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HAMILTON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH
BILL BARKLEY

1 (INTRODUCTION)

2 MR. MILLS: Okay. We're here today -- the
3 Hamilton County Historical Commission is here with Bill
4 Barkley to conduct an interview on some history of
5 Hamilton. Also present in the room -- present in the
6 room is Andy McMullen and Jane Crouch and my wife,
7 Sharon Mills. Bill is a longtime citizen for Hamilton
8 County. He may not be the oldest one, but he's pretty
9 doggone close to it, and we appreciate Bill and, you
10 know, we -- we do or we couldn't tease him like that.

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1 (INTERVIEW)

2 MR. MILLS: Bill, of course, you have a
3 long history with the Hamilton National Bank, and I
4 guess maybe the best way to start out is give us a
5 little bit of background about where you were raised,
6 where you were born, and a little bit about your family
7 because that does relate to your -- the background here.

8 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. I was born October
9 the 6th, 1923, in what was known as the Brown House.
10 It's where Dr. Ford's office is now across from the
11 hospital that was torn down. That hospital was in the
12 process of being built when I was born, and it was
13 completed in 1924, and I was born in '23.

14 MR. MILLS: Would that be the sanitarium?

15 MR. BARKLEY: Yes.

16 MR. MILLS: Okay.

17 MR. BARKLEY: And I grew up here. The --
18 in the days -- well, in the '20s, I can remember when
19 they were paving East Main up in about the 500 block. I
20 remember I was four years old. My little dog had
21 puppies. We had a snow in Hamilton October the 6th.
22 That was my birthday.

23 MR. MILLS: So you remember when they
24 paved --

25 MR. BARKLEY: They were --

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1 MR. MILLS: -- East Main?

2 MR. BARKLEY: I remember the steamroller
3 going up and down Main Street.

4 MR. MILLS: Okay.

5 MR. BARKLEY: And I think that was 1927,
6 '28, and I believe that was when they paved the square,
7 right around that year.

8 MR. MILLS: Okay.

9 MR. BARKLEY: So this was back in the
10 days -- and as we went into the Depression, as I stated
11 in that other interview, everybody was poor in Hamilton.
12 Some people were just a little more poor than others.
13 And so the people, you know, had their own gardens. My
14 grandparents -- my Grandparent Barkley lived -- pardon
15 me -- on 522 East Leslie where Dr. Bill Craig lived in
16 that two-story house for many years. My grandparents
17 bought that I think in about 1915, '16, and it -- that
18 house was built in 1912 --

19 MR. MILLS: So it was a new house?

20 MR. BARKLEY: -- by the Baker family. But
21 my grandparents didn't build it. They had come over
22 here from Turnersville. Their house burned down in 1910
23 in Turnersville, but they were from Coryell County
24 and -- on the Barkley side, and then on -- my

25 grandmother was a Merit, and they were in Coryell

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1 County, too. So they -- they had lived at Pearl, Texas,
2 for about four or five years, but my grand- -- my dad
3 was born down on the Cowhouse at Purmela.

4 MR. MILLS: Oh, really?

5 MR. BARKLEY: And -- so that's a little
6 bit of the background of -- my grandfather, Wood
7 Barkley, built the first service station in Hamilton
8 down there where the City Hall is now. The old Perry
9 National Bank building. And --

10 MR. MILLS: Now, what did your mom and dad
11 do?

12 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. My -- my dad went to
13 work for the Hamilton National Bank in 1920. He had
14 gone through I think it was Drawns Business School in
15 about 1919 or 1920, and he -- my -- my mother and dad
16 married in -- July the 3rd, 1920, and Guffey went to
17 work for the bank in 19- -- 1920, on July the 26th,
18 about three weeks later. My mother was a homemaker,
19 loved to cook, was very active in the Central Christian
20 Church. Her family -- she was a Doggett, and the
21 Doggetts were one of the active families in the Central
22 Christian Church. The Barkley side were in the
23 Presbyterian Church, which at that time was behind the
24 Anglin house right here around the corner.

25 MR. MILLS: Okay.

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1 MR. BARKLEY: That church was moved in
2 1947 by Mr. A.A. Reiley, the father of a good friend of
3 mine, Milton Reiley. And it was over here on 281
4 north --

5 MR. MILLS: Okay.

6 MR. BARKLEY: -- the Presbyterian Church.
7 So that's a little bit of the background on --

8 MR. MILLS: You completed your public --
9 public schools in Hamilton?

10 MR. BARKLEY: Where?

11 MR. MILLS: Your public school education
12 was here in Hamilton?

13 MR. BARKLEY: Yes.

14 MR. MILLS: And basically you've -- you've
15 been here -- other than the war --

16 MR. BARKLEY: Well, since --

17 MR. MILLS: -- you've been here --

18 MR. BARKLEY: Well, in -- in -- I got out
19 of -- well, I went to East Ward for grammar school, and
20 the West Ward was over here. The high school, the
21 auditorium, and West Ward. The East Ward and West Ward
22 were grades one through six. The seventh grade was up
23 there in the high school building, but I guess nowadays,
24 you would have called it junior high. But, anyway,

25 you -- when you got out of the sixth grade, you went to

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1 the high school building. But I graduated in May of '41
2 and worked for A. Lee Whit, who had bought the Tate
3 Drugstore where the Crouch & White Law Office has been
4 for years. That was -- I worked three months in the
5 summer for Mr. Whit, and then I went to Tarlton. And
6 the following summer, I worked a couple of months for
7 the soil conservation and then I worked about two months
8 or so for the ice plant down here.

9 MR. MILLS: Who owned the ice plant?

10 MR. BARKLEY: Community Public Service.

11 MR. MILLS: Community Public Service.

12 MR. BARKLEY: Their office was down there
13 about where Lucy Lee's office is now.

14 MR. MILLS: Was Community Public Service a
15 consortium of some type or was it an independent --

16 MR. BARKLEY: They had -- they were
17 electrical and had ice plants around also.

18 MR. MILLS: So it was a public utility?

19 MR. BARKLEY: Yes.

20 MR. MILLS: Okay.

21 MR. BARKLEY: And after -- that was the
22 summer of '42. So I went back in about September. And
23 all this is -- incidentally was 75 years ago now. And I
24 signed up for the Reserves in November of '42. I was

25 now 18 by that time. And so I signed up in the enlisted

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1 Reserves, the Army. I wanted to get in the Air Corps,
2 but I had a poultry lab the day they were signing up.
3 So I -- if you skipped a lab, the war board -- that's
4 not the word -- draft board -- if you missed one, they
5 knew it the next day and you were gone. So, anyway, I
6 signed up for the ERC, enlisted Reserves, and they told
7 me if I'd go up -- this was November. They told me if
8 I'd go to Dallas in December, I could transfer into the
9 Air Corps Reserve, which I did, and I wasn't trying to
10 get off -- back into that service board. But, anyway,
11 I -- you know, on April the 6th of 1943, I got on the
12 bus down here in Hamilton to go to Dallas, and the
13 following day I went to Shepperd Field for basic
14 training. But, anyway, this -- I went to East Ward for
15 my public school and then I went over to the high school
16 building.

17 MR. MILLS: Now, where did you serve in --
18 in the military at? Tell me a little bit about that.

19 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. I spent about --
20 almost a month at Shepherd Field for basic.

21 MR. MILLS: And Shepherd Field is where?

22 MR. BARKLEY: Wichita Falls.

23 MR. MILLS: Wichita Falls.

24 MR. BARKLEY: And at that time, in the

25 cadet program, they some- -- usually sent you to some

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1 college for about three or four months, and so they sent
2 me to the University of Wichita, Wichita, Kansas. And
3 Claudine and I had been going steady for about three
4 years or so. And about a couple of -- three months
5 after we got up to Wichita -- after I got there, well,
6 we got married.

7 MR. MILLS: Okay.

8 MR. BARKLEY: And stayed there until
9 September, went down to classification in San Antonio at
10 Lackland, and I washed out of cadets on account of my
11 eyes, and because of that, they even wouldn't let me be
12 a gunner, which at that time when you washed out, you
13 had about three choices, and they were all gunnery
14 school.

15 MR. MILLS: They were all what?

16 MR. BARKLEY: Gunnery school.

17 MR. MILLS: Oh, okay.

18 MR. BARKLEY: But, anyway, they -- they
19 put me ground duty -- on a GDO --

20 MR. MILLS: Okay.

21 MR. BARKLEY: -- ground duty only. And as
22 luck would have it, I -- they put me in the cadet
23 testing unit, because out of about 50 of us that washed
24 out, there were about eight that had had some college.

1 Research Unit No. 3. That was the outfit that did the
2 testing. And so, of course, by that time, we were
3 married, and I had some relatives in San Antonio, and it
4 looked like I was going to be in San Antonio about -- no
5 telling, and a month later, no, they sent me to St.
6 Louis, the Jefferson Barracks Army Base. I was Air
7 Corps.

8 MR. MILLS: St. Louis, Missouri?

9 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah. And so I tested
10 cadets -- helped test cadets for about eight months, and
11 then they decided -- we'd been testing about 300
12 infantrymen a day, and they opened about five other
13 testing units -- places, Denver, Gulfport, North
14 Carolina. They already had three more. San Antonio,
15 Nashville, and California. So I eventually wound up at
16 Normal, which was a little military base in San Antonio,
17 and -- until they decided what they were going to do
18 with me, and as luck would have it -- and I was so
19 fortunate several times that I didn't realize how lucky
20 I was, but -- because so many of the guys that I went to
21 college with and -- and served with early, you know,
22 they didn't make it back. And so they -- they -- I
23 eventually wound up in a Cielo course supply school, and
24 that -- I don't know, a couple of months probably. And

25 then -- from then went to -- we went -- started going --

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1 preparing to go overseas, went to Oklahoma City, Tinker
2 Field, for three or four months, and then I shipped out.
3 Left March the 6th of '45 and -- to go overseas and
4 left -- went to Fort Lewis, Washington, to catch our
5 ship, and it took 23 days to go from there to Guam. And
6 they told us we were headed for Okinawa, which -- they
7 were taking Okinawa about that time. They had just
8 taken a few days before -- when they captured Iwo
9 completely. But I got to Guam on the day President
10 Roosevelt died, April the 10, 1945. It depended on
11 which side of the date line you were on whether it was
12 the 10th or the 11th.

13 MR. MILLS: It was --

14 MR. BARKLEY: Anyway, so I was fortunate
15 in that they did not -- they decided they were going to
16 put about five air depo groups on Guam instead of
17 shipping everybody to different islands, which was a
18 good move, a smart move, and so then I stayed on Guam
19 until February 8th, I think, when I left Guam to come
20 home. I was discharged at Fort Sam -- I was supposed to
21 go to Fort Sam Houston, but when we got about five
22 miles -- five days out of San Francisco -- that wasn't
23 where we were supposed to have gone -- but they called a
24 strike on the docks. So we went in to San Francisco and

25 started processing at Camp Stoneman, which is up the --

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1 the bay there from Fresno. And, anyway, I got back to
2 Austin where Claudine was waiting. She had found a job
3 at the University of Texas and had found a place for us
4 to live. So it was a year to the day when I left her in
5 Oklahoma City that I got back to see her again in
6 Austin.

7 MR. MILLS: How long were you in Austin --
8 both of you in Austin before you got back to Hamilton?

9 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. Well, I had lost
10 about -- unfortunately, I didn't go to A&M. I went to
11 Texas when I got out of Tarlton, and so I lost about --

12 MR. MILLS: Well, hold it. Unfortunately?

13 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah.

14 MR. MILLS: Okay. Go ahead.

15 MR. BARKLEY: Well, I lost 35 hours.

16 MR. MILLS: Oh, okay.

17 MR. BARKLEY: That's the unfortunate part.

18 MR. MILLS: Okay. That's the unfortunate
19 part.

20 MR. BARKLEY: And so I -- I went straight
21 through, I guess, about two and a half years.

22 MR. MILLS: Okay.

23 MR. BARKLEY: Graduated in January of '49
24 at UT, went to work for Sears Robuck in San Angelo for

25 about a year and a half. Then I went to work for

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1 Firestone for about four years, and then in -- July
2 the 6th of 1952 -- no. I went to work for the Midland
3 National Bank July 6, 1954, but I had moved to Midland
4 and then Firestone transferred me --

5 MR. MILLS: Okay.

6 MR. BARKLEY: -- in October of '52. So I
7 put in -- I lived in Midland 18 years, but I was with
8 Midland National Bank 16. And so then I came back to
9 Hamilton in July of 1970 and went to work for Hamilton
10 National Bank.

11 MR. MILLS: Okay.

12 MR. BARKLEY: Worked for them 21 years.
13 My dad had worked for them. In 1950 -- I mean, 1970, he
14 had worked for Hamilton National 50 years.

15 MR. MILLS: Wow.

16 MR. BARKLEY: And --

17 MR. MILLS: That was who we affectionately
18 called Guffey.

19 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah. William Guffey, and
20 my granddad was William Wood.

21 MR. MILLS: Now, you've being working with
22 the bank -- you were -- and being on the -- where was --
23 where was the bank in 1970? Or when you came here in,
24 what year, 1970, where was the Hamilton National Bank

25 then, the same location?

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1 MR. BARKLEY: The same location.

2 MR. MILLS: Which is now the courthouse
3 annex.

4 MR. BARKLEY: Yes.

5 MR. MILLS: Okay. But they redid that
6 bank in '76; is that correct?

7 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. Originally the
8 Hamilton National Bank was over there where the Willard
9 Shell -- or just between the little old fire station --

10 MR. MILLS: Okay.

11 MR. BARKLEY: -- and the corner.

12 MR. MILLS: Okay.

13 MR. BARKLEY: Until 1920, that was
14 Hamilton National Bank.

15 MR. MILLS: Okay.

16 MR. BARKLEY: And when they moved across
17 the street, they built -- the same year Guffey went to
18 work for them, 1920, they built the new building, and at
19 that time, then the -- Grants Grocery put a building in
20 there, and I worked for them some, and there was a --
21 William Conley hotel grocery was right there. Then Bob
22 White's Top and Body Shop was next and then the little
23 fire station, the jail, the old jail --

24 MR. MILLS: Right. And we're talking

25 about what year now?

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1 MR. BARKLEY: This was back in the 1920s.

2 MR. MILLS: 1920s.

3 MR. BARKLEY: '10s and '20s. And then
4 right there where the new bridge is, in about 1935 or
5 something, the fellow by the -- Stan- -- Stanley Moore
6 came in and built that -- the annex building would be
7 it, I guess, the grocery store. And across from that in
8 the '30s was the farmers produce, where the fire station
9 is.

10 MR. MILLS: Uh-huh. Farmers produce, tell
11 me a little bit -- what was that? Was it a farmers
12 market or --

13 MR. BARKLEY: Well, yeah. They -- in
14 November before Thanksgiving, they picked turkeys --

15 MR. MILLS: Okay.

16 MR. BARKLEY: -- just right and left. In
17 fact, you got a nickel for picking a turkey.

18 MR. MILLS: Okay.

19 MR. BARKLEY: And they --

20 MR. MILLS: Was that an avenue for a
21 farmer to come into town --

22 MR. BARKLEY: They had --

23 MR. MILLS: -- and get some cash?

24 MR. BARKLEY: -- feed. It was a

25 feedstore.

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1 MR. MILLS: Okay.

2 MR. BARKLEY: And -- but handled the
3 cream, butter --

4 MR. MILLS: Okay.

5 MR. BARKLEY: -- all that.

6 MR. MILLS: So Joe Brown, the farmer,
7 could probably come in and sell his butter --

8 MR. BARKLEY: Oh, yeah.

9 MR. MILLS: -- and -- you know, to the
10 people in town, that type of transactions?

11 MR. BARKLEY: Now, there was another
12 little feedstore about so wide. Where the Hamilton
13 National drive-in window is right now, that was a
14 feedstore.

15 MR. MILLS: Okay.

16 MR. BARKLEY: Across the street from it --
17 there's a picture in it -- a Conoco station, and then
18 Camp Hamilton, which was the cafe and then a motel. Had
19 about five cabins, I think.

20 MR. MILLS: Okay. Now, when -- when
21 you -- when you came back, what was the -- I guess what
22 I'm getting at is, the square -- the function of the
23 square has changed it seems like now to what it was 50
24 to 60 years ago, and could you talk a little bit about

25 what the activities were on the square or maybe some of

17

1 the more interesting businesses that were there that you

2 remember that were successful or that -- that sold

3 products or services that we just don't use anymore?

4 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. I was --

5 MR. MILLS: You can just go around the

6 square if you wanted to, because we all know east and

7 west sides of the square and what was there.

8 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. I've got a picture,

9 and this -- my dad put this together, and I've got a

10 picture of all the saloons on the north side of the

11 square.

12 MR. MILLS: They were on the north side?

13 MR. BARKLEY: Yes. And one other one

14 is -- over here on the west side of the square, the

15 Williams hardware, furniture -- hardware -- or the

16 furniture store was on the corner, which is now a

17 parking lot on -- the next building was the hardware

18 store, and then I'd have to look -- but the -- all of

19 the saloons were in the teens and the -- I guess by the

20 '20s, they were all gone, and I don't -- I don't

21 remember, you know, coming down here, but I just know

22 that --

23 MR. MILLS: You weren't a drinker?

24 MR. BARKLEY: Huh?

25 MR. MILLS: You weren't a drinker?

18

1 MR. BARKLEY: No.

2 MR. MILLS: No. Did you have a favorite
3 store when you were a child that you liked to come into
4 when you were -- maybe in the '30s? A lot of kids
5 did...

6 MR. BARKLEY: Well, over there on the
7 south side of the square, we had Witty's Five and Dime
8 and also Perry's Five and Dime. So that was sort of --
9 as a youngster, you know, if you -- if you had a nickel,
10 you know, that was the place you could go spend it.
11 And -- but then I -- Rance Grocery, my very first job, I
12 sold popcorn on Saturdays in a big popcorn four-wheel
13 machine.

14 MR. MILLS: At the grocery store?

15 MR. BARKLEY: At the -- in front of the
16 grocery -- in front of the grocery store.

17 MR. MILLS: But you worked for the grocery
18 store?

19 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah.

20 MR. MILLS: Okay. Was it a lot of
21 activity Saturdays?

22 MR. BARKLEY: Oh, yeah. Saturday was the
23 day everybody came to town, and -- all the farmers, I'm
24 talking about, and some of it was kind of like a family

25 get-together, in fact. And -- but they would bring

19

1 their produce, if they hadn't come in during the week,
2 the farmers would, and we had -- I worked for Curly L.
3 McGrant when they moved over here on the corner, and
4 then later a picture show went in there, and it burned,
5 and I guess that was about the time they moved. The --
6 the Strand theater was about two doors down, about where
7 Harelik's would be now. But in 1938, there was -- a
8 family by the name of Ray from Dublin put in an ice
9 cream parlor, and I worked for them that summer, but
10 before they put in that, there was a two-lane bowling
11 alley right next to the bank.

12 MR. MILLS: Really?

13 MR. BARKLEY: It didn't last long, but,
14 anyway, it was there.

15 MR. MILLS: Well, I have to ask. Was
16 that -- was that an electronic bowling -- I mean,
17 electrically set up or was it a manual setup.

18 MR. BARKLEY: It was manual.

19 MR. MILLS: Okay. Okay.

20 MR. BARKLEY: And, then, I don't remember
21 when the drug stores went in there exactly, and it was
22 down there -- well, when the Strand -- the Strand, I
23 guess, closed in about 1928, and right next to the
24 Strand was the City Bakery. IV Hughes -- you might

25 remember IV and his brother, RV. They ran the City

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1 Bakery for awhile. But then where Grant's grocery was,
2 on the other side of that was the TA Emmett Tin shop,
3 and on the other side of the shop was a vacant space,
4 which later Ed Emmett filled in with three stores. The
5 first store was Dunkin's Barbershop, and I guess that
6 would be where Chapel's probably is right now, and then
7 the next space was a little cafe, and then the next
8 space was Washum's Appliance, and then my grandfather
9 had that service station from about -- after he -- his
10 early station there on the corner.

11 MR. MILLS: Bell and Henry?

12 MR. BARKLEY: Bell -- Bell and Main.

13 MR. MILLS: Okay.

14 MR. BARKLEY: And then -- okay. He went
15 across the street and -- where Bob and Lloyd's were, he
16 had a little station there, and by the way, my second
17 job, when I was 11 years old, I sold Denver Post
18 newspapers.

19 MR. MILLS: All right.

20 MR. BARKLEY: That's Denver, Colorado.
21 I'd get my papers on Wednesday, and I had -- I'd get 60
22 papers.

23 MR. MILLS: How were they delivered? How
24 were they delivered?

25 MR. BARKLEY: By bus.

21

1 MR. MILLS: By bus.

2 MR. BARKLEY: I would get them on
3 Wednesday by bus.

4 MR. MILLS: Okay.

5 MR. BARKLEY: I'd sell them for a dime.
6 They cost me six -- six cents each. So I made four
7 cents.

8 MR. MILLS: Did you sell out?

9 MR. BARKLEY: Well, boy, yeah.

10 MR. MILLS: Did you push them pretty hard?

11 MR. BARKLEY: I pushed pretty hard. I had
12 probably about 40 regulars, but that other 20 came kind
13 of hard, you know. But, anyway, I owned my own bicycle.
14 I got my driver's license when I was 12, and --

15 MR. MILLS: For a motor vehicle?

16 MR. BARKLEY: Yes. It wasn't like the
17 hardship case like now, but -- and I started driving
18 when I was ten. But, anyway, I -- if for some reason
19 you needed it, you thought, well, your father could go
20 down before the county judge and swear that he'd be
21 responsible for whatever -- your transactions and
22 actions, and so that's how I got -- which was rather
23 common. It wasn't all that big a deal.

24 MR. MILLS: That's interesting.

25 MR. BARKLEY: It would be to you.

22

1 MR. MILLS: Well, it is. It is.

2 MR. BARKLEY: So you can see -- at 94, you
3 can see how many years I've been driving.

4 MR. MILLS: Now, there is a foundation.
5 It's -- what is that Ross Street that runs from the
6 Civic Theater?

7 MR. BARKLEY: Yes.

8 MS. CROUCH: I think that's right.

9 MR. MILLS: It's between -- now between
10 Wenzel Meat and the CEFCO station. There's some old
11 ruins of an old rock wall there. Actually, the
12 foundation spans that creek -- that creek that has a dip
13 in it. Do you know what that building was? I do not.
14 I've asked and asked.

15 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah, I've been asked that,
16 too, and I -- I cannot remember what was there. I do
17 know -- and whether that wall is a part of it or not --
18 but in the '30s or maybe early '40s, there was a welding
19 shop, Durham's Welding Shop, and it spanned the creek.

20 MR. MILLS: Okay.

21 MR. BARKLEY: But now whether it went back
22 to that rock wall, I'm not sure.

23 MR. MILLS: Okay. Well, that's -- my
24 mission in life is to figure out what that building was.

1 was -- and by the way, that -- across from the ice
2 plant, the -- the park headquarters, that was my
3 grandfather's, Wood Barkley's. When he first came here,
4 he was -- part of the time, he was a Magnolia
5 distributor, and that was his warehouse. He also was
6 involved in -- in the electrical business. He had these
7 round bulbs that goes on these -- like the Gulf and
8 Texaco stations, you know, had lights on them. About
9 the size of the ones on the square, the light bulbs.
10 But, anyway, he had all kind of electrical supplies that
11 he sold. I'm not sure when he got out of that.

12 MR. MILLS: He was the one that had the
13 Magnolia station at the corner of Bell and Henry?

14 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah. Yeah. After he -- I
15 think the one on -- where Bob and Lloyd's was, I think
16 that was probably Texaco. It had hand pumps, and I'd go
17 by there on my paper route, and if they needed pumping
18 up or -- I would do him a favor, you know, and...

19 MR. MILLS: Just out of curiosity -- I
20 don't know -- but on the hand pumps -- the gasoline hand
21 pumps, did the attendant usually pump those or did you
22 pump those yourself?

23 MR. BARKLEY: No. It would be an
24 attendant.

25 MR. MILLS: Okay.

24

1 MR. BARKLEY: It was self- -- it wasn't
2 self-serve. It was full-service. Clean up the
3 windshield, air up the tires, anything that needed done
4 to sell a gallon of gas.

5 MR. MILLS: Okay.

6 MR. BARKLEY: Because it was -- money was
7 scarce.

8 MR. MILLS: Now, you mentioned grocery
9 stores, that you worked at a couple of different
10 locations. Where were the grocery stores? Were there
11 several? Were there a couple or --

12 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. In -- I worked for AG
13 Thompson for -- in the summer some and in the --
14 Saturday. About the time -- I guess when I was about a
15 senior in high school is when I was working for him.
16 You got nine cents an hour.

17 MR. MILLS: Is that at --

18 MR. BARKLEY: That's AG Thompson. He came
19 here in 1937, and the building that he moved into had
20 been the Golightly Chevrolet, and there's a picture in
21 here about Golightly in 193- -- well, this is '36.
22 And -- but on the -- the interesting thing about the
23 east side of the square, on the far corner of what --
24 east of AG's building was the Lemon's Texaco station,

25 and on the south wall of that station, that was about

25

1 the time 281 was getting organized and, you know,
2 getting -- getting all the help they could get. And
3 my -- my mother's brother -- I mean, my grandmother's
4 brother was Roy Seti, the daddy of Virgil Seti, and
5 Virgil and my mother were first cousins. And -- but
6 there was -- Uncle Roy sold cars, but there was a garage
7 back behind the office of that Texaco station there.
8 Across the street in about 1938 was the Piggly Wiggly.
9 A guy by the name of Bob Carmichael was manager, and a
10 girl that was -- that I went to Tarlton with, Cotton
11 Hiliard, I was at school with her daddy, too --

12 MS. CROUCH: Wow.

13 THE WITNESS: -- at Tarlton. And -- but,
14 anyway, Cotton Hiliard from Brady married Bob Carmichael
15 years later, but -- and another grocery store, Albert
16 Wiliford, who visited -- Wiliford ran the rest home up
17 here northwest of town with his wife. Albert put in a
18 grocery store after he left working for the Grants about
19 where the law office -- where -- where Andy --

20 MR. MCMULLEN: Campbell --

21 MS. CROUCH: Yeah.

22 THE WITNESS: -- Andy and Jim -- and they
23 were -- when you go past that -- that big store there
24 was Johnson's Dry Goods store, and then that was --

25 Emmet's brother, Art Emmet, had a furniture store. Then

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1 Ms. Alice McGarvey had a gift shop, and my Uncle Owen

2 Doggett had a watch repair shop right in there. Then

3 the stairway next was up -- would take you up to

4 Dr. Hoover's dental office. Then Garner Alvis moved

5 over here in about 1937 or '38, I think. The

6 interesting thing there, they were from Gatesville.

7 Garner Alvis was the name here. In Gatesville, it was

8 Alvis Garner. Each one got first billing. And then the

9 Koen & Foster Drug was next. Then the stairway took you

10 to Dr. Jack Cohen, dentist. Then the Ike Homer Feed

11 Store. Dr. F.C. Cathy was an optometrist. Clarence

12 Rush had left the Hamilton Bank & Trust, opened up an

13 insurance office, and then the Hamilton Bank & Trust was

14 on the corner. One other thing -- talking about the

15 saloons on the north side of the square, there was a

16 basement saloon right underneath the Williams furniture

17 store. I never did go in it.

18 MR. MILLS: That wasn't your favorite

19 hangout?

20 MR. BARKLEY: Huh-uh.

21 MR. MILLS: I've heard Hamilton had some

22 bottling companies, soft drink bottling companies.

23 MR. BARKLEY: Yes, sir.

24 MR. MILLS: Where were they at and how

25 long and what years did they operate? Do you remember?

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1 MR. BARKLEY: Well, up to not too many
2 years ago, they were known as the Pure -- Pure Products.

3 MR. MILLS: Purity Products?

4 MR. BARKLEY: Purity Products.

5 MR. MILLS: Does that --

6 MR. BARKLEY: And I can't think of what --
7 I think there was a beauty shop, maybe, recently in that
8 building. The guy that ran it most of that time was
9 Bubba Davis, and he lived in the house right west of
10 there. And across the street was the Wieser Mill, which
11 later became the Craig Mill Silos. And -- but the
12 Purity Products, they sold ice cream at ten cents a
13 pint. They also sold Coca-Cola. The bottles were 24 to
14 a wooden case. The case of Coke was \$0.80.

15 MR. MILLS: \$0.80?

16 MR. BARKLEY: \$0.80 for 24. And --

17 MR. MILLS: Did they bottle those Cokes
18 here? Do you know?

19 MR. BARKLEY: I can't remember.

20 MR. MILLS: Okay.

21 MR. BARKLEY: I kind of think in the early
22 days they might have, but that was back when Dr. Pepper
23 was bottling in Dublin, and my grandfather used to -- he
24 would drive over to Dublin to restock his little filling

25 station icebox, you know. He had Grapettes. He had

28

1 Nehis. He had Cokes, Dr. Pepper and --

2 MR. MILLS: Delaware Punch?

3 MR. BARKLEY: Right. Now, that --

4 MR. MILLS: Do you --

5 MR. BARKLEY: I got off, I guess, on the
6 grocery stores.

7 MR. MILLS: Well, I -- I had wondered --
8 I'm always curious about what the -- what citizens had
9 to eat and where they got their food.

10 MR. BARKLEY: Well, one more -- I'll
11 interrupt you.

12 MR. MILLS: Uh-huh.

13 MR. BARKLEY: One more. About the middle
14 of the south side, A&P had a grocery store at about the
15 same time Piggly Wiggly, but then on the corner down on
16 that south side was Bauman Lengefeld. It was first
17 Bowman's and then it was Bauman Lengefeld, David's
18 daddy.

19 MR. MILLS: Okay.

20 MR. BARKLEY: So -- and then A&P moved
21 from the south side of the square over there next door
22 to AG Thompson, and it'll be about where Hamilton Floral
23 is now, I guess. And about that time, Western Auto was
24 on the east side of the square. Dick Edgar was the

25 owner and manager of that, and then later it became

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1 Western Auto over -- this is -- well, I didn't answer
2 your question one time. When I left here in '41, I was
3 in Tarlton two -- three semesters. I did not get to
4 complete my fourth one. That's why I lost 35 hours. So
5 at that time when I went in April the 6th of '43 into
6 the Air Corps, then Claudine and I were gone from
7 Hamilton 29 years, and then we came back here in '70.
8 So it's been 40, what, -8 -- 47 years that I've been
9 back.

10 MR. MILLS: Okay. And your last position
11 with the bank -- what was your last position with the
12 Hamilton National Bank?

13 MR. BARKLEY: Chairman of the Board
14 Emeritus.

15 MR. MILLS: Okay. Okay. Well, you have
16 always been a fixture since we've been here, you and
17 Claudine.

18 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah.

19 MR. MILLS: I've got to tell this little
20 story, and I don't know whether I'll need to tell it
21 on -- on the air or not, but it's a -- it's a good
22 story. I was testifying at a criminal trial -- I had a
23 criminal trial once and Claudine was being voir dired I
24 think by Mr. McMullen, and he asked a standard question:

25 "Does anybody here know Randy Mills, the arresting

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1 officer?" And she raised her hand. "Is there anybody
2 here that would believe Randy, Mr. Mills, over the
3 testimony of the defendant or anybody else representing
4 the defendant?" And she raised her hand and she said "I
5 would," and she was immediately excused. But I remember
6 that, and the reason I remember it is because there were
7 expectations of the community -- that citizens had on
8 the community of their peace officers, and I tried to
9 live up to that. I think of that often, and I
10 appreciate her confidence in me.

11 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah. She said, "If Randy
12 Mills said it, that's it."

13 MR. MILLS: At any rate, some other
14 questions -- y'all might have some questions for Bill
15 that I've overlooked and...

16 MR. MCMULLEN: For the record, I'm Andy
17 McMullen. And, Bill, thank you so much for giving us
18 this information. It's been wonderful to hear this
19 history, and it has prompted me to ask a question that
20 I -- I hadn't planned to ask any questions, but during
21 the Depression, how -- how did people in Hamilton County
22 deal with it? Did it overwhelm them, or what was the
23 psychological effect of the people of Hamilton County?

24 MR. BARKLEY: Well, of course, growing up

25 as a child during the early -- well, in the '20s -- and

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1 then it just seemed to be everybody accepted it. They
2 didn't like it, but there was nothing you could do about
3 it, and you'd raise your own gardens. Both of my
4 grandparents had a garden. My Grandparents Doggett had
5 a cow up here on West Ross, the other grandparents,
6 and -- so my mother would oftentimes go over to my
7 Grandmother Doggett's on Monday and do the laundry. You
8 know, you just -- it was a family operation every way
9 that you could, and people were -- both of my
10 grandparents -- the Grandparent Barkleys owned that
11 two-story house. They had two apartments upstairs that
12 they rented out. The front apartment of the Doggett
13 grandparents, they rented that out as an apartment.
14 Anybody that had an extra room on their house, you know,
15 they rented it out if they could find a taker. And so
16 it was just -- you just lived with it. That was -- that
17 may not answer your question.

18 MR. MCMULLEN: No. You've answered it
19 very well, but did they -- was there -- it was in the
20 Depression, but was there a sense of depression among
21 the people in Hamilton County? Did they have a
22 psychological feeling of depression?

23 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah, I -- I think so, but,
24 you know, it -- it was somewhere along the line you just

25 started living with it, and -- but I'm sure that as we

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1 would look at it today from a psychological standpoint,
2 you know, there were probably a lot of people that just
3 didn't know what to think maybe.

4 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay.

5 MR. BARKLEY: But they lived with it.

6 MR. MCMULLEN: And the last question is,
7 we -- we have had the luxury in recent times -- and I'm
8 going to say post '50s -- of having a psychology of
9 trying to do better, trying to come up with new ideas,
10 trying to develop things or make things work in a
11 business setting, and, of course, your father was so
12 involved at the Hamilton National Bank, but did that --
13 did that Depression -- did it quash that feeling of
14 wanting to figure out a way to do better? Were people
15 ingenious? Were people trying to figure out a way in a
16 business setting to make money or were they just
17 overwhelmed by it and knew that it wasn't possible at
18 that time?

19 MR. BARKLEY: Well, I think they were
20 overwhelmed by it, and I don't really think -- and I was
21 gone, you know, from here in the '40s and the '50s.

22 MR. MCMULLEN: I'm confining my question
23 to the '30s, for example.

24 MR. BARKLEY: I think it was just

25 overwhelming probably, and I don't really think people

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1 maybe had their -- felt like they had their foot in the
2 door until after the war was over, maybe.

3 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay.

4 MR. BARKLEY: I believe.

5 MR. MCMULLEN: Thank you.

6 MR. MILLS: Jane.

7 MS. CROUCH: I don't really have -- I
8 don't have questions, but I thank you very much, Bill,
9 for being here. I've -- I've enjoyed listening to you.

10 MR. BARKLEY: Well, thank you. I -- you
11 know, I ramble on. I never know when to hush.

12 MS. CROUCH: We wanted to hear what your
13 thoughts were, and you told us.

14 MR. MCMULLEN: Thank you.

15 Sharon, let me give you this.

16 MRS. MILLS: Do you have any memories of
17 the railroad station?

18 MR. BARKLEY: Oh, yeah. I can remember as
19 you go out toward Blue Ridge, as the railroad tracks
20 came right around that big house just this side, the
21 Jones house, there was a little -- I guess a little
22 building that was called Porfa. Porfa was short for
23 poor farm, and the poor farm, when they brought it into
24 town, was down right behind where the Church of

1 Porter Willis's house was, about two houses from your
2 house.

3 MS. CROUCH: Uh-huh.

4 MR. BARKLEY: And -- but I can remember as
5 a kid, you know, the -- the poor farm was down there,
6 and people -- I don't know how many people were there,
7 but the ones that couldn't work, couldn't make a living
8 anywhere doing anything, the County kept them going.
9 And then the railroad, they -- I don't know. I
10 forgot -- I've got in here -- or here where they put the
11 tracks down in 1911, I think, and that was the cotton
12 belt. There was another line that went from here to
13 Stephenville, and -- but they took up the tracks I think
14 in 1939 or '40. I thought it might have been a little
15 later than that, but as a kid, I can remember going
16 down -- and the railway express, you know, had those
17 little go-carts that they would haul the luggage on.
18 They had one or two of those. I can remember the
19 manager of that at one time. They lived across the
20 creek from the grandparents up here on West Ross -- West
21 Ross. In fact, they lived in that house which sometimes
22 is black and white. They lived in that house. And -- I
23 shouldn't have said that.

24 MR. MILLS: Just the facts. Well, Bill,

25 thank you very much for being here. It's very

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1 enlightening.

2 MR. BARKLEY: Okay. I appreciate you
3 asking me.

4 MR. MILLS: We just -- we just don't have
5 that information in our heads anymore. You do.

6 MR. BARKLEY: Well, it's very important.
7 I appreciate you doing this because, you know, it needs
8 to be known, I think.

9 MR. MILLS: Once it's -- once it's lost,
10 it's gone. It can't be regained.

11 MR. MCMULLEN: That's right.

12 MR. MILLS: Well, thank you very much.

13 MR. MCMULLEN: Thank you.

14 MR. BARKLEY: Okay.

15 MR. MCMULLEN: Thank you.

16 MR. BARKLEY: Just like I --

17 MR. MCMULLEN: Go ahead.

18 MR. BARKLEY: I'm off the air now?

19 MR. MCMULLEN: No. No. We're -- we're
20 still wanting to hear what you've got to say if you have
21 anything to add.

22 MR. BARKLEY: Well, just like a couple of
23 days ago, I called a friend of mine who stood up with
24 Claudine and me when we got married. He lives -- he's a

1 a well-known attorney, and -- but, anyway, he and I went
2 into the service together. We were in Wichita together,
3 and then I washed out, but he eventually wound up being
4 a P-51 pilot. And he and one other lady that -- that
5 was at Tarlton when I was there, they're about the only
6 ones I can remember, you know, that are still living.
7 But, anyway, I checked with Forest, and his wife passed
8 away about a year and a half ago and Claudine passed
9 away seven years ago. The guy that was best man at that
10 wed- -- there were four Army guys that stood up with me
11 in the First Methodist Church, Wichita, Kansas. And --
12 but the guy that was best man was Bob Boyett from
13 Marshall, Texas. He passed away about four years ago,
14 and his wife passed away about two years ago. I talked
15 to the daughter about two or three days ago. She lives
16 in Dripping Springs, and -- but Bob was my best man, and
17 the other two guys that stood up, one of them was the
18 son of a General, and the other one I think was from
19 Greensboro, a cotton farmer, you know, that is -- was
20 for daddy. So when we were talking about grocery
21 stores, there was a Rankin grocery store at the same
22 time on the east side after you got past A&P while it
23 was still there, and then Woods and --

24 MS. CROUCH: Robinson.

25 MR. MCMULLEN: Robinson.

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1 MR. BARKLEY: Yeah. They -- all of these
2 things, you know, that -- they went in at different
3 times and some of them went in and out and came back in.

4 MS. CROUCH: I have a question for you.
5 You're a longtime member of the Hamilton Lion's Club,
6 right?

7 MR. BARKLEY: Right.

8 MS. CROUCH: How far back do you go?

9 MR. BARKLEY: 1970.

10 MS. CROUCH: 1970. Okay. Now --

11 MR. BARKLEY: So that's 47, -8 years.

12 MS. CROUCH: So the Lion's Club was in
13 existence when you joined it?

14 MR. BARKLEY: Oh, yes.

15 MS. CROUCH: Yeah.

16 MR. BARKLEY: They were in existence first
17 in 1928.

18 MS. CROUCH: 1928. Okay.

19 MR. BARKLEY: The first charter up there
20 is '28. But then during the Depression, apparently they
21 didn't have enough money to pay the dues of the members,
22 and so the Lion's Club cut them off.

23 MS. CROUCH: Ah.

24 MR. BARKLEY: And then back in the

1 so they had been in existence since then.

2 MS. CROUCH: Yeah. Thank you. Good
3 group.

4 MR. MCMULLEN: Good job, Bill. And, you
5 know, this statement that's -- you know, we didn't think
6 we would hear it today, but it -- it puts in such great
7 perspective the -- the Depression era when the Lion's
8 Club didn't have the dues to pay.

9 MS. CROUCH: Yeah.

10 MR. MCMULLEN: That just really brings it
11 home how -- how devastating it was and, yet, the country
12 survived.

13 MR. BARKLEY: Uh-huh.

14 MS. CROUCH: Uh-huh.

15 MR. BARKLEY: Well, I don't know what the
16 dues were then. I mentioned awhile ago when I was
17 working for AG that I made nine cents an hour. That was
18 Saturday -- a Saturday boy. You'd go to work -- well,
19 if you were lucky, you got to work all day for a dollar
20 and a half. It -- all day was from like 6:30 in the
21 morning to 11:30 at night. You -- if you worked half a
22 day, you made a dollar. You'd go to work about 1:00 in
23 the afternoon and -- but the reason you worked at 11:30
24 that Saturday night was that the wholesale grocery truck

25 would back in, and we would unload 100-pound sacks of

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1 potatoes, a 100-pound sacks of salt, a 100-pound sacks
2 of sugar. I can remember one Saturday -- and I wasn't
3 as big around as a pencil in- -- into my high school
4 days, but one of our customers at AG had parked over
5 here by the Farmers Grocery across from the jail, and I
6 can't remember if that guy bought 100-pound sacks of
7 sugar or if I just thought he did, but, anyway, it might
8 have been a 24-pound sack of flour, but whatever it was,
9 for a little old teenager that big around, man, I didn't
10 think I'd ever -- and a guy by the name of Harvey
11 McKinley was managing the AG at that time, assistant
12 manager, I guess. Phelo was the manager -- or Phelo and
13 AG, and -- but Harvey had me step down off of the curb
14 and then he'd put that sack of whatever it was on my
15 shoulders. If I had stepped down off of the curb, I'd
16 have just gone on down through the soft pavement, you
17 know. So that was -- that kind of tells you -- you
18 know, working from 6:30 in the morning to 11:30 at
19 night, and then by the -- the end of the -- when I was
20 getting out of high school and all, Claudine and I were
21 going steady, and just to show you, when -- if you
22 weren't going with -- or dating a girl, it would cost
23 you a dime to go to the Texas theater, but if you
24 started dating, it went to \$0.25. So Claudine a lot of

25 times would be waiting on me to get off work. We'd go

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1 to the midnight show, and I'd have to pay \$0.25 and
2 \$0.25 for her, and we would buy a bottle of RC Coke for
3 a nickel. And may I inject one other thing? Where
4 the -- where we're sitting right now, my Granddad Wood
5 Barkley, this was his last service station, as I
6 remember it, and when Claudine was a junior or a senior,
7 she'd ride her bike down here, and -- and my granddad
8 felt real -- whatever he could do to help Claudine, you
9 know, he wanted to do that. So he'd let her park her
10 bicycle here, and she'd walk on up the hill. But in --
11 whenever they built the post office in '37 or '38,
12 Ms. Hughes, Paris, built these three buildings. One
13 building, three sections. The one on the south side by
14 the wall was a little rest- -- cafe. We didn't have
15 many restaurants. Most were cafes. And he charged a
16 dime for hamburgers. Mr. Coaliron had his hamburger --
17 a little metal building down there, what -- where
18 Lily's -- right in that area, and Mr. Coaliron would
19 sell you ten cents -- three for a quarter.

20 MS. CROUCH: Wow.

21 MR. BARKLEY: And his motto was, "You'll
22 find them much better if you'll eat them while they're
23 hot."

24 MS. CROUCH: Wow. Wow.

25 MR. BARKLEY: Anyway, I got off on another

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1 tangent.

2 MR. MILLS: Thank you again very much,

3 Bill.

4 MR. MCMULLEN: Thank you very much.

5 MS. CROUCH: It's been very interesting.

6 MR. MCMULLEN: Very -- it has been good to

7 be with you.

8 MS. CROUCH: Yeah, it has been.

9 MR. MCMULLEN: All right.

10 (INTERVIEW CONCLUDED)

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATION

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3 I, Jamie Cooley, Certified Shorthand

4 Reporter for the State of Texas, do hereby certify that

5 the above and foregoing interview contains a true and

6 correct transcription of all portions of the

7 proceedings, all of which were reported by me.

8 IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, witness my hand on

9 this the 31st day of January, 2019.

10

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