hamilton Park, TI had already bought and built a plant. Things were already happening out there outside of the housing industry, white or black. Land became too valuable to put any kind of houses on it. By the time you could have bought that, it was already gone for TI and Frito-Lay and all of the many people that took up a lot of that land out there. As a matter of fact, Charlie...the first part he sold to TI for them to get their first plant started was just a fraction of the total acreage that he finally bought for them--Charlie Inge.

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: They are probably still buying land. As a matter of fact, there was a move...I don't know who it was. There was a move on to buy Hamilton Park by one of the developers just

before the bottom dropped out of the real estate market.

Wilson: Oh, yes, the buy-out.

Hayman: If this boom had lasted two more years, Hamilton Park would have already been gone.

Wilson: A quarter a million dollars a lot.

Hayman: Sure.

Wilson: Now that collapsed.

Hayman: Well, it should collapse. But the right price could still be offered to most of them out there now, and they would take it. And the right price would be far less than that. I mean, that day will never repeat itself. That \$250,000 for...I think they wanted 50 x 150-foot lots.

Wilson: Yes.

Hayman: It was something like that.

Wilson: Your lots up on High Point Circle were...

Hayman: Yes, we built some nice homes at High Point. We had a doctor or two up there from the very word "go." We sure did. He was a nice fellow, too. Dr. Williams, I think his name was. Anyhow, they won't sell for anything like that, but neither will those people have to get that to have a good deal.

Wilson: So they can buy elsewhere for less than they're paid.

Hayman: Oh, sure, they can. Sure, they can.

Wilson: Mr. Hayman, is there anything else you would like to add about Hamilton Park?

Hayman: I don't know of anything. I think I've covered about the

points of interest that I remember about it. I hate to hear the things that they are having trouble on. But I don't think there is any question about it that if you check close enough, we are having that trouble in almost all of our neighborhoods right now.

Wilson: Well, thank you very much.

Hayman: You bet! You bet!