

**THE WILLIAM BREMAN JEWISH HERITAGE MUSEUM
ESTHER AND HERBERT TAYLOR
JEWISH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF ATLANTA
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN
ATLANTA JEWISH FEDERATION**

MEMOIRIST: SAM MASSELL
INTERVIEWER: RAY ANN KREMER
LOCATION: ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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INTERVIEW BEGINS

<Begin Tape 1, Side 1>

Ray Ann: Today is August 10, 1992. This is Ray Ann Kremer interviewing Sam Massell at his office for the Atlanta Jewish Oral History Collection sponsored by the American Jewish Committee,¹ the National Council of Jewish Women² and the Atlanta Jewish Federation.³ Mr. Massell, I'd like to go way back to the beginning. Do you remember who came to this country in your family and where they came from?

Sam: My father [Sam A. Massell Sr.]⁴ was born here in Atlanta [Georgia] but his father [Raphael "Ralph" Massell]⁵ had came here from New York, I don't know the date but he came here and went into the wholesale grocery business. They lived on Kennedy Street near downtown

¹ The American Jewish Committee (AJC) was founded in 1906 to safeguard the welfare and security of Jews worldwide. It is one of the oldest Jewish advocacy organizations in the United States.

² The National Council of Jewish Women is an organization of volunteers and advocates, founded in the 1890's, who turn progressive ideals in advocacy and philanthropy inspired by Jewish values. They strive to improve the quality of life for women, children and families.

³ The Atlanta Jewish Federation was formally incorporated in 1967 and is the result of the merger of the Atlanta Federation for Jewish Social Service founded in 1905 as the Federation of Jewish Charities; the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Federation founded in 1936 as the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund; and the Atlanta Jewish Community Council founded in 1945. The organization was renamed the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta in 1997. The Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta raises funds, which are dispersed throughout the Jewish community. Services also include caring for Jews in need locally and around the world, community outreach, leadership development, and educational opportunities. It is part of the Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA).

⁴ Sam A. Massell Sr. (1892-1961) was an Atlanta attorney. He was in the real estate and construction business with his brothers Levi Massell and Benjamin J. Massell before opening a law office. He attended Boys' High School and Atlanta Law School. He founded and published the *Atlanta Democrat*. He was the father of former Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell.

⁵ Raphael "Ralph" Moses Massell (1861-1936).

Atlanta. My mother [Florence Rubin Massell]⁶ was born in St. Louis [Missouri]. Her mother [Rebecca Brown Rubin]⁷ came from Russia. Her father [Solomon “Sol” Rubin]⁸ was born in New York, the son of a rabbi. I don’t know where his father was born. They were in the department store business. My grandfather [Sol Rubin], maternal grandfather, was a buyer at Rich’s⁹ in its early days. They only had a handful of buyers and [he] was very important to the operation. Subsequently, he opened his own department store named Rubins on Peachtree [Street] across from Macy’s¹⁰ which was then Davison-Paxon.¹¹

Ray Ann: Can I go back a minute? What kind of rabbi was your grandfather in New York? Do you know?

Sam: No, Reform,¹² but I don’t know.

Ray Ann: He came from Russia?

Sam: No, my mother’s mother came from Russia. My mother’s father was born in New York. His father was a rabbi but I don’t know where he came from.

Ray Ann: There weren’t too many Reform rabbis in those days. [unintelligible].

Sam: I don’t really know. My sister might know. Sherry Solomon is in Savannah and would probably know a lot more about my family, generally, than I or my brother.

<Break in tape.>

⁶ Florence Rubin Massell (1901-1977).

⁷ Rebecca Brown Rubin (1877-1967).

⁸ Solomon “Sol” Rubin (1877-1947) was a native of Charleston, South Carolina.

⁹ Rich’s was a department store retail chain, headquartered in Atlanta that operated in the southern United States from 1867 until 2005. The retailer began in Atlanta as M. Rich & Co. dry goods store and was run by Mauritius Reich (anglicized to ‘Morris Rich’), a Hungarian Jewish immigrant. It was renamed M. Rich & Bro. in 1877, when his brother Emanuel was admitted into the partnership, and was again renamed M. Rich & Bros. in 1884 when the third brother Daniel joined the partnership. In 1929, the company was reorganized and the retail portion of the business became simply, Rich’s. Many of the former Rich’s stores today form the core of Macy’s Central, an Atlanta-based division of Macy’s, Inc., which formerly operated as Federated Department Stores, Inc.

¹⁰ Macy’s, originally R. H. Macy & Co., is a chain of department stores owned by American multinational corporation Macy’s, Inc. As of January 2014, it operates 850 department stores locations in the continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam, with a prominent Herald Square flagship location in New York City.

¹¹ Davison’s of Atlanta was a department store chain and an Atlanta shopping institution. Davison’s first opened its doors in Atlanta in 1891 and had its origins in the Davison & Douglas Company. In 1901, the store changed its name to Davison-Paxon-Stokes after the retirement of E. Lee Douglas from the business and the appointment of Frederic John Paxon as treasurer. Davison-Paxon-Stokes sold out to R.H. Macy & Co. in 1925. By 1927, R.H. Macy built the Peachtree Street store that still stands today. That same year the company dropped the ‘Stokes’ to become Davison Paxon Co. Davison’s took the Macy’s name in 1986.

¹² Reform Judaism is a division within Judaism, especially in North America and Western Europe. Historically, it began in the nineteenth century. In general, the Reform movement maintains that Judaism and Jewish traditions should be modernized and compatible with participation in Western culture. While the *Torah* remains the law, in Reform Judaism women are included (mixed seating, bat mitzvah and women rabbis), music is allowed in the services, and most of the service is in English.

Sam: Let's see. Father, either when he first got married or maybe as a bachelor, worked as secretary to the Atlanta Crackers,¹³ the forerunner of the Atlanta Braves.¹⁴ He also had a booking agency for entertainment, which was interesting because I have a daughter who is in the entertainment field.

Ray Ann: That was his business, a kind of entertainment promoter?

Sam: Yes, [he was] secretary to the Atlanta Crackers, in those early years, I think as a bachelor. When they got married, they first lived in a . . . they first lived I think in the old Imperial Hotel,¹⁵ I know they spent some time there.

Ray Ann: Do you know how they met?

Sam: No. I know they spent some time living in the Imperial Hotel for a while but I don't know if it was before they got married. They didn't live together until they got married. Times have changed.

Ray Ann: Did they go to college?

Sam: She went to Miriam Webster in St. Louis [Missouri],¹⁶ I think it's in St. Louis. He went to Boys' High¹⁷ here in Atlanta and Atlanta Law School¹⁸ and became a lawyer. He went in

¹³ The Atlanta Crackers were a minor league baseball team based in Atlanta between 1901 and 1965. The Crackers were Atlanta's home team until the Atlanta Braves moved from Milwaukee in 1966. The Crackers played in Ponce de Leon Park from 1907 until a fire destroyed the all-wood stadium in 1923. Spiller Field (a stadium later also called 'Ponce de Leon Park'), became their home starting in the 1924 season. The new park was constructed around a magnolia tree that became part of the outfield.

¹⁴ The Atlanta Braves are an American professional baseball team based in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The Braves compete in Major League Baseball (MLB) as a member of the National League (NL) East division. The Braves played home games at Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium from 1966 to 1996, and Turner Field from 1997 to 2016. Since 2017, their home stadium has been SunTrust Park, a new stadium 10 miles (16 km) northwest of downtown Atlanta in the Cumberland neighborhood of Cobb County. The Braves were the World Series champion team in 1995.

¹⁵ The Imperial Hotel is a historic eight-story building located at 355 Peachtree Street in Atlanta, Georgia that was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. It was completed in 1910 and was abandoned during the 1980's. It was remodeled and reopened with apartments for former homeless and special needs residents. It is now known as The Commons at Imperial Hotel.

¹⁶ Probably a reference to Webster University, a private non-denominational, non-profit university located in St. Louis, Missouri. It was founded by the Sisters of Loretto, a Catholic religious organization, in 1915, as a small liberal arts college for women. It was renamed Webster College in 1924 and in 1962 became a co-educational institution. It was renamed Webster University in 1983.

¹⁷ Boys' High School was founded in 1924 and is now known as Henry W. Grady High School. It is part of the Atlanta Public School System. It has had many notable alumni, including S. Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A. It is located in Midtown Atlanta.

¹⁸ Atlanta Law School was a private, night law school for working professionals and others seeking a legal education. The school's faculty members were practicing lawyers and judges from across Georgia. In 1890, Hamilton Douglas, Sr., Hooper Alexander, Archibald H. Davis and Charles A. Read, began night law classes for those who were unable to attend law classes during the day. The school closed its doors in 1994.

with his brothers, Levi¹⁹ and Ben,²⁰ and they formed the Massell Realty Company. They became the largest developers in the Southeast. When the [Great] Depression²¹ came, he left and went into full time practicing law. Ben went back into real estate developing. They are all three deceased now.

Ray Ann: What did Levi do?

Sam: Levi went back into real estate, I think. He was the father of Charles and Lee Massell. Lee is still living here in Atlanta. Charlie is deceased.

Ray Ann: What was their mother's name? Maybe we better get a little family tree here.

Sam: Mynnie [Simmons Massell Reitler]²² was her name. She was, I think, from Nashville [Tennessee]. I'm not sure about that.

Ray Ann: Ben married . . .

Sam: Ben's first wife was named Fannie [Wolfson Massell].²³ My parents lived first in an apartment there on Piedmont across from Piedmont Park²⁴ and moved . . .

<Break in tape>

Sam: They lived in an apartment building on Piedmont Road across from Piedmont Park. They later moved to an apartment building on Peachtree Road, I mean on Ponce de Leon Avenue²⁵ right at Piedmont Avenue, which was called the Massellton Apartments.²⁶ They are still

¹⁹ Levi Massell (1888-1937) was a civic leader in the Atlanta community. He was a founding member of the Atlanta Tammany Club and a member of the Masons, Shriners, and Elks. He and his brothers Ben and Sam founded the Massell Realty Company and president of the Atlanta Desk and Table Company.

²⁰ Benjamin "Ben" J. Massell (1886-1962) was a civic and community leader in both the Jewish and general communities of Atlanta. In the early 1900's, he and his two brothers, Sam and Levi, founded the Massell Realty Company, which had a hand in the development and sale of several landmark properties in Atlanta. Civic leader Ivan Allen, Sr., was known to say, "Sherman burned Atlanta and Ben Massell built it back." Ben Massell was the uncle of former Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell.

²¹ The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding World War II. The time of the Great Depression varied across nations, but in most countries it started in about 1929 and lasted until the late 1930's or early 1940's. It was the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the twentieth century.

²² Mynnie Simmons Massell Reitler (1887-1987) was born in Eufala, Alabama. From the age of five, she resided in Atlanta, Georgia until the death of her first husband Levi Massell in 1937, when she married Louis Reitler and moved to Nashville, Tennessee.

²³ Fannie Wolfson Massell (1890-1941) was born in Savannah, Georgia and resided in Atlanta, Georgia for 27 years after marrying Ben J. Massell, a prominent real estate developer.

²⁴ Piedmont Park is a 189-acre park located just north of downtown Atlanta. It was originally designed by Joseph Forsyth Johnson to host the first Piedmont Exhibition in 1887.

²⁵ Ponce de Leon Avenue, often simply called "Ponce," provides a link between Atlanta, Decatur, Clarkston, and Stone Mountain, Georgia.

²⁶ Massellton Apartments is a three-story garden apartment complex on Ponce de Leon Avenue in Midtown Atlanta, Georgia that was built in 1924 by Massell Realty Company and designed by architect Emil C. Seiz. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999 and is now known as Massellton Condominiums.

standing. They were one of the first modern apartment buildings, fireproof, [with] garbage chutes, inside parking, and all kinds of “modern” conveniences.

Ray Ann: Was that developed by the family?

Sam: Yes, that’s how it got the name.

Ray Ann: How do you spell that?

Sam: It was spelled M-A-S-S-E-L-L-T-O-N. They just added on to it. I was just there for a month in the Massellton apartments.

Ray Ann: You were born when?

Sam: On August 26, 1927. We moved to Oakdale Road, 1280 Oakdale Road. There I lived for about 11 or 12 years, 11 years.

Ray Ann: Where is that?

Sam: It’s in Druid Hills²⁷ down off North Decatur Road, between North Decatur Road and Emory Road. It was the last block of Oakdale Road. It was in the *Driving Miss Daisy*²⁸ community. We moved from there to Briarcliff Road, 1077 Briarcliff Road, near The By Way. We were there for probably three, four, or five years, then we moved to St. Charles Place, 1280 St. Charles Place. I lived there another four or five years until I got married. Going back to the childhood part, I attended Druid Hills grade school and high school.²⁹ I went to University of Georgia³⁰ and went into the [United States Army] Air Force[s]. I went back to the University of Georgia, went to Georgia State University³¹ and then Atlanta Law School. I left out Emory

²⁷ Druid Hills is an affluent neighborhood in the city of Atlanta, Georgia. The main campus of Emory University and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are located in Druid Hills. Druid Hills was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and was one of his last commissions. A showpiece of the design was the string of parks along Ponce de Leon Avenue, which was designated as Druid Hills Parks and Parkways and listed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 11, 1975. The remainder of the development was listed on the Register as the Druid Hills Historic District on October 25, 1979.

²⁸ *Driving Miss Daisy* (1987) is the first in what is known as Alfred Uhry’s ‘Atlanta Trilogy’ of plays which earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Uhry adapted it into the screenplay for the 1989 Academy Award winning film of the same name. The film starred Jessica Tandy (Daisy Werthan), Morgan Freeman (Hoke Colburn), and Dan Aykroyd (Boolie Werthan). The story of ‘Miss Daisy,’ a Southern Jewish widow and Hoke, her black chauffeur, is set in Atlanta between 1948 and 1973 as their 25-year friendship reflects the social changes in the American South.

²⁹ Emory University founded the Emory School in the Fishburne Building on the Emory Campus in 1919 as a public school for faculty children. In 1928, the K-11 school moved to its current site at 1798 Haygood Drive and renamed Druid Hills High School. In 1959, the elementary students were moved to Fernbank Elementary School and Druid Hills High School then housed grades 8-12.

³⁰ The University of Georgia, founded in 1785, also referred to as UGA or simply Georgia, is an American public research university in the city of Athens in the U.S. state of Georgia.

³¹ Initially intended as a night school, Georgia State University was established in 1913 as the Georgia Institute of Technology’s Evening School of Commerce. A reorganization of the university system of Georgia in the 1930’s led to the school becoming the Atlanta Extension Center of the University System of Georgia and allowed night students

[University].³² I went to Emory [University] before I went to the Air Force. I went to the University of Georgia first and then I transferred to Emory [University]. I went into the Air Force and then I went back to the University of Georgia, and then Georgia State [University].

Ray Ann: You got your degree from where?

Sam: From Georgia State [University] I got a bachelor of commercial science degree and I got my LLB degree from Atlanta Law School. Then from there, took some courses at Georgia Tech³³ and some at Woodrow Wilson Law School.³⁴ I was in there for a couple of semesters. I got married in 1952. [unintelligible]. I have three children. My first job was with, interestingly enough, was in the association management business which is what I'm doing now. It was with Marshall Mantler³⁵ often known as 'Buddy'. It was with the National Association of Women's and Children's Apparel Salesmen [Guild] (NAWCAS), in charge of their publications. I went into real estate, with Allan-Grayson Realty for years, during which time I got involved in the civic.

Ray Ann: Before we start getting into all that, we've gotten this quick run-through but now I want the story and a picture of what things were like. Let's go back to when you can really remember your young childhood, going to school. Did you go to school with lots of Jewish kids or was it pretty mixed?

to earn degrees from several colleges in the university System. During this time, the school was divided into two divisions: Georgia Evening College, and Atlanta Junior College. In 1947, the school became affiliated with the University of Georgia and was named the 'Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia.' The school was later removed from the University of Georgia in 1955 and became the Georgia State College of Business Administration. In 1961 the name was shortened to Georgia State College. It became Georgia State University in 1969.

³² Emory University is a private university in Atlanta. It was founded in 1836 by a small group of Methodists and named in honor of Methodist bishop John Emory. Today it has nearly 3,000 faculty members and is ranked 20th among national universities in U.S. News & World Report's 2014 rankings. Emory University was officially desegregated in September of 1962 and admitted its first African American undergraduate in the fall of 1963.

³³ The Georgia Institute of Technology (commonly referred to as 'Georgia Tech' or 'Tech') is a public research university in Atlanta, Georgia, in the United States. It is a part of the University System of Georgia. The educational institution was founded in 1885 as the Georgia School of Technology as part of Reconstruction plans to build an industrial economy in the post-Civil War Southern United States.

³⁴ The Woodrow Wilson College of Law was founded in 1933 in Atlanta and was located at 830 West Peachtree Street. In 1998 the State Bar of Georgia modified the requirements for bar admission allowing only ABA (American Bar Association) accredited law school graduates to take the bar exam. This rule change affected the three night law schools in Georgia, Woodrow Wilson, the Atlanta Law School and John Marshall Law School. The Woodrow Wilson College of Law attempted to merge with Georgia State University but was unsuccessful and closed. Its library and records are housed at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta. Atlanta Law School also closed. John Marshall Law School was able to meet the requirements of the ABA and is still open. (2015)

³⁵ Marshall J. "Bud" Mantler (1918-2008) was a long-time Atlanta resident who was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut. In 1949 he became the executive director for the National Association of Women's and Children's Apparel Salesmen Guild (NAWCAS). He was an aide to General George Patton during World War II, attaining the rank of Major. He was one of the liberators of the Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps. He was the recipient of a Bronze Star and the French government's Croix de Guerre. He was given the Lion of Judah Peace Award from the Atlanta State of Israel Bonds Committee in 1971.

Sam: There was an interesting experience, I think one that taught me a lot and helped me later in the political arena because it taught me a sensitivity to people who are from a different background. It was a county school but serving Druid Hills, which at that time was the Buckhead³⁶ of yesteryear with a lot of very wealthy families. Being a county school, it also had a school bus that went out to rural areas to pick up kids from very low-income families. Although it wasn't racially mixed with standard operational education at that time . . . There wasn't any racially mixed schools. It was mixed socially, economic[ally] and religious[ly] to a large degree. We had chauffeur-driven children coming up in limousines and we had barefoot kids in blue jeans from the school bus mixed together. I don't know the percentage of Jewish children but I would guess maybe five percent or ten percent. A lot of the wealthy community of the time lived in Druid Hills.

Ray Ann: Who were some of the people in your class, names we might recognize?

Sam: One of the Orkins was Shirley. Not Shirley. I'm not sure of the first name but one of the Orkin³⁷ daughters. The Helds, his father [Charles Henry Held]³⁸ was president of Atlanta Envelope Company³⁹ and Atlanta Envelope [unintelligible]. Arthur Heyman⁴⁰ whose father [Herman Heyman]⁴¹ was a prominent lawyer. Donald Chait.⁴² No, he didn't go there. He went to Boys' High.

³⁶ Buckhead is an area located northwest of Downtown Atlanta with gracious homes, elegant hotels, shopping centers, restaurants, and high-rise condominium and office buildings. Buckhead is a major commercial and financial center of the Southeast, and it is the third-largest business district in Atlanta, behind Downtown and Midtown.

³⁷ Orkin is a nation-wide pest control services firm headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, that was started in 1901 by Otto Orkin. Otto Orkin was a Latvian immigrant who founded Orkin, one of the largest consumer services companies in the United States. Known as "Otto the Rat Man," he began by selling rat poison door to door. Orkin established his first office in the American National Bank Building in Richmond, Virginia. Eventually he moved to Atlanta and went on to build the largest pest control company in the United States. In 1964, the Rollins Company purchased Orkin for \$62.4 million. Otto's two daughters were Bernice Kaye, born in 1928, and Gloria Bergman, born in 1930.

³⁸ Charles Henry Held (1898-1976) was a partner and co-manager of the Atlanta Envelope Company after the death of his father-in-law and the firm's founder, Sigmund Guthman.

³⁹ Atlanta Envelope Company was founded in 1893 by Sigmund Guthman, an immigrant from Germany. After his death in 1943, it was co-managed by his nephew Sigfried Guthman and sons-in-law Charles Held and David Goldwasser. It was acquired by National Linen Service in 1964 to create National Service Industries (NSI).

⁴⁰ Arthur Heyman II was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1926. He graduated from Druid Hills High School and graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in Economics. He served in the United States Navy during and after World War II. He sold life insurance and later went into real estate development.

⁴¹ Herman Heyman (1898-1968) was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He was a graduate of Tech High School, the University of Georgia, and Columbia University Law School. He served as a second lieutenant in the First World War. Upon graduation, he opened his own practice, eventually joining the firm of his father, who was also a prominent Atlanta attorney. Along with Elliott Abram, he successfully argued the case that abolished Georgia's county unit system which had provided outsized political influence to the smaller counties. In the Jewish community, he served as president for The Temple, the Federation of Social Services, the Atlanta chapter of the American Jewish

Ray Ann: How do you spell that?

Sam: C-H-A-I-T. He went to Boys' High. He lived on Briarcliff Road.

Ray Ann: We skipped from elementary school to high school.

Sam: It was all one.

Ray Ann: You just kind of went through together.

Sam: Yes, I spent a lot of years in the same building. The same building is still standing incidentally.

Ray Ann: Really? What is it now?

Sam: Druid Hills. It's still Druid Hills but just a high school now. It's not a grade school and a high school. We missed . . . Charles Goldstein⁴³ went to school with me [unintelligible]. His son is still there. Charlie now lives in Miami.

Ray Ann: Charlie who?

Sam: Goldstein. The Jewish kids were pretty well-accepted. Charlie, in fact, was voted most popular. He was president of the student body. I helped him. He's the one that . . . I'll give him the credit or the blame for getting me involved in politics. He asked me to paint his signs—he was running for student body president—which I did. I was actually an introvert at that time. Maybe I had an inferiority complex as well, which I believe all [unintelligible]. How's that for an egotistical statement? An introvert can paint signs, which I did at home: 'Goldstein for president'. He ran and he got elected. He looked at me and said, "You're going to be the student body treasurer." The president appoints the treasurer. I didn't want to be one. He insisted. He thought I was being coy. I thought he was being unreasonable because I'd already done him a favor. I didn't want to do him another favor. He insisted, I did, and I liked it. I did well at it. I think it gave me the confidence I needed. It changed my whole life. From that day on I started getting very involved in student programs at school.

Ray Ann: How old were you?

Committee, and the Atlanta Lodge of B'nai B'rith. He was also president of the Atlanta Community Planning Council and the Legal Aid Society.

⁴² Donald C. Chait (1928-2014) a native and life-long resident of Atlanta, Georgia was a graduate of Boys' High School in Atlanta and received his B.S. degree from Duke University and his M.D. from Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, GA. His medical practice specialized in hematology, oncology, and hemophilia.

⁴³ Charles J. Goldstein (1928-2018) was born in Birmingham, Alabama and lived in the Druid Hills area of Atlanta during his youth. He relocated to Miami, Florida after serving in the Merchant Marines. He founded and operated the 24 Collection, an upscale retail chain that provided clothing and accessories for the TV show "Miami Vice."

Sam: I was 15 when I painted the signs, 16 when I became treasurer, and 16 when I went off to University of Georgia. [I] became a big man on campus because: one, he had instilled this initiative or whatever; and two, I have to admit that most of the able bodied men were off to war then.

Ray Ann: What year was this?

Sam: That was 1944, summer of 1944, when I went to [University of] Georgia. Later I went into service, too.

Ray Ann: You could go to [University of] Georgia because you were so young and didn't go in the army right away?

Sam: That's right, I wasn't old enough. I was 16. Then I went into the service.

Ray Ann: What was University of Georgia like when you went? Were there mostly women in the student body?

Sam: Yes, mostly women. In fact, I don't know how much you want in the way of anecdotes.

Ray Ann: We want them all.

Sam: We had, in our fraternity . . . Most fraternities were closed because the men were off at war. Our fraternity, Phi Epsilon Pi⁴⁴ . . .

Ray Ann: . . . Phi Epsilon Pi.

Sam: . . . Phi Epsilon Pi, which later became part of ZBT. It was still open but had gotten down to one active [member] and he lived over a store in downtown Athens. He initiated three of us and he pledged three of us. Sonny Held⁴⁵ was one of them and Bobby Brail.⁴⁶

Ray Ann: Held is H-E-L-D.

Sam: Yes, and Brail is B-R-A-I-L. Bobby also went to Druid Hills. He lived in the Emory area where we lived. Bobby and Sonny and I pledged Phi Ep[silon Pi]. The embarrassing part about this was this was my first political coup because the one active flunked out of school. The alumni in Atlanta had to rush up there to initiate the three of us otherwise there wouldn't be any

⁴⁴ Phi Epsilon Pi (PEP) was a predominantly Jewish fraternity active between 1904 and 1970. At its peak it had at least 48 chapters across the United States and Canada. In 1970 PEP was absorbed by Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT).

⁴⁵ Sigmund "Sonny" Held (1928-2010) grew up in Atlanta, Georgia and relocated to Nashville, Tennessee to manage the Southern Envelope Manufacturing Company after it was acquired by the Atlanta Envelope Manufacturing Company in 1951. He was the eldest grandson of Sigmund Guthman, founder of the Atlanta Envelope Company.

⁴⁶ Robert "Bobby" Brail (1931-) was born in Atlanta, Georgia and moved to North Miami Beach, Florida where he was employed by the Fox Manufacturing Company. He was a graduate of the University of Georgia in Athens.

fraternity chapter, and one of us had to be president. I didn't need but one more vote. I had my own, you see. I got another friend, who is not Jewish and not in the fraternity, [who] worked on the other two and got me a vote. I became president of my college fraternity as a first-quarter freshman. Sounds impressive until you realize that I only needed one more vote. Only one vote to do it. History of involvement, very active.

Ray Ann: You were only in University of Georgia that year?

Sam: Yes. I went back after the service for another year.

Ray Ann: You left University of Georgia and you went into the service?

Sam: No, I left [University of] Georgia and went to Emory.

Ray Ann: Why?

Sam: I got so involved at [University of] Georgia that the classes were interfering with my extra-curricular activities. I was business manager at the literary magazine at [University of] Georgia. I was president of the fraternity. I was member of the fraternity council. I was an officer in half a dozen different organizations. I was very active on campus. I was not doing well in my studies. I decided that the only way to do it was cold turkey. I quit and left and moved to Emory. I transferred to Emory. For a year, I didn't do anything but go to class, go home, study, and go to bed. I did that every single day. I didn't join any organizations. I didn't go to any meetings. I just, cold turkey, cut myself off from extracurricular activities.

Ray Ann: Were you real unhappy?

Sam: I didn't like it. After I went in the service I went right back to Georgia. After I came out of service I was anxious to get back to things.

Ray Ann: Surely in both of these places you met a lot of people throughout the city that, I'm sure, have been wonderful contacts through the years.

Sam: Yes, like I said, I went to five different colleges. It looks like nobody wanted me but I was really building a political base. That's not true. I'm just kidding you. Yes, I met a lot of people and got involved and active.

Ray Ann: Let's go back again to your childhood. You said you were real shy.

Sam: Yes, I had two friends. One of those went to reform school.

Ray Ann: Reform school from Druid Hills in elementary school?

Sam: Probably, I can't think of what year that was.

Ray Ann: What was that friend's name?

Sam: I don't even remember. I don't remember what he was arrested for, stealing or something.

Ray Ann: Was this a friend bused in from the county or somebody from Druid Hills?

Sam: He lived up off of Briarcliff Road but I don't remember if it was a farm house. That was open area back in those days.

Ray Ann: Who was your other friend?

Sam: The other one was Walter Rogers.⁴⁷ He is now deceased. It's funny I went on a radio show and [unintelligible] in St. Louis. My sister called me up. She heard me on the radio show. I enjoyed life but I didn't think I was . . . I didn't think any of the young girls at the time would accept a date if I asked them, so I never asked them.

Ray Ann: Were you friendly with any of the Jewish kids? Did you go to temple?

Sam: Charlie Goldstein was confirmed at The Temple and a lot of those kids I mentioned . . . Sonny Held and Jack Brail.⁴⁸ I was running with the Jewish kids and I went to some Jewish organizations. We had a Jewish fraternity at the high school called the Top Hat Club⁴⁹ which was not just for Druid Hills. There weren't enough Jewish kids there to support one but it was from any of the high schools in Atlanta. Although the non-Jewish kids had their fraternities, one at each school.

Ray Ann: What was the one at your school?

Sam: I don't remember the name of it. The Top Hat Club was a good outfit.

Ray Ann: Was it just Reform or was it for anybody Jewish.

Sam: Just Reform. There were AZA⁵⁰ chapters in Atlanta. They weren't fraternities but they were considered parallels. In fact, we had a basketball team, the Top Hat Club did. [It] played AZA league sometimes in basketball and stuff like that.

Ray Ann: Where did you play?

⁴⁷ Walter Francis Rogers (1927-1965) was born in Atlanta, Georgia and served in the United States Marines during World War II, attaining the rank of Major.

⁴⁸ Jacob "Jack" Brail (1927-) was born in Atlanta, Georgia and moved to Philadelphia. He was employed by the Fox Manufacturing Company

⁴⁹ A teenage social fraternity founded in 1935, it became one of the 12 youth clubs associated with the Atlanta Youth Council at the Jewish Educational Alliance in 1947.

⁵⁰ The Grand Order of the Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) is an international youth-led fraternal organization for Jewish teenagers, founded in 1924. It currently exists as the male wing of B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, an independent non-profit organization. AZA's sister organization, for teenage girls, is the B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG).

Sam: In the old Jewish [Educational] Alliance,⁵¹ I guess it was called, down on Washington Street or Capitol Avenue, or somewhere in that area. We played other teams, too. We played Druid Hills B team once at Druid Hills. We got beat totally but we had nice uniforms.

Ray Ann: Who sponsored the Top Hat Club? Who got the uniforms?

Sam: It was . . . We did it on our own. We paid dues and everything. I remember something . . .

Ray Ann: Did you have adult advisors?

Sam: No, we really didn't. I do remember two things, one is an anecdote which I don't think I ought to tell but one was . . .

Ray Ann: Why not?

Sam: Just embarrassed. It would embarrass me. I'll tell the story and you can decide not to use it but I was editor of the paper. The Top Hat Club had a little newspaper that they put out. Sonny Held, who was a friend of mine, a neighbor, and a classmate, was the treasurer. He didn't do his job. He wasn't really that interested. Every meeting he'd have another excuse as to why he didn't have the records up to date. The bylaws say that what you do when somebody doesn't do their job. You impeach him. We didn't, as kids, have any inkling that the word impeachment was a negative connotation. So [we] impeached him. As editor of the newspaper, I put it in the headline. That was the story of the week: "Held impeached as treasurer." That sounds pretty bad. It sounds criminal. Poor guy. He was my friend. I didn't mean anything in the world by it. His father [Charles Held], who just lived a few doors from us as I mentioned earlier, was president of the Atlanta Envelope Company. He was smart enough to figure out some place we violated the postal regulations for the amount of white space around the stamp or something. He had them all destroyed at the post office and they never went out, which I don't blame him. I would do the same thing for my son. I would never have written it if I had half a brain and had known that it had such a negative connotation. Sonny now lives in Nashville, Tennessee [unintelligible]. We were never enemies. I'll admit our billy goat, we had a billy goat at our home and he got loose

⁵¹ The Jewish Educational Alliance operated from 1910 to 1948 on the site where the Atlanta- Fulton County Stadium was located. The JEA was once the hub of Jewish life in Atlanta. Families congregated there for social, educational, sports and cultural programs. The JEA ran camps and held classes to help some new residents learn to read and write English. For newcomers, it became a refuge, with programs to help them acclimate to a new home. The JEA stayed at that site until the late 1940's, when it evolved into the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and moved to Peachtree Street. It stayed there until 1998, when the building was sold and the center moved to Dunwoody. In 2000, it was renamed the 'Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.'

occasionally and would go down to the Held's home and eat Mr. Held's orchids that he raised. That caused some irritation and aggravation. The other thing I was going to tell you [is] another story about the Top Hat Club that really meant something to me. I told you before about Druid Hills mixing with those less fortunate, those with less income, and those with much less materialistic [unintelligible]. It was very meaningful to me. I really believe it helped me better understand the plight of blacks in a mixed society. The other reference that I wanted to mention is in the Top Hat Club we did have an annual banquet where we had an adult speaker. One year we had a doctor named, Ginsberg, he had written a book called *Barbed Wire Surgeon*.⁵²

Ray Ann: His name was not Ginsberg, but I know who you mean. I read the book.

Sam: Great. I had a copy and lost it. I had an autographed copy and lost it.

Ray Ann: That must be valuable. It's out of print.

Sam: He's deceased. Greenberg or Greenbaum was our speaker. The theme of his talk . . . I have to confess that the sentiment generally among most of or many of the Reform Jews at that period of my life were . . . I won't say they resented being Jewish but were uneasy about being Jewish, maybe were embarrassed by it or resentment. There were many of them that wished they were not Jewish.

Ray Ann: Did your family feel that way?

Sam: I don't think my family ever felt that way. I never heard anything that would indicate that. I had friends who talked about it in high school about changing their names or doing this or doing that to try to assimilate more. The doctor addressed our banquet and was telling how because he was Jewish he had to work twice as hard. He had to work twice as hard to get in medical school because they had quotas and everything. When he got in he had to work twice as hard to get decent grades. He had to work twice as hard to set up an office. He built some apartments. I remember, he was the first one . . . Many of them during the war when apartments were so hard to get they would restrict . . . no children, no dogs, no this. He said you couldn't live there unless you had children. They were right off Northside Drive near the Atlanta Envelope Company, right in that area there. He made the observation that everything he did was harder to do whether it was to get a loan for these apartments or whether it was to get a publisher for his book or whatever, which he said ended up just making him that much better. He was a better

⁵² *Barbed-Wire Surgeon* is a memoir written by Dr. Alfred A. Weinstein about his survival through 40 months in Japanese prison camps during World War II.

doctor than any of the others. He was a better developer. He was a better author or writer because he had to work harder to do it. It meant a lot to me at the time. It made me think it was all worthwhile. It was fine to pay the price that you will benefit from that price. Top Hat Club.

Ray Ann: He was just your invited guest speaker at the club. That's so interesting because his wife [Hanna Kaunitz Weinstein Entell]⁵³ has been interviewed in this project and so we did hear all about him.

Sam: He impressed me with his thoughts along that line. Top Hat Club [unintelligible]. I'll tell you something that was big in the Jewish community, in the social life for that era, were a series of children's clubs. There ought to be a whole chapter on this somewhere. The one in Atlanta was called the Ballyhoo Club.⁵⁴

Ray Ann: How do you spell that?

Sam: B-A-L-L-Y-H-O-O. One word. There was one in Columbus, Georgia. It may have been called the Phoenix Club or the Falcons Club.⁵⁵ There's one in Birmingham [Alabama]. There's one in another city in Alabama.

Ray Ann: Montgomery?

Sam: Montgomery, that was it. One of them was called the Jubilee Club. I think that was in, that was either Birmingham or Montgomery. These four or five clubs, cotillion clubs, were organizations of Reform Jews aged 16 to 20. I'm really guessing as to the age. The Ballyhoo Club, for instance, had a series of social events every Christmas. One of the others had it every Thanksgiving. Another one had it every Fourth of July. Another one had it Labor Day. I don't know which was which. Each one would invite all the kids from the others. When the Ballyhoo Club around the Christmas holiday season . . . When it held it's events in Atlanta, we'd send out invitations to all the kids who belonged to the Jubilee Club and the Falcon Club and all the others

⁵³ Hanna Kaunitz Weinstein Entell (1918-1999) was born in Vienna, Austria. She was the youngest of five children. She married a Czechoslovakian farmer 14 years her senior in order to get a passport and fled Austria in the 1930's via Shanghai, China and thence to the Philippines. There she divorced her first husband and met Dr. Alfred A. Weinstein, a captain in the U.S. Army. During the war, Dr. Weinstein was taken captive by the Japanese and Hannah worked in the underground which provided food for prisoners of war. When Dr. Weinstein was released, he and Hannah married. They moved to Atlanta. Dr. Weinstein died in 1964, and Hannah married Max Entell.

⁵⁴ From 1931 to the late 1950's, courtship weekends in southern cities included Montgomery, Alabama's 'Falcon,' Birmingham, Alabama's 'Jubilee,' Columbus, Georgia's 'Holly Days,' and Atlanta, Georgia's 'Ballyhoo.' They were attended by college-age Jewish youth from across the South who participated in rounds of breakfast dates, lunch dates, tea dance dates, early evening dates, late night dates, formal dances, and cocktail parties, with the goal of meeting a "nice Jewish boy or girl" who might well become a spouse.

⁵⁵ Falcon Picnic was an annual summer weekend gathering for German-Jewish singles in Montgomery, Alabama before World War II.

in those other cities. They'd come in droves. The Ballyhoo Club would have a series of three days of events. We'd have a fashion show for the girls and a tea that maybe Rich's would sponsor. We'd have a stag⁵⁶ show for the guys with beer and lots of [unintelligible] and maybe a striptease or something. We'd have a dance one night. We'd have a formal dance another night. We'd have a costume ball one night with everybody in costumes. It was a big event. We'd put out a program. We'd sell our ads. We'd charge fees for the local people. The out of town people didn't pay anything.

Ray Ann: Did they stay with people in town?

Sam: A lot of them would stay with friends and with other members of Ballyhoo or whatever. Some might stay at hotels. You would have dates and late dates and late, late dates. I don't know if kids do that today or not. You'd seriously have a date for the dance, then at nine or ten o'clock you'd have a late date that picked you up at the hotel, your girlfriend's house, or wherever you were staying. Maybe midnight you'd have a late, late date. There was, incidentally, the Ballyhoo Club . . . As far as I know, they've all gone out of existence. The Ballyhoo Club probably lasted 15 years.

Ray Ann: From what years would those be?

Sam: It seems like it ended . . . I was involved in it in the late 1940's. It probably ended about, I'm purely guessing, early 1950's. It started in the 1930's. I remember Alex Dittler⁵⁷ and the Dittler Brothers.

Ray Ann: D-I-T-T-L-E-R?

Sam: Yes. His daughter was . . . Elice . . .

Ray Ann: Haverty?

Sam: Elice Shlesinger Haverty.⁵⁸ Yes. He was big time in the Ballyhoo Club I remember. Tell you about the Ballyhoo Club . . . We put out a real neat program, about the size of a

⁵⁶ A social gathering attended by men only, sometimes a fund-raiser. A stag is often held in honor of a groom on the eve of his wedding, attended by male friends of the groom.

⁵⁷ Alexander Dittler (1901-1974) was an Atlanta businessman, and philanthropist. He succeeded his father Emil as president and chairman of Dittler Brothers, a printing and stationery business in Atlanta. He was one of the founding members of the Ballyhoo Club in 1931 and its chairman in 1932. He was a board member of the Temple for 30 years, and served as president of the Temple from 1950 to 1953. He served as co-chairman of the committee that built the new educational building after the bombing of the Temple in 1958. His was married to Eleanor Behrend Dittler.

⁵⁸ Elice Bebe Dittler Shlesinger Haverty (1935-) was the daughter of Alex Dittler. She married Irving M. Shlesinger in 1958 and later remarried Dr. John Rhodes Haverty, whose grandfather founded Haverty's, a chain of retail furniture stores headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia.

magazine, in which we sold ads and had the program. One year I was in charge of the program. One year I was president, but one year I was in charge of the program. The Allan-Grayson Realty Company⁵⁹ which was owned by Sam[uel A.] Goldberg⁶⁰—who was the father of Joel Goldberg⁶¹ who was a friend of mine and later a classmate at University of Georgia, and where I later went to work when I was in commercial real estate—had the back cover. I’m going to skip to something else and tell you and I’ll come back. When I was mayor, one time I was interviewed by some publication. They said, “Had you planned this political career?” I was in a number of different offices for a total of 22 years. I said, “No, I really hadn’t planned it. It just happened to come as opportunities presented themselves.” This was in print and Sig Guthman,⁶² who was another friend who was very active in the Ballyhoo Club and probably president one year . . . Sig, who was the latest [unintelligible] . . . Sig sent me a letter down at city hall and said, “Hell, you didn’t plan for it.” On the magazine, on the back cover of the Ballyhoo Magazine which I had done as a teenager, with this full page Allan-Grayson Realty Company ad, I had cut out a little corner and in print it said, “Massell for Mayor.” I had done this as a joke. Intuition or something.

Ray Ann: That’s amazing that Sig still had it.

Sam: Yes, Sig still had it. I’ve got one now but I don’t have it at home. I gave all my stuff to the historical society.

Ray Ann: The Atlanta Historical Society.

Sam: Yes, they’re going through all that now. It’s probably still over there.

⁵⁹ The original name of the company was Allan-Goldberg Realty Co., founded by Samuel Allan Goldberg in 1930. It was renamed Allan-Grayson Realty Company in 1946. The firm became one of the largest commercial real estate brokerage firms in Atlanta, Georgia. It specialized in property management, leases, and sales of offices, stores, and warehouses. It managed properties owned and developed by builder Ben Massell.

⁶⁰ Samuel Allan Goldberg (1902-1962), a native of Atlanta, Georgia, founded the Allan-Goldberg Realty Company in 1930, which was renamed Allan-Grayson Realty Company in 1946. The firm became one of the largest commercial real estate brokerage firms in Atlanta, Georgia. It managed properties owned and developed by builder Ben Massell. He was a graduate of Boys’ High. He was a member of The Temple, the Standard Club, and B’nai B’rith.

⁶¹ Joel Goldberg (1929-1954) was a native of Atlanta, Georgia who died in an airplane crash in Commerce, Georgia. Lieutenant Goldberg flew more than 100 combat missions as a pilot in the United States Air Force during the Korean War and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Soldier’s Medal, and the Air Medal. He was a graduate of the University of Georgia, where he was president of the Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity for two years.

⁶² Sig Guthman, Jr (1929-2008), a native of Atlanta, Georgia, was president for 20 years of the Atlanta Envelope Company, a firm founded by his grandfather Sigmund Guthman. He was a graduate of Georgia Tech where he was president of Phi Epsilon Pi fraternity and the Georgia Tech chapter of the Intercollegiate Zionist Federation of America (IZFA). He was president of the Ballyhoo Club in 1949. He was in the United States Navy during the Korean War as a supply officer on an aircraft carrier.

Ray Ann: Are they going to keep it or copy it?

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: They're going to copy it.

Sam: The magazine was filled with all kinds of comical stuff. Some of it the adults didn't think it was too comical. My brother was the president a few years later. I remember one of his jokes was to give away a car at the stag,⁶³ an automobile to the winner. It was a car they bought for \$50. It would only start. It wouldn't run. The poor guy had to get rid of it. He had it. It was his. The Ballyhoo Club, the Jubilee, the Falcon, and whatever the name of the other one, they were a real important part of the social life of the Jewish community, the Reform Jews anyway, in those years.

Ray Ann: It's probably a way for a lot of people who are Jews to meet Jewish people and eventually marry them.

Sam: Yes, very definitely. A lot of them made lifelong relations or friendship.

Ray Ann: Those are good stories. That's what we're looking for. Tell me, were you the oldest of the children?

Sam: No, I have a sister who's about four years older and I have a brother who's four years younger.

Ray Ann: What is her name?

Sam: My sister is Shirley Solomons.⁶⁴ She's married to Phillip Solomons⁶⁵ who's related to [unintelligible]. They live in Savannah, Georgia. [unintelligible]. My brother, Howard [Massell],⁶⁶ lives in [unintelligible].

⁶³ A social gathering attended by men only, sometimes a fund-raiser. A stag is often held in honor of a groom on the eve of his wedding, attended by male friends of the groom.

⁶⁴ Shirley Claire Massell Solomons (1922-1995) was born in Atlanta, Georgia. She relocated to Savannah, Georgia with her husband Philip Solomons, where they raised their three sons: Philip Solomons Jr., Richard Massell Solomons, and Ralph Solomon.

⁶⁵ Philip Solomons (1919-2011) a native and lifelong resident of Savannah, Georgia. His career spanned 47 years at Solomons Company, a family pharmaceutical distribution business which was founded as a small apothecary shop in 1845, and served as a president and CEO. He achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and the Order of the Arrow in Boy Scouts of America, and received the Silver Beaver award as an adult volunteer. He attended Armstrong College, subsequently renamed Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU), then Atlantic State University, and currently known as Georgia Southern University—Armstrong Campus. He graduated from Georgia Tech with a bachelor's degree in Industrial Management. He was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree from AASU. He was in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II and the Korean War, attaining the rank of Captain before beginning his career at Solomons Company. He was a member of Congregation Mickve Israel in Savannah, the Rotary Club of Savannah, and past-president of the Savannah Benevolent Association.

⁶⁶ Howard Barry Massell (1931-2004) a native of Atlanta, Georgia was president of Atlanta Seal and Stamp

Ray Ann: [When] you were growing up in elementary school, was your family somewhat observant? How did you celebrate Jewish holidays at home or did you? Did you have a *seder*?⁶⁷

Sam: Yes, we did, but not at my home. It was at my grandfather's home, my paternal grandfather [Raphael "Ralph" M. Massell].⁶⁸ He was very good . . . He had a good voice and he would sing the service and it sounded like [unintelligible].

Ray Ann: Was he Reform?

Sam: He was Reform, yes. It was a Reform-type service. It wasn't . . . the observation of the High Holy Days⁶⁹ and we went to the services at The Temple. My parents were members of The Temple before me. I'm not sure if they were married in The Temple. I was. I don't know if they were married in the original Temple but I think they were married in The Temple.

Ray Ann: Your family also belonged to the Standard Club.⁷⁰

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: Did your grandparents?

Sam: No. They might have when it was in Avondale. Actually it had a different name. The forerunner was called . . . It became the Standard Club when it moved to Ponce de Leon [Avenue]. I think maybe they did but I'm not sure.

Ray Ann: Did you run across any prejudice when you were young?

Sam: Along the way. One that comes to mind that's humorous in reflection but to me it wasn't when I was that young. Maybe it will remind me of some during other periods. When I ran for my first political office which was the City Council of Mountain Park⁷¹ [unintelligible].

Company, an office supply firm in Atlanta. He had a checkered past, serving a 12-month probation sentence for the possession of indecent and obscene photographs and film. In 1972, a grand jury alleged that he illegally solicited campaign funds from nightclub owners for his brother Sam Massell's 1969 mayoral campaign, an accusation previously reported by the *Atlanta Constitution*. Although unindicted, he subsequently relocated to Miami Beach, Florida.

⁶⁷ *Seder* (meaning "order" in Hebrew) is a Jewish ritual feast that marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is conducted on the evening of the fifteenth day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar throughout the world. Some communities hold seder on both the first two nights of Passover. The *seder* incorporates prayers, candle lighting, and traditional foods symbolizing the slavery of the Jews and the exodus from Egypt. It is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life.

⁶⁸ Raphael "Ralph" Moses Massell (1861-1936).

⁶⁹ The two High Holy Days are Rosh Ha-Shanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

⁷⁰ The Standard Club is a Jewish social club that started as the Concordia Association in 1867 in Downtown Atlanta. In 1905, it was reorganized as the 'Standard Club' and moved into the former mansion of William C. Sanders near where Turner Field is now located. In the late 1920's the club moved to Ponce de Leon Avenue in Midtown Atlanta. Later, the club moved to what is now the Lenox Park business park and was located there until 1983. In the 1980's, the club moved to its present location in Johns Creek in Atlanta's northern suburbs.

⁷¹ Mountain Park is a city in the western part of northern Fulton County in Georgia. Its area totals 0.5 square miles

Incidentally, later if you remind me I can also give you a biography with details and some of these dates. Mountain Park is a little incorporated city up in North Fulton County, which like the city of Atlanta, has powers from the state, and has a one-man police force. It has potholes and garbage problems, the same things that major cities have.

Ray Ann: Did you live there?

Sam: No, it was unique. [unintelligible] has deemed it the only city in the United States where you can vote and hold office and not have legal residence there. It was for property owners. Only property, today, would be unconstitutional, I'm sure. If you owned property, you could go in and hold office. As a bachelor, I had bought a little bachelor pad up there, a little cabin. My brother and I bought it together, in fact. We were busy building. I got actively involved and interested in this city and went to some City Council meetings. The city fathers—or the powerbrokers, I guess you'd call them—asked me if I would run for office. They were getting ready to have an election. They invited me or asked me to run for City Council. I said, "Fine, I'd like that very much." I decided if I was going to run I was going to put on a campaign. I was up at the [unintelligible] family home. They worked in Atlanta but lived [unintelligible]. I went up there one night with my girlfriend who is now my wife, Doris, who is not Jewish incidentally. She converted after we were married by Rabbi [Jacob] Rothschild.⁷² She went up there with me one night. We copied down the list of registered voters. We went so I could send them out a letter because I was going to campaign. Nobody else really had a number for it. The clerk, Inez Logue, said, "Sam, you don't have a chance." I said, "Why?" "They found out you're Jewish." I said, "Who found out?" She named the guys who had asked me to run, Charlie Johnson⁷³ and Lee Wolfe, who is not Jewish, and I don't remember who the third one was. I said, "I'm surprised they didn't know I was Jewish." It hadn't been a secret. I've lived right here in Atlanta just 45 minutes away. I went to them and I asked them, "I've heard you've changed your mind about supporting me." They said, "That's right. We found out you're Jewish." Instead of supporting me, they opposed me. I lost the election but it was a moral victory. I was only in my early twenties.

and as of the 2010 census, the city had a total population of 547. Incorporated in 1927, it consists of residential property only. Law enforcement is provided by the Roswell Police Department on a contract basis and the City of Mountain Park is governed by a Mayor and five-member City Council.

⁷² Rabbi Jacob Rothschild was rabbi of the city's oldest Reform congregation, The Temple, in Atlanta, Georgia from 1946 until his death in 1973 from a heart attack. He forged close relationships with the city's Christian clergy and distinguished himself as a charismatic spokesperson for civil rights.

⁷³ Charlie Johnson was a Mayor of Mountain Park, Georgia and operated Mountain Park's only business, "The Stand" until he sold it in 1971.

I'd only owned the cabin for six months or less. They had eight people running. The way they elect there, the top five were elected. I came in sixth. It was a moral victory. I stayed active. It wasn't long until one of the five sold his property and moved to Florida. The other four elected me to fill the vacancy.

<End Tape 1, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 1, Side 2>

Ray Ann: You were such a good sport about it. I could see you telling the story, you're not exhibiting anger. You stayed active. How did you feel at the time?

Sam: I felt they were shortsighted. I felt like they misunderstood or had a false sense of values. I was somebody who had something to offer. My being Jewish had nothing to do with it either pro or con. Incidentally, it wasn't too many months after that that my cabin mysteriously burned to the ground. I don't know. I have no way of knowing what caused that to happen.

Ray Ann: You didn't feel anger towards those three men?

Sam: No, I really didn't. It's just like I explained it. We could spend a lot of time talking about what is prejudice and what it demonstrates. I feel sorry for the person who is prejudiced because they're losing as much as I'm losing. Life's too short for them or for me. That was one of my early brushes with it.

Ray Ann: Obviously . . .

Sam: I had another one. I remember one when I was in the army which was [unintelligible]. When I went in the service, the dog tags that you wore were stamped with your name, serial number, and your religious preference. They had an "H", I think, if you were Jewish, for Hebrew I guess. I don't remember what the others were . . . "C" for Christian maybe or "G" for gentile. I really don't know . . . "C" for Catholic, I guess. They had made a mistake on mine. You go through real fast and they stamp them out. They had put "P" for Protestant. It didn't make any difference to me. I wasn't in the fighting war. I didn't feel I was going to be killed and buried in an unknown grave. At the time it didn't really make any difference. It didn't bother me. One time in the barracks there was an argument going on between some of the guys. I came up and was standing there listening. I don't recall now all the details, but it had to do with something about Jews. One of my nice, good personal friends was in the argument. He turned to me and said, "Don't you agree, Sam?" with this position that was antisemitic. I said, "I can't give you an unbiased answer because I'm Jewish." They said, "No, you're not. Come on, give us a real

answer. We want to know what you feel about this.” They said, “You went to school.” I said, “I’m Jewish. I’m going to be prejudiced. My feelings are going to be biased.” They said, “No, you’re not Jewish.” I’d forgotten all about my dog tags. Damn, if one of them didn’t grab the dog tags to look at it. “See, I told you he wasn’t Jewish.” I don’t think to this day that they believed that I was Jewish. It was a funny position to be in. I was trying to defend something innocently and be fair with them because, being Jewish, I knew how I felt. There was another incident. I had a cross burned in my yard during the mayoral campaign.

Ray Ann: I would imagine you’ve had all kinds of letters and hate mail.

Sam: Yes, a lot of hate mail. That goes with the territory. That’s people, really hatred. What it does is it exaggerates the hatred for the inner person against, not necessarily you or me . . . they may not have even known me but whatever power I had. The office is what they’re angry with. They’ll lash out at any limb they can hold, whether it’s antisemitic attacks, liberalism, or whatever. It was interesting. I saw the difference. I didn’t realize it when I was in office, but when I came out of office there was a dramatic change in attitudes with people who were real strong enemies and no longer cared. I don’t think they fell in love with me but they’d say hello when I went by. It wasn’t me they were angry with. It was my office, my power, and whatever actions I was taking that they didn’t like. Once I couldn’t do that anymore, they didn’t care.

Ray Ann: Were they angry at you as just Sam Massell or were they angry at you being Jewish Sam Massell.

Sam: No, I think they were angry mostly because I was doing something they thought was wrong because they thought it would adversely affect them. I was campaigning for equal opportunities for blacks. They thought this would hurt their opportunities. They were very upset. They would be very upset if I was Jewish, Protestant, or Catholic. My being Jewish, they could scream, “You damn Jew.” Otherwise, they could scream, “You nigger⁷⁴ lover.”

Ray Ann: You didn’t save those letters by any chance, did you? Did you give them to any organizations?

⁷⁴ An ethnic slur, usually directed at black people. The word originated as a neutral term referring to people with black skin, as a variation of the Spanish and Portuguese noun negro, a descendant of the Latin adjective niger (black). By the mid-twentieth century, particularly in the United States, its usage became unambiguously pejorative, a racist insult. It began to disappear from popular culture, and its continued inclusion in classic works of literature has sparked controversy. In the United States and United Kingdom, using the word "nigger" is considered extremely offensive, and it is often replaced with the euphemism "the N-word".

Sam: I don't know whatever happened to the hate letters. I used to read them all. It was interesting, one person . . .

Ray Ann: It would be interesting to have that in the exhibit because that's kind of . . .

Sam: There's one letter writer we caught because of the very distinct typing. He had a very old typewriter. The letters were filled with ink and it was very noticeable. I used to get frequent letters from him threatening my life, all anonymous letters. One day I get a letter, same guy. Immediately we spot it, that [he] was saying something nice to me and he signed it. He had seen me with my son at a wrestling match. He thought it was so nice how I was with him even though I was mayor of the city and I was there as a normal person-type thing. He was a lover of the wrestling matches. The FBI⁷⁵ called him and he confessed that he had written the other letters. He was an elderly man. We decided he wasn't going to kill me, so we didn't charge him. I told him not to write me any more letters.

Ray Ann: Going back again, we left you with your studying at Emory, and then what happened?

Sam: I went in the Air Force.

Ray Ann: Did you do anything about your . . .

Sam: No, I was drafted. It was an uneventful period. The war was just about over. When I was in, peace was declared. I went to this . . . I started at Wichita Falls, Texas where I took my basic training. I was able there, through some source—I can't remember if it was USO or what—to meet with some Jewish families.

Ray Ann: Even with the "P" on your dog tags they let you go to some Jewish holiday things.

Sam: From there to Scott Field,⁷⁶ Illinois where I taught school in the [United States Army] Air Force,⁷⁷ administrative school. The last, the other one, was Scott Field . . . Lowry

⁷⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is an intelligence-driven and a threat-focused national security organization with both intelligence and law enforcement responsibilities. The mission of the FBI is to protect and defend the United States against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats, to uphold and enforce the criminal laws of the United States, and to provide leadership and criminal justice services to federal, state, municipal, and international agencies and partners. The FBI focuses on threats that challenge the foundations of American society or involve dangers too large or complex for any local or state authority to handle alone.

⁷⁶ United States Army Air Corps training camp during World War II in Illinois. It was renamed Scott Air Force Base in 1948.

⁷⁷ The name at that time was United States Army Air Corps.

Field⁷⁸ that's where I taught school. Then I went to Scott Field, Illinois and I was discharged. It was like I said...

Ray Ann: You're one of the few who went to Lowry that didn't want to stay in Denver.

Sam: It was very nice. I taught school. I had a good life there.

Ray Ann: Had you met your wife already?

Sam: No, I didn't meet her until I came back. I was going to Atlanta Law School. When I came back I went back up to [University of Georgia in] Athens.

Ray Ann: How many more years did you have in Athens?

Sam: I just went there, as I recall, one more year.

Ray Ann: You re-affiliated with the fraternity and got back into doing what?

Sam: The fraternity was big then. I got active on campus again. I don't know what all. I liked University of Georgia. The social life was good. We had a DPhiE⁷⁹ sorority there, a Jewish sorority. We had parties with them.

Ray Ann: There was one fraternity and one sorority?

Sam: No. There was another. There were three fraternities and two sororities, STK . . .

Ray Ann: STT.

Sam: STT, that was the other sorority. That's the one that we partied with more than DPhiE. They were the Reform as I recall. There were two other fraternities, AEPi,⁸⁰ TEP.⁸¹

Ray Ann: Were they there the first time you went up there?

Sam: Yes. No, they may have closed. Almost everybody had closed. We were down to one man. Many of the Jewish and non-Jewish fraternities were closed. The sororities were going strong but they wouldn't let me join that. I went . . . I left Georgia. I don't recall exactly why I . . .

Ray Ann: Just out of curiosity, did the boys from all Jewish fraternities relate to each other?

Sam: No, very competitive.

⁷⁸ United States Army Air Corps training base in Denver, Colorado during World War II. It was renamed Lowry Air Force Base in 1948.

⁷⁹ Delta Phi Epsilon (DPhiE) is an international sorority founded in 1917 at New York University Law School, New York City, New York. The international president of Delta Phi Epsilon in 2016 was Stacy Segal at University of Georgia.

⁸⁰ Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi or AEPi) is college fraternity founded at New York University, New York, New York in 1913. Although the fraternity is based upon Jewish principles, it is non-discriminatory.

⁸¹ Tau Epsilon Phi (TEΦ, commonly pronounced 'TEP') is a fraternity founded by ten Jewish men at Columbia University in New York in 1910 as a response to the existence of similar organizations which would not admit Jewish members.

Ray Ann: I find it so amazing.

Sam: That's not all bad. There may be some phony reasons that are used to find fault with the others but I think more likely it's one of esprit de corps within an organization to which each belongs. The pride and competitiveness, you know, "We've got more trophies than you have, or we've got better sports than you have, or we have better parties than you do." I don't see that as bad. Protestant ones do that, too. We were close to a lot of non-Jewish . . . the Sigma Pi fraternity also had some non-Jews and later became all non-Jewish and later closed up, but our chapter . . .

Ray Ann: That was unusual in those days, wasn't it?

Sam: Yes. The other Jewish fraternities were strictly Jewish, Orthodox or Conservative. Ours was Reform and had some non-Jewish members. We had other organizations. I was an officer in a Greek, Kappa Beta Phi which was backwards Phi Beta Kappa. That's the way it operated. It was Phi Epsilon . . . Kappa Alpha was PhiEpBeta. It was a combination of all three. [unintelligible].

Ray Ann: It was like a combination of the in-group of three fraternities who got together to socialize some more.

Sam: Yes, that's exactly what it was. You had other organizations that were even broader-based like we had two literary societies at Athens. One was called Phi Kappa⁸² which was made up of fraternity men and the other was called Demosthenian⁸³ which was made up of non-fraternity men. They were debating societies. They really acted big. After the meeting we'd pass out cigars. I was treasurer, secretary once, and had to give cigars to everybody who came in. These 17-year olds smoking big old cigars.

Ray Ann: Which one were you in?

Sam: Phi Kappa.

Ray Ann: You debated.

Sam: When I came back to Atlanta, I don't remember exactly what motivated that change. I don't recall. I went to work in my dad's law office. For a while I was working in the daytime and going to two night schools. I was going to Georgia State [University] and Atlanta Law

⁸² The Phi Kappa Literary Society is a debate organization founded in 1820 at University of Georgia. It is the second oldest Greek-lettered collegiate society in North America. Phi Kappa has served as a training forum for many public leaders and first families of Georgia and throughout the South.

⁸³ The Demosthenian Literary Society is a literary society primarily involved in debating at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia.

School. One night they overlapped 30 minutes. One week I'd be late to one and the next week, late at the other. It was a full schedule. I kept going to school. I was not a good student in spite of the fact that I make a lot of references to higher education. I went for a long number of years and got all kinds of . . . In addition to the degrees I mentioned and going to two schools at one time, I also got certificates twice at Georgia State. They had a two-year program in marketing that I took and got a certificate, and a one-year program in real estate that I took. I kept going back to graduation. They finally changed the catalogue and said you couldn't do that if you already had a degree. I felt that I was not a good student. I did not make good grades but I felt that I would get something by osmosis if I would show up. I forced myself. I had enough discipline to force myself to go to school on my own initiative. I don't want to claim that I was a good student, or made good grades, or learned a lot, but I guess it helped.

Ray Ann: Did you take the bar [examination]?⁸⁴

Sam: I took the bar but I failed it. That was in my freshman [year], first quarter. That was egotistical. I had already left this period of inferiority complex and was all powerful. I took it my first quarter and obviously failed it. Later, I was preparing to take it again. My father and I had an argument. More than an argument, we had a falling out. You go through those periods of kids thinking that they're smarter than their parents. All of a sudden my whole life changed because I had a joint checking account, I had a big LaSalle⁸⁵ automobile, and a job. I had all these different things and all of a sudden I didn't have any of those.

Ray Ann: Were you working for your father at the time?

Sam: I was working for my father at the time.

Ray Ann: Which business was that?

Sam: That was in his law office. I was not a lawyer but I was what you'd call a paralegal, today they call it that.

Ray Ann: You had finished law school.

Sam: Yes. I did finish it while I was there and I was going to take the bar again and we had this falling out and separation. Although I was living at home and continued to live at home, I was out on my own and had to ride the bus to find me a job, which was good for me. The end

⁸⁴ A bar examination is a test intended to determine whether a candidate is qualified to practice law in a given jurisdiction.

⁸⁵ LaSalle was an American brand of luxury automobiles manufactured and marketed by General Motors' Cadillac division from 1927 through 1940.

result, incidentally, is that we got back together and fortunately attained a good relationship. For a period of about a year or two we had a very strained relationship.

Ray Ann: You still lived at home?

Sam: I still lived at home, but at that time, to spite him, I did not take the bar again.

Ray Ann: You never took the bar.

Sam: Never took it. It's alright. I never missed it until one time. I'm skipping. Many years later after I came out of office, I was sued by some hoodlums, the Wolcoffs.⁸⁶ They had moved to Atlanta and tried to strong-arm people in the vending machine business, bars, and different things. They already had a record in Chicago. They had bribed a rabbi while they were in jail for mail fraud. They got caught bribing a rabbi. While I was in office I ran them out of town.

Ray Ann: How did you do that?

Sam: I leaned on them publicly. They, incidentally, turned around and attacked my brother who was a playboy. He was a real [unintelligible] so that got him a lot of adverse publicity.

Bottom line . . .

Ray Ann: This is the brother that moved to Florida?

Sam: Yes. Bottom line is they sued me after I came out of office for slander or defamation of character, or something like that. Their lawyer was F. Lee Bailey⁸⁷ who they paid \$10,000—which back then was like \$100,000 today—to come in and try this case. That's the only time I ever missed not being a lawyer. I looked and I saw him come in the mornings just two or three minutes before the trial, run through the depositions, and then try his case. I thought, "Man, you're getting \$10,000 for that?" As detail oriented as I am, I could be a millionaire many times if I would have gone into the law business. We won the case, incidentally. [Burton] Wolcoff⁸⁸ is in jail for a very famous murder in Miami. He's serving time. He was really bad. He was in all kinds of things in Miami.

⁸⁶ Brothers Sanford Burton Wolcoff and Robert Wolcoff were convicted in 1966 in Illinois of violating the National Bankruptcy Act and mail fraud. They each and received a five-year prison sentence.

⁸⁷ Francis Lee Bailey, Jr. (born 1933) is an American former criminal defense attorney. For most of his career he was licensed in Massachusetts and in Florida, where he was disbarred in 2001. He served as the lawyer in the re-trial of osteopathic physician Sam Sheppard, was the supervisory attorney over attorney Mark J. Kadish in the court martial of Captain Ernest Medina for the My Lai Massacre, and was one of the lawyers for the defense in the O. J. Simpson murder case.

⁸⁸ Burton Wolcoff was convicted in 1988 of first-degree murder in the shooting deaths of Edward and Sylvia Nipon in Hallandale, Florida in 1987. He was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years. The Nipons were the brother and sister-in-law of fashion designer Albert Nipon.

Ray Ann: Was he really mafia?⁸⁹

Sam: Junior mafia for Atlanta. The biggest thing in Atlanta that we had. In Miami, right outside of Wolfie's⁹⁰ delicatessen, they had a bomb underneath his car that they discovered. Somebody had put in a radio control and were across the street. They were going to blow him up. He was in some kind of big scam with the stadium down there. He's serving big time now. The law practice . . . I went instead to work for . . . Interesting little anecdote here, it's this Ballyhoo Club. It has senior advisors. You were asking before about the Top Hat Club, it didn't. I was president of the Ballyhoo Club. At this meeting I held one day before the upcoming events, I had the chairmen of each committee there. I had the chairman's adult advisor, Buddy Mantler—who I later went to work for—who was the senior advisor for somebody who was there. What he did, he told me he was impressed by the way I handled the meeting. I had little cards with what each person was supposed to do, in order: one, two, three, four, and copies to follow up for their files.

Ray Ann: That's pretty amazing at such a young age.

Sam: He liked that and asked me if I wanted to go to work for him because that's when I just left my dad. So I did. I went to work for him for two years in charge of his publications even though I hadn't studied journalism. I had been involved with publications at Georgia and with the Top Hat News. Buddy . . . another nice thing about Buddy, who's Jewish, incidentally . . .

Ray Ann: How does he spell his last name?

Sam: M-A-N-T-L-E-R. He had Mantlers in Florida. He may still have a house here. He's retired. A good friend of his was Marvin Goldstein,⁹¹ who later became . . . Prior to that, he had

⁸⁹ A mafia is a type of organized crime syndicate whose primary activities are protection racketeering, the arbitration of disputes between criminals, and the organizing and oversight of illegal agreements and transactions. Mafias often engage in gambling, loan sharking, drug-trafficking, prostitution, and fraud. The term "Mafia" was originally applied to the Sicilian Mafia and originates in Sicily, but it has since expanded to encompass other organizations of similar methods and purpose, such as "the Russian Mafia" or "the Japanese Mafia". The term is applied informally by the press and public. The criminal organizations themselves have their own terms.

⁹⁰ Wolfie's was a popular delicatessen in Miami Beach, Florida, founded by Wilfred "Wolfie" Cohen. In 1959 Northeast Airlines chose it to cater meals for Miami-to-NY passengers. It closed in 2002.

⁹¹ Marvin C. Goldstein (1917-1997) was a prominent dentist and businessman in Atlanta. He was a graduate of Boys' High School in Atlanta, had with a combined undergraduate and master's degree in dentistry from Emory University in Atlanta, and trained in orthodontic dentistry at Columbia University and the University of Michigan. He served as a dental surgeon for the United States Army Air Forces in Europe during World War II. He and his brother, Irving Goldstein, also a dentist, built the Atlanta Americana Motor Hotel, Atlanta's first integrated hotel, which opened in 1961. Marvin was international president of the Alpha Omega Dental Fraternity, editor of the American Journal of Orthodontics, president of the Georgia Society of Orthodontists, trustee for the American Fund for Dental Health, honorary fellow in the American College of Dentists and International College of Dentists, and chief of staff of the Ben Massell Dental Clinic. He was a president of Ahavath Achim Synagogue, Atlanta Jewish Federation, ORT Atlanta men's chapter, Tichon Atlanta, B'nai Brith's Atlanta chapter; vice-president of the

been my orthodontist. I used to go in to see Buddy every four, five, or six months and ask for a raise. He'd give me \$50 and I'd go back out there. One time after two years I came in and I said, "I'd like a raise." He said, "No, instead of that I'm going to fire you." I went into shock because I thought I had done a good job. He said, "The reason I'm going to fire you is because it's time to get out and make some real money. If you want to stay here I'll give you the raise and you can stay forever. You can get a big star raise every year. It's time for you to get out and make some more money. I think you ought to go in the real estate business." He was also very friendly with Sam Goldberg, the man I mentioned earlier at the Allan-Grayson Realty Company, whose son Joel Goldberg, went to the university with me.

Ray Ann: That's Joel who went to work for Rich's?⁹²

Sam: No.

Ray Ann: Not that Joel? Different Joel.

Sam: Different Joel who's now deceased. He got killed in an airplane crash in the service. His father is now deceased. He has a sister [Sandra Goldberg Epstein] that's married to Burt Epstein.⁹³ She's very active at the Jewish home. I was telling you about Buddy. He made me go in the real estate business. He called up Sam Goldberg and sent me over there. First he had me talk to Marvin Goldstein so Marvin could convince me. The three of them ganged up and made me leave from where I had my security and go to work on a commission basis. I was still single.

Ray Ann: How old were you?

Sam: I was still single. I was in my twenties. I went to work there and did well. I made good money. He was right. I stayed there for 20 years until I became full-time, until I became mayor. When I was president of City Council I was still at Allan-Grayson. It was a part-time job supposedly. When I became mayor, I sold my stock. I had a little stock in Allan-Grayson. I was the vice-president. Gave that up for city hall. Now you have me.

American Jewish Committee; and a vice-chairman of the board of trustees for the Martin Luther King Center for Non-violent Social Change.

⁹² Joel Goldberg (1925-2010) was born in Worcester, Massachusetts and relocated to Atlanta, Georgia in 1954. During his 30-year career at Rich's Department Store, he served as President, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer. He served as a Lieutenant in the United States Navy during World War II and was a graduate of Dartmouth College. He was president of Temple Sinai in Atlanta, Georgia, and president of the American Jewish Committee's Atlanta chapter.

⁹³ Burton "Burt" Jerome Epstein, born 1928, was the husband of Sandra Goldberg Epstein, born 1935.

Ray Ann: We only have one part of you. I'm sort of trying to hold off getting to the politics because I know that's a whole tape. Let's, at this point, find out. You had met your wife at law school?

Sam: She wasn't at law school but she was . . . I met her . . . Actually, another girlfriend had jilted me and gone off to marry someone else. I was in a state of sadness.

Ray Ann: Had you gone with that girl a long time? Was she someone from Atlanta you knew?

Sam: No. She just happened to be the girl of the moment. Donald Chait, this friend of mine whose father was a dentist . . .

Ray Ann: How do you spell Donald's last name?

Sam: C-H-A-I-T. He's practicing medicine. He's a physician. He and I went out that night and went to a little night club and at the facing table was Doris, my-bride-to-be.

Ray Ann: What was her last name?

Sam: Middlebrooks. She was from Hogansville, Georgia which is south of here, 60 miles south. She was with her girlfriend and her girlfriend's boyfriend who she later married. Doris did not have a date. I flirted with her to no avail. I used all the tactics. I sent a bunch of candy to the other girl the next day, whatever foolishness. We dated for a couple of years before we got married. That was where we met.

Ray Ann: How did your family . . . because it was more unusual in those days to marry someone who wasn't Jewish?

Sam: My mother was not happy about it at all. In fact, she didn't go to the wedding. It was a small wedding. The rabbi started . . .

Ray Ann: How did Doris' family feel?

Sam: They didn't mind at all. They were rural people from a simple background. They really didn't know what a Jew was. If they ever had any adverse or negative feelings, I never knew of them. I don't believe . . . I think Doris would have shared them with me. Fortunately, my mother and Doris got to be very close in later years. She's been a very good wife and mother, friend, and everything else. My father accepted it. I don't think he ever counseled me not to do so. One uncle, I remember, Monte Rubin,⁹⁴ one of my mother's brothers who I respected very highly and talked to from time to time for advice, counseled me. He was single, incidentally,

⁹⁴ Montague "Monte" F. Rubin (1902-1988) was born in New York City and resided in Atlanta. He served as a corporal in the United States Army 455th AAA Battalion during World War II.

difficult to take advice from. He was not married [unintelligible]. We had a lot of differences not just religious differences, but cultural background, educational background. Almost everything you could identify was different. October 25 of this year we will have been married 40 years. I have a lot of friends who married people who are ideal for them who've been divorced. I'm not saying that that makes it right or wrong, just that it's not a science. [unintelligible]. My own philosophy is that we've got a lot of intermarriage in my family. My daughter is going to get married September 2. She's marrying a non-Jewish man. My son [Steve Massell]⁹⁵ is married to a non-Jewish girl. My uncle, not the one I talked to for advice but his brother [Ernst Rubin]⁹⁶ married a non-Jewish girl.

Ray Ann: Were your children raised Jewish?

Sam: Yes. They observe the rituals probably more than I do.

Ray Ann: Are they raising their children Jewish?

Sam: Only one of them is married right now. That child is only two years old, so I don't know how they are going to do that.

Ray Ann: Did their spouse convert like your wife did?

Sam: No. They take courses in Judaism from a [unintelligible]. I think, my own philosophy is, contrary to what the Jewish community feels generally, is that I don't find it that damaging. Although it might decrease the number of Jews, it might increase it if we have enough conversions. I don't know the history on that.

Ray Ann: I could tell you, because there's been a lot of studies that we've done, that we're losing more than we're gaining. The fear is that there won't be any Jews in this country in another three generations.

Sam: I'm not surprised. The people who do it pay a price. My philosophy is if you're willing to pay that price, that's their decision.

Ray Ann: The people who do what?

⁹⁵ Steve Alan Massell (b. 1957), a member of the Atlanta Commercial Board of Realtors' Million Dollar Club, founded Massell Commercial Real Estate in 1991. He was a president of the Buckhead Business Association. He is the son of former Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell.

⁹⁶ Ernst Rubin (1903-1993) was born in New York City and resided in Atlanta. He served in the United States Army during World War II. He was a reporter for the Atlanta Constitution and businessman.

Sam: That intermarry. It's difficult. When you ask about the children, it's a difficult existence for the child. The decisions the child has to make and the confrontations with society . . . I could go on about it but that's another whole study.

Ray Ann: You have a wedding coming up?

<Break in tape>

Ray Ann: You got married.

Sam: Early married life . . . All of my married life, except maybe for the period in political life when I was a full-time government . . . our married life, the social content of it has been 95 percent Jewish. I said my wife converted, so we consider her Jewish. Although I had non-Jewish friends from my various involvements with college, work, politics, and other interests, my friends were Jewish and they were all very outgoing and good to my wife. It surprised me a little bit because I guess I felt like they went beyond the contract. It was more than just a courtesy politeness. I don't know whether it was just a southern trait of gentleness, politeness.

Ray Ann: Were there many other intermarried couples of your era?

Sam: No, not many, so it wasn't that. It wasn't that these people were bosom pals of mine that did it out of close friendship to me because mostly I talk about the women. If I go down the names of Shirley Pulsar, Mitty Sharp and Maxine Sherer . . . I just go down one after another, all of them took her in, my wife. Maybe it's to her credit. Maybe she just had that good a personality. They accepted her. That made a tremendous difference in my life. I'm not that socially responsive. I like people but I'm not motivated by social events. If it had been left to me I probably would have just lived within a small boundary. Because of their involvement with her and she's anything but a climber, so she didn't have . . . she wasn't out there seeking position or recognition. They were saying, "Let's do this, let's do that." There was a great deal of that. She knows more people at the Standard Club than I do. She knows more people at The Temple than I do. She goes and meets with the girls. They have card games once a week. They have tennis once a week. She's done this for 40 years. For a few years there she worked in a travel agency.

Ray Ann: You did the travel agency after you were finished being mayor?

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: How many years did you have that?

Sam: For 13 or 14 years. We just sold that. Two of our . . . all three children worked there some. My son worked there for seven years, I guess. One daughter for four years. The other one,

on and off for the summers. Doris worked there and I worked there. It was a family affair. I really don't know why I got off on this tangent so much except I think it's noteworthy, at least in this instance . . . I don't know if it's commonplace or not, but Reform Jewish women of Atlanta took in and accepted Doris, more than just accepted her but seemed to want to make her life happier. Maybe that's part of why we face this problem that we've got that the Jews are disappearing. Maybe they shouldn't be so nice to non-Jews.

Ray Ann: I think what happens is, once it's a fait accompli, they want to bring them in, not push them away, which is probably the same attitude that they would have towards your intermarried children. Hopefully they will send that two year-old to Sunday school at The Temple and that sort of thing. Did you do all those things at home? Did you celebrate the holidays?

Sam: We still have a *seder* at home at Passover⁹⁷ which I conduct rather poorly. My wife cooks the foods and holiday ritual. We have family that all comes together and those who are in town she invites over to the house.

Ray Ann: You took over from your uncle who did it.

Sam: My grandfather. We don't have a lot of . . . we've got *mezuzahs*⁹⁸ on the entrances to our home. We have a ring with the [unintelligible] Israel that I wear from time to time, a few Jewish cufflinks. I used to wear cufflinks, gold *mezuzah* cufflinks. Gave some to the rabbi. One of the smartest political things [unintelligible]. I remember one of the trips I took to Israel was with a group of mayors. Louie Welch⁹⁹ was Mayor of Houston, Texas, not Jewish. While he was over there he bought 15, maybe 20 *mezuzahs* and he brought them back for his Jewish supporters. For the mayor to bring you a *mezuzah* from Israel, that was quite a selection, a good gift idea. I don't know if you say we . . . We weren't real Jewish. We were Jewish. We never denied being Jewish. I had a Christmas tree when I was a child.

⁹⁷ Hebrew: *Pesach*. The anniversary of Israel's liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, *matzah*, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had not time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the *seder*, the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The *seder* service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life. In addition to eating *matzah* during the *seder*, Jews are prohibited from eating leavened bread during the entire week of Passover. In addition, Jews are also supposed to avoid foods made with wheat, barley, rye, spelt or oats unless those foods are labeled 'kosher for Passover.' Jews traditionally have separate dishes for Passover.

⁹⁸ A *mezuzah* (Hebrew for 'doorpost') is a parchment scroll often contained in a decorative case which is fixed on the right side of doorpost of a home. The parchment scroll made by a scribe contains the handwritten text of the first two paragraphs of the *Shema*.

⁹⁹ Louie Welch (1918- 2008) was an American politician who served from 1964 to 1973 as the Mayor of Houston, Texas.

Ray Ann: Did you have one for your children?

Sam: Yes. They had a Christmas tree. We still exchange presents at Christmas to this day. I guess when I was growing up almost all of my Jewish friends observed Christmas. We gave gifts and cards. We don't send out a card that has reference to Christmas as a religious holiday but we send something like happy holidays or something like that. That's a compromise, I guess.

Ray Ann: Where did you live when you were first married?

Sam: We've always lived within a couple miles of one place. We started out on Adina Drive right off Lindbergh [Drive], which was the lowest priced apartment that you could get on the north side of Atlanta. We were both broke. I was on a commission basis. She was working and supporting me. She was with Texas Oil Company.¹⁰⁰ She worked for about nine years, I think. She was working there when we got married. She continued working there for a couple of years until we had our first child. We had no money at all. We budgeted everything and went on a straight cash basis. We finally saved up enough to buy a Muntz TV.¹⁰¹ We had borrowed our carpet from [unintelligible] and a sofa from Buddy Mantler. Most of the furniture we had was some that she had from her apartment when she was single. We lived on Adina Drive. We lived there for two or three years. Our first child came there. We moved. We bought a little house on Springdale Drive just about a mile from Adina Drive, off of Lindbergh Drive also. [We] stayed there—I don't know how long—ten years or eight years, then we bought a big home on Windgate off of the expressway about a mile from Springdale Drive, a mile and a half. It's a six bedroom home. We stayed there 28 years. We just sold that. We bought a little townhouse on Peachtree Road about a mile from Windgate. All these in a certain circle. Now we have a two-bedroom townhouse.

Ray Ann: I'm going to cut this off here and we'll take this up another day. Thank you.

<End Tape 1, Side 2>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 1>

Ray Ann: Today is August 24, 1992. This is Ray Ann Kremer interviewing Sam Massell for the Atlanta Jewish Oral History Project. This project is sponsored by the American Jewish

¹⁰⁰ Texas Oil Company was founded in 1902 in Beaumont, Texas. It was renamed Texaco in 1959 and acquired by Chevron in 2001. Texaco has since been a subsidiary of Chevron.

¹⁰¹ Muntz TV was sold from 1947 until 1959, when it filed bankruptcy. Founded by Earl William "Madman" Muntz, Muntz TV was the first black and white TV receiver to retail in the U.S. for less than \$100, and the first to include an attached antenna.

Committee, the Atlanta Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women. This is tape two, side one. I reviewed the other tape. One of the questions that came to mind before we get into politics . . . Because you were in the real estate business, I was wondering if you had any observations as to the growth of Atlanta and why it seems to have grown. Because of real estate, really, with that sort of focus in your time, from when you were young and what you observed.

Sam: We've been fortunate to have developers who had self-confidence and creativity that helped provide brick and mortar for the growth of the community. If you don't have the space, people don't come. The Massells were very involved in that during the early post-war era, 1940's and 1950's, when Ben Massell was the only builder in Atlanta. Back before that—though I didn't witness it—in the 1920's and 1930's, they were major developers also, Ben and Sam, his brother, and my father. They built a lot of apartments as well as warehouses and retail stores. Their office buildings started after World War II. Since then, Atlanta has seen a number of other local people like John Portman¹⁰² and Tommy Cousins¹⁰³ and Jim Cushman,¹⁰⁴ people who are not Jewish.

Ray Ann: Can you tell me a little bit more about your uncle . . . uncles. There were several of them in the building business together?

Sam: My father and two of his brothers.

Ray Ann: Your father also was an attorney.

Sam: After the [Great] Depression, when they split up, yes. Then he began to practice law. Before that, the three brothers were together as developers.

Ray Ann: They all started out doing that together from their youth?

¹⁰² John Calvin Portman, Jr., (1924-2017) was an American architect famous for buildings, especially hotels, with multi-storied interior atria. He grew up in Atlanta and had a very large impact on the city, specifically the Peachtree Center complex downtown. His buildings in Atlanta include the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, 230 Peachtree Building (formerly Peachtree Center Tower), AmericasMart (formerly Atlanta Market Center) and the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center.

¹⁰³ Thomas "Tom" Grady Cousins (born 1931) is a real estate developer, sports supporter and philanthropist, primarily based in Atlanta, Georgia. He founded Cousins Properties in 1958 and was CEO and subsequently its chairman of the board until 2007 when he retired. He was a leader in shaping the skyline in Atlanta and was known for purchasing and bringing the Atlanta Hawks to Atlanta. He developed buildings such as the CNN Center, the Omni Coliseum, 191 Peachtree Tower, the Pinnacle Building in Buckhead and the first phase of the Georgia World Congress Center.

¹⁰⁴ James Edward "Jim" Cushman (1930-2015) was an Atlanta, Georgia real estate developer who built the Colony Square complex in Midtown Atlanta, Georgia, Paces Place condominium in Buckhead, and Lenox Tower, the first high-rise building in Buckhead.

Sam: My dad, at one time, was secretary to the Atlanta Crackers which was a forerunner to the Atlanta Braves.

Ray Ann: Was your father the oldest? Maybe we ought to get the years they were born.

Sam: No, I don't know the years they were born. He also had a little entertainment brokerage, a booking agency, and their father had a grocery store. They may have all worked in the grocery business at one time. That's as much as I know of their history.

Ray Ann: At some point, when your father left, was the developing business already going on? Were Levi and Ben already doing it?

Sam: They all three went into the development business. That [Great] Depression came. They all three went out of the development business. It was closed up. It was terminated. It was ended. It was bankrupt. My father went into law and Ben went back into the development business. I'm not sure just what Levi did then.

Ray Ann: Did he stay in Atlanta?

Sam: Yes. He didn't live much longer. I just don't recall the details.

Ray Ann: Did he have children?

Sam: Yes, Lee, who's still living in Atlanta and Charles, who is deceased.

Ray Ann: Then your father had you . . .

Sam: Three. Me, my brother, Howard, and my sister, Shirley.

Ray Ann: The other brother had a daughter.

Sam: Caroline,¹⁰⁵ who married Simon Selig,¹⁰⁶ and Ben Jr.,¹⁰⁷ his son. Both of those are deceased now.

¹⁰⁵ Caroline Margery Massell Selig (1919-1984) was president and co-owner of Massell Company, a real estate development company, after the death of founder Ben J. Massell Sr. in 1962. Her civic, cultural, and philanthropic activities included serving on the boards of the High Museum of Art, the Atlanta Opera Company, and the Jewish Children's Services of Atlanta. She and her husband Simon Selig Jr. provided a substantial gift to purchase adjacent property with two buildings that enabled the expansion of The Temple in 1981.

¹⁰⁶ Simon "Slick" Selig, Jr. (1913-1986) of Atlanta was chairman of Selig Enterprises, a commercial and industrial real estate firm. He was previously president of Selig Chemical Industries Inc., a manufacturer of chemical sanitary products, from 1940 to 1968. His philanthropic gifts benefited the University of Georgia (UGA) in Athens, the Woodruff Arts Center which includes the High Museum, The Temple, and the Southern Center for International Studies. He was a graduate of Boys High, and received a bachelor's degree in business administration from UGA. During World War II, he served in the infantry and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

¹⁰⁷ Ben J. Massell Jr., (1917-1986) was a native of Atlanta, Georgia who became chairman of Massell Company, Massell Investment Co., and Realty Operations Inc., three holding companies for the Massell family's properties. His father, Ben J. Massell Sr., was a well-known real estate developer in Atlanta who was often referred to as "Mr. Skyscraper." Ben Jr. chaired a restoration committee for the Fox, a landmark Atlanta theater. He was a national co-chairman of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Society of Fellows, a member of the ADL executive committee for

Ray Ann: Going back to the development, you wouldn't have been aware of it really until you got back into it, when you went into it yourself . . . the period between, say, your father and you, between the Great Depression and when you got into it. There must have been some growth between the Great Depression and when you got into it. A lot actually.

Sam: That's what I was explaining about the post-World War II era where they were the largest . . . Ben, at that time, was the largest developer in Atlanta, maybe in the Southeast.

Ray Ann: When you were encouraged to go into the business by Buddy . . . How did you spell his name again?

Sam: M-A-N-T-L-E-R.

Ray Ann: You didn't consider going in with your uncle?

Sam: No.

Ray Ann: That was a different kind of thing?

Sam: He was doing development and I went into brokerage, leasing.

Ray Ann: You described the development through World War II. You mentioned it going on now. What is your view of the future of Atlanta? Here you are with the Buckhead Coalition.¹⁰⁸

Sam: I think Atlanta's future is as bright as its past has been in that there's a lot of ambition here, leadership, and momentum. Put all that together and you have a pretty good future.

Ray Ann: What about during the 1970's when supposedly [unintelligible] and now? [unintelligible]?

Sam: Yes, we're in a recession like the rest of the United States, but everything is relative. Unfortunately, maybe we got carried away with our prosperity and progress, did too much in development, and this caused the bust, as you called it, to hurt more than had it just been a slower paced growth.

Ray Ann: You made a comment before about how you needed to build so that people would come and there was a space for them. To encourage it, sort of 'if you build it. they will come'.

the Southeastern United States, and a member of a local ADL development committee. He assembled a notable collection of antique cars, including a Packard formerly owned by Al Jolson and a 1928 Cadillac convertible. He was a graduate of Marist School and of the University of Virginia where he earned a degree in architecture. His first cousin, Sam Massell, was Mayor of Atlanta in 1970-74.

¹⁰⁸ The Buckhead Coalition is a non-profit organization comprised of business and civic leaders interested in nurturing and preserving the quality of life in the Buckhead area of Atlanta, Georgia. The organization plans and implements action programs for improvement of Buckhead.

Sam: If they come . . . If you don't have a space, they sure won't come. Let's put it that way. When you have a product, you're in better shape than your competitors if they don't have a product. Having space available is very important to the growth of any community.

Ray Ann: It's that fine a balance . . .

Sam: That's correct.

Ray Ann: . . . which we all wish we knew. Any other observances about Atlanta and its real estate and growth?

Sam: I don't know how far you want me to expand.

Ray Ann: Just start.

Sam: Atlanta is fortunate in a number of ways that generates growth. Part of it is its geographical location. It's the center of the southeast. It's vehemence in transportation, particularly, what we are to air transportation where we have the first, second, or third busiest airport in the United States year after year. We have a network of rail lines and highways. There's no boundary, no natural boundary that deters growth in any direction like most major cities. There's no river, ocean, mountain, desert or anything else to stop the growth, so it goes in all four directions.

Ray Ann: You say that but I keep hearing complaints and comments that it's not going south.

Sam: It can. I guess I should have said it can go in all four directions. There's nothing to stop it. There is some growth to the south but not as much as we have in the north. That's probably not unusual anywhere in the country, either, that some directions are more popular than others.

Ray Ann: Do you think there is a racial reason?

Sam: No. The south side was lily white for years, and years, and years, and there was no growth down there. Only the west side was black. That's not the reason at all.

Ray Ann: Do you think it's the airport?

Sam: No. The airport generates some growth. It's just the income level is not as high. Better growth started in the north. Better growth begets better growth. Development follows a pattern. The other ways, taking to the east . . . Ponce de Leon Avenue is a street that has never developed to what it should. It's prominent. It's a major artery connecting Decatur and Atlanta, two cities. It's a street that's a United States highway. It's a wide thoroughfare that has had a department store, Sears Roebuck, on it—a major building. It had a major hotel, the Briarcliff

Hotel on Ponce de Leon Avenue and Highland Avenue. It led to Druid Hills which was a very prominent high-income community. It had the handsome Fox Theatre¹⁰⁹ and Georgian Terrace¹¹⁰ Hotel. Yet, it's never developed. It's a lower-income area and has not attracted development.

Ray Ann: When you got into the business, the post-war boom had really pretty much had happened. Where did you come in? What was going on?

Sam: New office buildings were being built. West Peachtree Street was being zoned for commercial use, prior to which it had been single family homes, some of which had turned into boarding houses or rooming houses. The **Peachtree Ridge** was being developed with low-rise office buildings. It's been a steady growth ever since I went into the business.

Ray Ann: You commented that it was a wonderful opportunity for you, and although you got pushed out of the other thing, that obviously was the thing to do. What do you think made you so good at it? Good salesman? Contacts?

Sam: I worked hard. I do my homework in whatever I work at. I am—I guess—ambitious, energetic, and, hopefully, creative to some degree. You put all that initiative together and it works for anybody.

Ray Ann: You were doing well. You liked the business. Atlanta was growing. Why did you give it up and go into politics? What got you started?

Sam: Actually, my father loved politics. [He] encouraged me to be involved in civic and service work, and the community. He used to take me with him when he used to visit with politicians during campaign periods. In fact, he edited a newspaper as a hobby called *Atlanta Democrat*.¹¹¹ He named me as an editor once. I would write a column or whatever. He went and he would involve me where he could.

Ray Ann: Did he ever run for political office?

¹⁰⁹ The Fox Theatre is located on Peachtree Street in Midtown Atlanta. The theater was originally planned as part of a large Shrine Temple as evidenced by its Moorish design. The theater was ultimately developed as a lavish movie palace, opening in 1929. The auditorium replicates an Arabian courtyard under a night sky of flickering stars and drifting clouds. The Fox Theatre now hosts cultural and artistic events, and concerts by popular artists.

¹¹⁰ The Georgian Terrace Hotel in Midtown Atlanta was designed by architect William Lee Stoddart in a Beaux-Arts style intended to evoke the architecture of Paris. Construction began in 1910 and the hotel opened 1911. A 19-story wing was added in 1991 and major renovation was completed in 2009. The Georgian Terrace is a member of Historic Hotel of America, the official program of the women's Trust for Historic Preservation.

¹¹¹ *Atlanta Democrat* was a monthly periodical published by Sam A. Massell beginning in 1937. It was the official organ of Atlanta Tammany Club, of which Sam A. Massell was a co-founder and president.

Sam: No, in fact, it's quite interesting and amusing that he used to make the observation that a Jew could not get elected citywide in Atlanta. Finally, once, I asked him, "How do you know it? One has never run." Later I did run.

Ray Ann: To know more about the newspaper, this was his newspaper? He published it?

Sam: Yes, he published it. He found it. It was a hobby. It was a monthly called *Atlanta Democrat*.

Ray Ann: What was its purpose?

Sam: Dissemination of information regarding political happenings, prognostications, and anything having to do with the political arena state-wide, but mostly Atlanta.

Ray Ann: What kind of circulation did it have?

Sam: I don't recall, though I was in charge of circulation for a while. We would roll them, label them, and take them to the post office.

Ray Ann: Do you remember what it cost to get a newspaper?

Sam: No. I've got one set of them at home that I did not give to the [Atlanta] Historical Society.

Ray Ann: They had advertising?

Sam: They had advertising. I sold some ads for it. I remember he took some trade for ads, so there were certain restaurants where we would eat. He would trade out ads for food or something. My dad used to trade his law service, too, for other things. That's where we got the billy goat I think I told you I had in my yard. He would get involved. He never turned anybody down. Whatever they had that they could pay with, he would accept.

Ray Ann: Was he friendly with politicians?

Sam: Yes, he was. He served on a lot of groups. There was a political group called the [Atlanta] Tammany Club which he was a legal counsel to. He served on different political groups and civic groups. He encouraged me to get involved in the community. That's where my civic activities started. I think I told you before about my friend Charles Goldstein in Miami, getting me really kicked off in high school.

Ray Ann: Right, and also we heard about your first running for office up in the county.

Sam: Yes, in Mountain Park, Georgia.

Ray Ann: Mountain Park?

Sam: Yes. Then, from that . . .

Ray Ann: Tell me about some of the things you were involved in. You were leasing in . . .

Sam: In real estate . . .

Ray Ann: You belonged to . . .

Sam: In real estate circles?

Ray Ann: Both. You said you were involved in the community.

Sam: The real estate part . . . I was active in the real estate board, program chairman, and other positions. In fact, I was honored with what they call the Alvin B. Cates trophy¹¹² for the outstanding deal of the year for three different years for the state. I was also a charter member of the Atlanta Real Estate Board Million Dollar Club.¹¹³ I did well in real estate. I became what I believe was the world's only specialist in doctor's office buildings. [I] developed, leased, and managed those in Atlanta, Jacksonville, Florida and Chattanooga, Tennessee. About that time is when I got involved full-time in the political arena, so I didn't go further. I was a consultant for a couple, one in Baltimore and one in Philadelphia. In real estate, I was very active and enjoyed it very much. My son's in it now and is going to do as well or better.

Ray Ann: Who's he with?

Sam: He's on his own. He was with Portman Barry [Investments]¹¹⁴ but in this recession they've phased down and he's gone out on his own. He does commercial real estate. During that time, I got real active in civic work. I was president of Muscular Dystrophy Association of Fulton County. I was president of the Atlanta Humane Society¹¹⁵ and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, same group. I was a charter member of the B'nai B'rith¹¹⁶ chapter, the

¹¹² The Alvin B. Cates Award is a silver trophy that is awarded annually to the member of the Atlanta Board of Realtors who completed the most outstanding real estate transaction of the calendar year. The large, sterling silver trophy was first presented in 1937 by Mr. Alvin B. Cates, Sr., to the Georgia Association of Realtors with the request that it be awarded annually. Since the late 1950's, the Atlanta Commercial Board of Realtors continues to present the award at its Million Dollar Club Banquet. The silver trophy is held by the recipient for one year until the next recipient is awarded.

¹¹³ The Million Dollar Club was formed in 1959 in Atlanta with 12 charter members, including Sam Massell, Jr. and Alvin Cates, who qualified as top producers in the field of real estate. Million Dollar Clubs have since been replicated in other localities in Georgia and elsewhere nationally. In 2004, the requirement for new members of the Atlanta Commercial Board of Realtors to qualify for the Million Dollar Club was increased to \$5 million in commercial real estate transactions.

¹¹⁴ An Atlanta-based real estate development firm founded by Atlanta architect John Portman and Hal Barry which built Northpark Town Center in the 1980's. It was Portman's first suburban development, north of Atlanta.

¹¹⁵ Atlanta Humane Society (AHS) is a nonprofit organization in Atlanta, founded in 1873. The animal charity was originally chartered to protect women, children, and animals and remained a child protection and animal welfare society for 79 years. AHS is now a pet adoption center, vet center, and educational program provider located on Howell Mill Road. The Alpharetta campus on Mansell Road was opened in 2011.

¹¹⁶ B'nai B'rith International (Hebrew: 'Children of the Covenant') is the oldest Jewish service organization in the

Atlanta chapter, the Atlanta Lodge of B'nai B'rith. I was an officer in that. I was an officer of American Jewish Committee, I think, vice-chairman of that. I think I was treasurer of the Anti-Defamation League.¹¹⁷ I was vice-president of the Metropolitan Atlanta Council on Alcohol and Drugs. I was on the board of a number of different organizations. I was very active in civic, service work in the community.

Ray Ann: Weren't you in Kiwanis¹¹⁸ or Rotary¹¹⁹ or anything?

Sam: No, I was not in a service club. I am now in the Buckhead Rotary Club.¹²⁰ I was in the Jaycees.¹²¹ In fact, I received an award for the outstanding young man of the year in the Atlanta Jaycees and one of the five outstanding young men in the state.

Ray Ann: What started happening in your life that started you thinking more seriously about running?

Sam: About running?

Ray Ann: For anything. I don't know what your first . . .

Sam: Each was an opportunity, timing. In fact, it's sort of funny. I was relating this story to a young man who has just won an election to the state legislature. His name is [Ron] Slotin.¹²² He was up here and I was telling him that timing is everything. He was running against an established candidate, an uphill battle. It was funny because he left here and he called me the

world. B'nai B'rith states that it is committed to the security and continuity of the Jewish people and the State of Israel and combating antisemitism and bigotry. Its mission is to unite persons of the Jewish faith and to enhance Jewish identity through strengthening Jewish family life, to provide broad-based services for the benefit of senior citizens, and to facilitate advocacy and action on behalf of Jews throughout the world.

¹¹⁷ The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is an international Jewish non-governmental organization based in the United States. The ADL was founded in 1913 "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all." Today, the ADL describes itself as "the nation's premier civil rights/human relations agency."

¹¹⁸ Kiwanis International is an international, coeducational service club founded in 1915. It is a volunteer-led organization dedicated to building better communities, children, and youth.

¹¹⁹ Rotary International is an international service organization whose stated purpose is to bring together business and professional leaders in order to provide humanitarian services, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. It is a secular organization with about 1.2 million members worldwide.

¹²⁰ The Buckhead Rotary Club was chartered in 1951 and has 161 members (2018).

¹²¹ The United States Junior Chamber ('JC's' or more commonly 'Jaycees') is a leadership training and civic organization for people between the ages of 18 and 41. Areas of emphasis are business development, management skills, individual training, community service, and international connections. It was established January 21, 1920 to provide opportunities for young men to develop personal and leadership skills through service to others.

¹²² Ronald David "Ron" Slotin (born 1963) was a member of the Georgia State Senate from 1993 to 1996. He opted not to run for re-election in 1996 so that he could run in the Democratic primary for the United States House of Representatives seat for Georgia's 4th congressional district, in an unsuccessful challenge to United States Representative Cynthia McKinney. He ran in the 2017 special election to represent Georgia's 6th congressional district in the United States House of Representatives, but was unsuccessful. He was a publisher of *Atlanta Jewish Life* magazine.

next day and he said, “Just after I left you I turned on my car radio and heard that my opponent was indicted.” He says, “Timing is everything.” Indeed.” When I ran for . . . My first office was city counselor in Mountain Park. What happened there, I told you before. They came to me and asked me to run. It seemed like an opportunity. It was something new and I was showing an interest. They weren’t used to that. That was an opportunity: timing. I got on the council. One day they sold their property, so that was timing or an opportunity. The next office was that of . . . as a member of the Atlanta City Executive Committee. That office no longer exists.

Ray Ann: What was it?

Sam: The Atlanta City Executive Committee was the group—established by state legislature, by charter—of the city that had the responsibility of managing the city elections, deciding when they would be, what the qualifying fee was to run for office, and what the rules were.

Ray Ann: This was an appointed position.

Sam: No. You were elected by wards only, not citywide. Each ward . . . They’re now called districts. Back then we had eight wards in the city. Each ward had two members elected to the Atlanta City Executive Committee which at the time was named the Atlanta Democratic City Executive Committee. In fact, it was named the White Democratic Executive Committee. Two blacks, or at least one black, A. T. Walden,¹²³ who was a friend of my father’s, a lawyer, wanted to run. He tried to qualify to run for the City Executive Committee from his ward. They wouldn’t qualify him because they said this was a White Executive Committee. He took it to court and won the right to run. As a result, of the 16 members on the Executive Committee, 15 of the 16 refused to run for re-election. They said, “You can have it if we’ve got to let blacks in.”

Ray Ann: What year was this?

Sam: I don’t know, 35 or 40 years ago. I don’t know. I’ll have to think it through and look it up. I’ve got the dates.

Ray Ann: What was the man’s name again, the black man?

¹²³ Austin Thomas “A. T.” Walden (1885-1965) was an Atlanta attorney, civil rights leader, and politician. He was elected to Atlanta’s city executive committee in 1953. He was one of the first two blacks to serve as members of the state Democratic executive committee. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1964, the first year in which blacks were included in the Georgia delegation. In 1964, Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. appointed him to serve as judge of the Atlanta Municipal Court, making him the first black judge in Georgia since Reconstruction.

Sam: A. T. Walden. He was an attorney. He's since deceased. Fifteen of the 16 refused to run. One woman, Margaret MacDougall¹²⁴ decided that she would run for re-election. I saw this in the paper . . . Again, opportunity was knocking. I said, "I'll run." She and I, together, and a couple of others, Ada Toombs¹²⁵ and I don't know who else . . . We scrounged around and we ended up getting the remaining 14, 13, or whatever we needed to run for the Executive Committee. Another black, Miles Amos,¹²⁶ ran. He was a popular druggist on the west side. We ran and got elected. It was a four-year term. I became secretary of the Executive Committee and Margaret MacDougall became chairman. In that position, incidentally, I did a lot of work there, too, one thing being to codify all the election laws. We put out a book which is in the library which, at that time, had federal, state, county, city and Executive Committee regulations. We changed the name from White Democratic Executive Committee to Democratic Executive Committee. Really, the courts did in effect. After that, I was the one who made the motion that we change it without the word democratic and just become the City Executive Committee, and change our local elections to non-partisan elections so that Republicans could run as well as Democrats. They didn't have an executive committee because there weren't enough of them and they didn't have the money to hold an election. That made a big change in the local government management. Later, one of the Republicans who ran and got elected to the City Council, then called the Board of Aldermen, ran against me for mayor. That was Rodney Cook.¹²⁷ That was alright. That was his right. I created the opportunity for him and he ran against me. City

¹²⁴ Margaret Clarkson McDow MacDougall (1903-1986), born in York, South Carolina, was known for her liberal and inter-racial activism. A graduate of Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, she taught school in Mississippi and South Carolina before her marriage to Robert Leak MacDougall. In the 1950's, she was chairman of the City Executive Committee, which supervised elections in Atlanta. She was active in the movement to eliminate the "county unit system" in statewide voting.

¹²⁵ Ada Knight Hereford Toombs, born 1907 in Florida, was the second wife of Henry Johnston Toombs, a prominent Atlanta architect who designed the Little White House, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's home in Warm Springs, Georgia. Prior to their marriage in 1948, she held positions in social work with the West Virginia Relief Administration and the Florida State Welfare Department. She was an advocate and lobbyist for child welfare, woman's voting rights, and civil rights in Georgia. She graduated from Agnes State College in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929.

¹²⁶ Miles Green Amos (1895-1995), was a pioneer black pharmacist who opened the Amos Drug Store in Atlanta in 1922 with his uncle Moses Amos who was the first black licensed pharmacist in Georgia, and operated it until 1969. In 1953, when he was elected as a member of the City Democratic Executive Committee, Amos and A. T. Walden became the first blacks elected to municipal office in Atlanta since 1870. He was a graduate of Wilberforce University in Ohio.

¹²⁷ Rodney Mims Cook (1924-2013) was a politician in Atlanta, Georgia who was an Atlanta city alderman and simultaneously was a member of the Georgia House of Representatives from 1966–1973. Cook unsuccessfully ran for Mayor of Atlanta in 1969, when he was defeated by Sam Massell. His pro-civil rights stance led the Ku Klux Klan to burn a cross on the lawn of his home. He was a graduate of Washington and Lee University in Lexington Virginia. During World War II, he was a lieutenant in the United States Navy.

Executive Committee, I ran for re-election and served another four years. I served eight years on the City Executive Committee. Then, interestingly enough, it was sort of opportunity that knocked for the next office I sought, which was that of president of the Board of Aldermen or City Council. They also called it vice-mayor. I was secretary of the City Executive Committee. In that position I sat in the office and had each candidate come in when they wanted to run for office. They would swear that they'd take the oath of the candidacy, pay their fee, and get their book of regulations so they could become a candidate. At the time, Ivan Allen¹²⁸ was running for mayor and a slew of others, including Lester Maddox,¹²⁹ whom you might know, who was a most extreme right-winger. One of the other good guys who was running was Muggsy Smith,¹³⁰ who had been in the legislature and was a moderate to liberal. I hated to see Muggsy and Ivan run against each other, so each time somebody would come in, I would try to convince them to go out and convince Muggsy to run for president of the council rather than mayor. Later he could run for mayor. We would lose one of them if they both ran for mayor. They couldn't both be mayor. That was my interest. One man, Everett Millican¹³¹ had been a state senator who was going to run for the City Council . . . He had been on City Council, was going to run again, and was qualified. I gave him this pitch and he said, "Yes, somebody needs to beat Lee Evans."¹³² Lee Evans was the president of the council. That wasn't my reason. My reason was Muggsy should run because he shouldn't run against Ivan. Everett Millican, who was highly respected in the community, was saying, "Yes, somebody needs to beat Lee Evans because he's done a bad

¹²⁸ Ivan Allen, Sr. (1876-1968) (born Isaac Anderson Allen) was born in Dalton Georgia. In 1900 while still in his mid-twenties, Ivan Allen co-founded the Atlanta office supply firm later known as the Ivan Allen Company. The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce tapped him to head the Forward Atlanta booster campaign from 1926 to 1929 to solidify Atlanta's emerging position as the leading city of the South. Allen wrote the campaign's central document, *Atlanta from the Ashes* (1928). Twenty years later he wrote another booster booklet called *The Atlanta Spirit: Altitude + Attitude* (1948).

¹²⁹ Lester Garfield Maddox, Sr. was the controversial 75th Governor of Georgia from 1967 to 1971. Originally, a restaurateur he came to political prominence as a staunch segregationist, although his record as governor often aided African-Americans. When Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated he denied the slain civil rights leader the honor of lying in state in the Georgia state capitol. When Maddox's bid for the presidency failed in 1976, he turned to stand-up comedy with an African-American named 'Bobby Lee Sears,' who had worked as a busboy in his restaurant. He died in 2003 of cancer and pneumonia.

¹³⁰ Milton Morton "Muggsy" Smith (1901-1966) was a member of the Georgia House of Representatives for Fulton County from 1947 to 1960. He advocated keeping Georgia public schools open during the period of de-segregation. He ran unsuccessfully as an Atlanta, Georgia mayoral candidate in 1961 and in 1965. He was a graduate of Boys' High.

¹³¹ George Everett Millican (1897-1979) was a City of Atlanta alderman and a Georgia State Senator from Fulton County. He was a vice president at Gulf Oil Corporation. He was a graduate of Harvard University and was awarded a Doctorate of Laws from Atlanta Law School.

¹³² Lee Evans served more than a decade on the Atlanta Board of Aldermen and as Mayor Pro Tem (vice-mayor).

job on several things.” Part of which was voting against Egleston. I’m giving you a lot of words that don’t mean anything to you, but they’re . . . Egleston was the first public housing project, not the first, but one that would have been racially mixed. Evans had broken a tie vote on the Board of Aldermen and voted against it. Everett Millican said somebody needs to beat Lee Evans. I went home that night and started thinking about it and decided, “If somebody needs to beat him, maybe I’ll do it.” I asked my wife and I asked A. T. Walden, the black lawyer I mentioned earlier, and I asked Helen Bullard¹³³ who was sort of the guru of . . .

Ray Ann: Helen who?

Sam: Bullard, she’s deceased also, but she was the guru of local political campaigns. She had handled Bill Hartsfield’s¹³⁴ for years. She handled Mayor Ivan Allen’s. She handled all of mine, too. Those three people said, “Yes, go for it.” The next day I qualified myself to run for president of the council and subsequently got elected.

Ray Ann: Muggsy didn’t run.

Sam: Muggsy ran for mayor and got beat. That was the end of Muggsy. He got bitter and never did run for anything else. He is since deceased, also. [unintelligible]. Then, I ran for re-election for president of the council which was very successful. I had about five opponents. One was black. I had some of everything. I won without a runoff which was very unusual. I served eight years there. Again opportunity knocked because Ivan Allen decided not to run again.

Ray Ann: I have a question. During your term as vice-mayor, is that when there seemed to be more blacks involved politically in the city?

Sam: They were just beginning then. When I was secretary of the City Executive Committee, that’s when A. T. Walden and Miles Amos got elected, the first two blacks. A guy named Horace Tate,¹³⁵ I think four years later, got elected to the Board of Education, who later ran against me when I ran for mayor and has since been in the legislature ever since until this last

¹³³ Helen Bullard (1908-1979) was an Atlanta, Georgia public relations and advertising professional who worked on the electoral campaigns of Atlanta Mayors Hartsfield, Allen, and Massell. She was hired by the Atlanta Housing Authority in the 1970’s to help with tenant relations. She founded Helen Bullard Associates, the first female-owned PR firm in Atlanta, in 1968.

¹³⁴ William Berry Hartsfield, Sr. (1890-1971), served as the 49th and 51st Mayor of Atlanta. His tenure extended from 1937 to 1941 and again from 1942 to 1962, making him the longest-serving Mayor of his native Atlanta. It was under his direction that Atlanta became a world-class city with the image of the “City Too Busy to Hate.”

¹³⁵ Horace E. Tate (1922-2002) was born in Elberton, GA. He was the first African-American to earn a Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky in 1960. He was a teacher, a principal, and a professor in Georgia. He was the first African-American to run for Mayor of Atlanta and was elected to the Georgia State Senate in 1974. The Horace E. Tate Freeway that is located on a portion of I-75N in Georgia was dedicated in his honor. His daughter Horacena Tate has been a Georgia State Senator since 1999.

week. He was just beat by Ralph Abernathy III.¹³⁶ The blacks started about then. The first black got elected to City Council, I keep calling it City Council, but back then it was called Board of Aldermen when I got elected president of the council. That was . . . I think that was the time—either then or four years later when I was re-elected. That's when the blacks started getting elected to office. Q.B. Williamson¹³⁷ was elected to the City Council as the first black there. Leroy Johnson¹³⁸ was elected to the legislature and the state senate. They were starting right about then. That was the first one. A. T. Walden was the first, he and Miles Amos.

Ray Ann: We're not sure what year this is?

Sam: I can look it up in my biography. When [Mayor] Ivan [Allen] wasn't going to run again, there was an opening there.

Ray Ann: Did he encourage you to run?

Sam: No. In fact, he opposed me. He supported Rodney Cook who was the gentleman I mentioned earlier. Rodney was more conservative than I. I guess the community is more conservative.

Ray Ann: Did you get along with him when you were vice-mayor?

Sam: Yes. They're two separate offices. Some people think of them as a deputy mayor like they have in New York. That's not the way it is here. You're elected and you're elected independently. You're president of the [Atlanta City] Council and a separate office holder.

Ray Ann: What was it like working with him? What did you work on that you accomplished together?

¹³⁶ Ralph David Abernathy III (1959-2016), a native of Montgomery, Alabama, was the son of civil rights leader Ralph David Abernathy, Sr. The recipient of a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College, he owned Clean Air Industries in Atlanta, Georgia. He was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1988 and the Georgia State Senate in 1992. In 1998, he was convicted on 35 felony charges related to false reimbursement requests to the Legislature and served about a year of a four-year prison sentence.

¹³⁷ Quentin V. Williamson (1918-1985), a native of Atlanta, Georgia was a realtor and civil rights leader. He founded Q.V. Williamson & Company, a real estate business in Atlanta. He was president and chairman of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers. In 1966, he became the first black since Reconstruction to serve on the Atlanta Board of Aldermen (now the Atlanta City Council).

¹³⁸ Leroy Reginald Johnson (born 1928), was an American politician who served in the Georgia State Senate from 1963 to 1975 after winning a seat in the 1962 Georgia General Assembly election. He was the first black state senator to be elected to the legislature in more than fifty years, since William Rogers in 1907, and the first to be elected to the Senate since 1874. Before his term as senator, Johnson was an attorney where he played a role in Atlanta's civil rights movement of the 1960's. He ran unsuccessfully as a candidate in the 1973 Atlanta mayoral election, losing to Maynard Jackson, who became Atlanta's first black Mayor. He was a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta who earned a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College and a master's degree from Atlanta University.

Sam: I can't remember any specific program that we undertook together. The mayor and council system then was different from what we have today. What we had then was what we called a weak mayor system, a mayor-council where the mayor does not have the power to administer without the acquiescence of the council. Today they're separate bodies. The mayor is administrative and the council is legislative.

Ray Ann: You actually could have caused him a lot of grief if you didn't support him in things.

Sam: Right.

Ray Ann: Did you ever do that?

Sam: I supported him in almost everything. I opposed him on the famous Peyton wall debacle, which was where he was trying to stop integration expanding into a neighborhood, black ownership.

Ray Ann: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Sam: Yes, that was an unfortunate situation where the whites . . . This was in a west-side community that was all white. The blacks were buying homes approaching that area. There was panic in the white community.

Ray Ann: Was there blockbusting?¹³⁹

Sam: There was some of that, too, yes. Ivan got the idea that he could stop them from going down a certain street called Peyton Road by putting up a barricade and that they wouldn't buy beyond that because they couldn't drive their cars. They'd have to go another way to get out, that type of thing. Like Bill Hartsfield said, "It's hard to make a mistake. Don't make one that can be photographed." That photograph went all over the country of him putting up a barricade or having it put up. That didn't work and didn't last. I opposed him publicly on that. Generally speaking, we got along alright.

Ray Ann: Was there anything else that you opposed him publicly?

Sam: I don't recall opposing him on anything.

Ray Ann: That must have made you very popular with the black community.

Sam: I was popular with the black community already. I got elected with 90 percent of the black vote. It wasn't a political ploy. It was an unpopular thing that I was white and living in a

¹³⁹ Blockbusting is a business process of United States real estate agents and building developers to convince white property owners to sell their house at low prices, which they do by promoting fear in those house owners that racial minorities will soon be moving into the neighborhood.

white community in a white world and was already elected. It didn't serve a good political purpose but it was just not a correct thing to do, in my opinion.

Ray Ann: When you were vice-mayor, what was the thing you were most proud of that you did, the best accomplishment?

Sam: That's a good question but my memory is failing me. I would have to. . .

Ray Ann: Think about it. We'll come back to that. I'm going to ask you about being mayor, too.

Sam: That I can remember. The vice-mayor part . . . vice-mayor was more governing the City Council.

Ray Ann: You had to deal with all the council members and get them to get together on votes. Was that difficult? Tell me about the people on the council and what they were like.

Sam: That reminds me of what I would have claimed as an achievement while I was vice-mayor. There were really three or four of us young Turks: Rodney Cook, the one I mentioned earlier that ran against me later for mayor; Richard Freeman¹⁴⁰ who was also a Republican and who is now a federal judge; Buddy Fowlkes,¹⁴¹ who's still on the council, a senior member; and Cecil Turner¹⁴², to some degree who has since retired. The five of us were elected at the same time as contemporaries, with new thinking—I guess—from a group of much older men who had been on there for many years. One of the things that we achieved—Richard, Rodney, and I were very involved in the actual crafting of the legislation—was to eliminate what was called courtesy in the issuing of liquor licenses. Prior to that time, liquor licenses had to get the approval of the two aldermen in the ward. A liquor license thus became very valuable because you had to get the approval of the two aldermen in your ward. That meant one alderman could block you from getting your license, which made him very powerful, and they limited the number of stores. They would maybe only have two in a ward, not by law but by the decision of those two

¹⁴⁰ Richard Cameron Freeman, (1926-1999), a native of Atlanta, Georgia, was a member of the Atlanta Board of Aldermen from 1962 until his appointment by President Richard M. Nixon as a United States District Court Judge for the Northern District of Georgia in 1971. He had a law degree from Emory University and served in the United States Army at the end of World War II from 1945 to 1946.

¹⁴¹ Douglas "Buddy" Fowlkes (b. 1928) head track & field coach at Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) from 1965 to 1992. He also was an Atlanta alderman and city councilman for nearly three decades. He was convicted in 1994 on federal bribery charges in Atlanta's airport scandal and sentenced to prison time.

¹⁴² Cecil Turner (1918-2010) served as an Atlanta city alderman from the Sixth Ward from 1961 to 1973 and as a representative for Fulton County to the Georgia General Assembly from 1967 to 1969.. He was a graduate of Boys' High in Atlanta, the University of Georgia, and Atlanta Law School. He retired from the real estate division of the City of Atlanta's Law Department in 1984.

aldermen, which meant that those licenses were extremely valuable. Although we didn't accuse anybody of any wrongdoing, we felt that it lent itself to corruption. There were always plenty of accusations of corruption. We were reformers and felt that the whole law needed to be eliminated, drew the provisions to do so, politicked through the council, and got it approved to the great resentment of some of the older members of the council. We took away a great deal of power . . . some resentment of some friends we had in the community who owned liquor stores because they didn't want competition. This opened the doors to competition. There was a very unholy war. You not only had the liquor barons fighting you, those who had control, but you also had the churches fighting you. Being in the Bible Belt,¹⁴³ the Baptist¹⁴⁴ influence was very powerful. Louie Newton¹⁴⁵ was one of the ministers who got on us, accusing us for all kinds of deficiencies, to put it lightly. It opened a flood gate to every [unintelligible]. It was a tough battle. That was one thing that I can point to with pride.

Ray Ann: Can you point to something that you are not proud of that you regret?

Sam: On the council? I really don't remember. I'm pleased that on the City Executive Committee we changed the regulations to non-partisan. It really doesn't make any difference whether you're Republican or Democrat as to how you police crime or fix potholes in the streets. I'm still a Democrat. I was a Democrat. I'll be a Democrat having to do with national elections. When you get down to the local level, that was a progressive move, in my opinion. As far as things I regret when I was president of the council, there probably are some, but I don't recall them right now.

Ray Ann: Did you have any problems with any particular council people? Did any of them give you a lot of grief?

Sam: I had one who went to jail for bribery, of taking a bribe on a zoning matter.

Ray Ann: Who was that?

¹⁴³ 'Bible Belt' is an informal term for a region in the southeastern and south-central United States in which socially conservative evangelical Protestantism is a significant part of the culture and Christian church attendance across the denominations is generally higher than the nation's average. The Bible Belt consists of much of the southern United States extending west into Texas and Oklahoma.

¹⁴⁴ Baptists are individuals who comprise a group of Evangelical Christian denominations and churches that subscribe to a doctrine that baptism should be performed only for professing believers (believer's baptism, as opposed to infant baptism), and that it must be done by complete immersion (as opposed to affusion or sprinkling).

¹⁴⁵ Louie D. Newton (1892-1986) was a prominent Baptist preacher, author and denominational leader who served as the pastor of Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta for 40 years. He was well known for his stand on temperance, social reform, and fairness. He was often called 'Mr. Baptist.'

Sam: Pete Petree.¹⁴⁶

Ray Ann: How did he get caught?

Sam: I don't recall the details. I helped the prosecutors. I felt very strongly that it shouldn't be tolerated. There were two others who were indicted but were not convicted. I had offers to me, so I know that it would have felt prevalent to the ease of corruption. They make it so easy that you can almost accept the reality that there is a lot of corruption in government.

Ray Ann: You think even now, definitely now?

Sam: Even now, yes. Based on what I saw, they just make it so attractive. The people who are in office have never made the kind of money that they can make in illegal avenues. This is the same problem you have with drugs. It's a whole other issue. There's so much money involved. Money does corrupt, I can assure you.

Ray Ann: The kinds of bribes that were offered to you . . . What are we talking about besides money?

Sam: When I was president of the council, I don't remember any specific amount. I remember one which was really funny. I'll share an anecdote with you. It wasn't long after I'd been elected. I had let it be known that I was going to be a stickler for integrity on the Board [of Aldermen] and watching over any wrongdoing and accusations of it. These two guys came to see me who were in the ice cream business. We had a member of council who was also in the ice cream business. These two men were claiming that he was misusing the power of his office to sell his ice cream. He would tell a beer tavern, "If you don't buy my ice cream, I'm going to see that you lose your beer license." He'd tell a . . .

<End Tape 2, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 2>

Ray Ann: This is tape 2, side 2, August 24, 1992.

Sam: These two men were making all these accusations about this council member and I listened intently. I said, "If you help me, I'll help you." They jumped up and said, "Don't worry. We'll take care of you." I broke out laughing in their face because I had no idea what I was saying had two meanings. What I was trying to say was if you'll help me, if you'll get me evidence, witnesses, and testimony, I'll help you. I'll put a stop to this. They thought I was

¹⁴⁶ Richard Alfred "Pete" Petree (born 1913) was a former Atlanta city alderman who celebrated his 105th birthday on September 6, 2018.

saying, “If you’ll pay me, I’ll stop him from doing this.” Really, I broke out laughing right in their face. It shows that they were very much against bribes unless they could do it, too. When I was mayor, once I was offered . . . I say offered. It came through several parties, so I don’t know—you never know—how true these things are unless you pursue them. Whenever I had any hint of anything, I sent it to the Grand Jury, to the District Attorney for the Grand Jury. I felt that was the only way I could handle it was to let him handle it. Once I had something that would have amounted to a couple of \$100,000, or something like that.

Ray Ann: That’s definitely significant.

Sam: Yes, that’s significant.

Ray Ann: Back to the vice-mayor time. Of all the things that happened, what was most controversial? You already told me that. This is when Ivan Allen was mayor.

Sam: There were a lot of racial changes then. That’s when we had some of the riots down on Capitol Avenue and that area.

Ray Ann: Do you think Ivan Allen handled that well?

Sam: Yes, I do. He did handle it well.

Ray Ann: What were some of the things that he did that helped turn the city together?

Sam: The fact that as mayor he would take a position that blacks were entitled to equal opportunity. It was very important. They hadn’t had that before. Of course, our laws said that they weren’t entitled to equal opportunity. You can’t say that the mayor was wrong, or Bill Hartsfield or LeCraw¹⁴⁷ or Key¹⁴⁸ or anybody before then when they said blacks could not eat in the restaurants. The law said they couldn’t eat in restaurants.

Ray Ann: Were those changed while you were vice-mayor?

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: Did you change them through City Council or Board of Aldermen or how were they changed?

Sam: They were changed through the courts.

¹⁴⁷ Roy LeCraw (1895-1985) served part of one term as Mayor of Atlanta, Georgia before resigning in 1942 to join the United States Army at the beginning of World War II. He served as president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce starting in 1932 and ran for Mayor in 1934, but was defeated by James L. Key. He ran again for Mayor in 1945 but was defeated by incumbent Mayor William B. Hartsfield. In 1948, he served as a state senator in the Georgia Legislature, and in 1954 lost a bid for the United States Congress. He served in Korea and received the Bronze Star. In 2002 a lamp was installed in his honor at 2970 Peachtree Road in Buckhead.

¹⁴⁸ James Lee Key (1867–1939) was a lawyer and Mayor of Atlanta from 1919 to 1923 and 1931 to 1937.

Ray Ann: That's probably when the civil rights law¹⁴⁹ came out.

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: Superseded all that anyway.

Sam: Yes. It was a very dramatic time, the sit-ins, marches, demonstrations, and riots.

Ray Ann: Were you close to some black people at that time?

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: How did they react? That one person you talked about, A.T. . .

Ray Ann: . . .Walden?

Sam: A. T. Walden. The black leadership was a very responsible group. I attribute a lot of the success of our civil rights reforms to the responsible manner in which the black leadership conducted themselves, more so than other cities. I think a lot of it was because of the education they had had at the college level, this being the black academic center of the country. There's about five black colleges. They sat around the table and they had on Phi Beta Kappa¹⁵⁰ keys on their cufflinks. They were well-traveled and well-read.

Ray Ann: Who were some of those leaders?

Sam: Martin Luther King.¹⁵¹

Ray Ann: Did you know him well?

Sam: Yes. Leroy Johnson.

Ray Ann: What did he do?

¹⁴⁹ The Civil Rights Act (PL 88-352) was enacted on July 2, 1964. It outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace and by facilities that served the general public.

¹⁵⁰ The Phi Beta Kappa Society celebrates and advocates excellence in the liberal arts and sciences. Its campus chapters invite for induction the most outstanding arts and sciences students at American's leading colleges and universities. The Society sponsors activities to advance these studies—the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences—in higher education and in society at large.

¹⁵¹ Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) is best known for his role as a leader in the Civil Rights Movement and the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs. A Baptist minister, King became a civil rights activist early in his career. He led the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott and helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957, serving as its first president. With the SCLC, King led an unsuccessful struggle against segregation in Albany, Georgia, in 1962, and organized nonviolent protests in Birmingham, Alabama, that attracted national attention following television news coverage of the brutal police response. King also helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. On October 14, 1964, King received the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence. In 1965, he and the SCLC helped to organize the Selma to Montgomery marches and the following year, he took the movement north to Chicago to work on segregated housing. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. His death was followed by riots in many United States cities. King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was established as a holiday in numerous cities and states beginning in 1971, and as a United States federal holiday in 1986.

Sam: He was a state senator, the first black state senator. Jesse Hill,¹⁵² head of Atlanta Life Insurance Company. Sam Williamson, not Sam Williams. Sam, a minister, I can't remember his name.¹⁵³ His widow [Billye Suber Williams Aarons]¹⁵⁴ is now married to Hank Aaron.¹⁵⁵

Ray Ann: He was a minister. Do you remember what church?

Sam: They had a whole list of . . . The black ministry was very involved. John Calhoun¹⁵⁶ was a layman out of a ministry.

Ray Ann: What did he do?

Sam: I don't know what John did. He later became a member of City Council. He was a Republican. [Q.V.] Williamson who was a member of City Council, was in real estate.

Ray Ann: Did you socialize with these people?

Sam: Not a great deal. I would go to functions at their houses. For instance, T.M. Alexander¹⁵⁷ is one I didn't mention and they were going to his house when Harry Belefonte¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² Jesse Hill (1927-2012) was one of Atlanta's most prominent civil rights leaders as well as president and chief executive officer of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company from 1973 to 1992. He used his position in the black business community to promote civil rights in Georgia and Alabama, worked to desegregate University of Georgia in Athens, helped make it possible for blacks to get mortgages to buy homes, and organized successful voter registration drives in which 50,000 blacks were registered to vote. He even employed Rosa Parks in his Montgomery office as a secretary during the Montgomery bus boycott. He supported Martin Luther King. Hill was active in the civic and business communities of Atlanta for more than five decades.

¹⁵³ Dr. Samuel W. Williams (1912-1970) was a civil rights leader, teacher, and preacher. He joined the Morehouse College faculty in 1946 and was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy professor at Morehouse. Williams was the fourth pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, serving during the critical period of desegregation in Atlanta and the United States (1954-1970). He was a founder of SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference), President of the Atlanta NAACP, and chairman of the Atlanta Human Relations Commission.

¹⁵⁴ Billye Suber Williams Aaron is a media personality and advocate for higher education for African-American citizens. She received her bachelor's degree from Texas College and later her master's degree from Atlanta University. During her graduate studies, she met and married Samuel W. Williams, a Morehouse College professor of philosophy and religion, the pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Atlanta and a distinguished civil rights leader. She was widowed in 1970 and in 1973 married baseball legend Hank Aaron.

¹⁵⁵ Henry Louis "Hank" Aaron (b. 1934) is a retired professional baseball player. He was a major league baseball right fielder from 1954 through 1976. Aaron spent 21 seasons with the Milwaukee and Atlanta Braves in the National League before playing for the Milwaukee Brewers of the American League for the final two years of his career. He held Major League Baseball's record for career home runs for 33 years, and he still holds several offensive records. He is the only player to hit 30 or more home runs in a season at least 15 times.

¹⁵⁶ John H. Calhoun (1900-1988), a native of Greenville, South Carolina, was a civil rights leader and an Atlanta City Councilman from 1974 until 1978/ He and several others formed the Atlanta Negro Voters League at a time when few blacks were permitted to vote. He was president of the Atlanta branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

¹⁵⁷ Theodore Martin "T.M." Alexander, Sr. (1909-2001) was a leader in Atlanta's insurance industry and civic activities for more than 70 years. Alexander ran for the office of city alderman in 1957 and for the State Senate in 1961. Although he was unsuccessful, his actions helped motivate other African-Americans to seek public office throughout the South. He founded Alexander & Company in 1931, an insurance brokerage agency with offices in Georgia and Alabama. The company grew to become one of the nation's oldest and most successful minority-owned full-time independent insurance agencies and served major clients including MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority), the City of Atlanta, and the Coca-Cola Company.

was in town. He had a party for him . . . Herman Russell¹⁵⁹ and different ones, to their homes for small parties. We didn't allow [unintelligible] or that type. I used to go to some black night clubs and restaurants. [I] still do.

Ray Ann: How did your Jewish friends react to that? Were they pretty conservative?

Sam: Everything is relative. The Jewish community was more tolerant of the integration movement than was the non-Jewish white community in general. I was going to say that during my campaign for president of the council, most of the campaigning was done at rallies at black churches. I remember walking down the aisle saying that being Jewish, I felt I was more sensitive to some of their hurts, needs, shortcomings, and the lifestyle. Although I couldn't claim to feel exactly like a black felt in a white society, I had seen some prejudices and felt I could sense it better than my competitors could.

Ray Ann: How do you think Ivan Allen related to all that? Here he was, as lucky as they come with all the right connections. Yet, he was mayor at a time when things were really changing.

Sam: One of the first things I learned, which I was uncomfortable with at first but quickly learned to accept, is] that on City Council where I had to get votes from the other council members for various issues, whatever they might be, whether they had to do with racial interests or not . . . I learned if I could get people to vote for what I considered to be the right side, I wouldn't be concerned about why they did it. I started off thinking that everybody ought to understand that this is right, that's wrong, and this is why we must do this. I learned that that didn't get the votes. The way you got the votes was by trading off or persuading people because of other concerns or interests that they might have. This was true of whatever came before us. This was true in Ivan Allen's tenure. He may not have done it for the right reasons, but he did it because he knew that's what he should do as mayor to keep peace in the community. He felt we should have peace as strong as any man alive could have felt. In order to keep that peace, what must you do? You bring yourself to do that. You have to commend him for that because, as you alluded to, his background was not very liberal by any stretch of the imagination. As you might imagine, he caught a lot of flak from his friends. He was still a member of the [Piedmont]

¹⁵⁸ Harry Belafonte (b. 1927) is an American singer, songwriter, actor, and social activist.

¹⁵⁹ Herman J. Russell (1930-) is an Atlanta businessman and philanthropist. He owns H.J. Russell & company, a construction, construction management, real estate development and property management company. He is active in civil affairs and worked very closely with Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1960's.

Driving Club¹⁶⁰ and he was still a member of the First Presbyterian Church and still a member of these WASP¹⁶¹ operations, or whatever you want to call it. He got a lot of mean and angry letters and looks.

Ray Ann: You think that's where the term, "Atlanta, the city too busy to hate," came from? Everyone was so pragmatic and still is. People are willing to work it out to stay in business.

Sam: That was Bill Hartsfield's slogan. Maybe. I was willing to work out things if I could get people to vote what I considered to be the right way. The fact that they did it because somebody else owed them a favor or for some other reason, I overlooked. That was okay.

Ray Ann: I'm just comparing it to other cities. For instance, Memphis during the same period of time wasn't working things out.

Sam: There were a lot of things going on here. I mentioned the black leadership and the fact that these were not only educated people, well-read, but that they were our blacks, if you want to put it that way. They weren't out-of-towners that were coming over here and telling us how to run our business. Martin Luther King lived here. [Stokely] Carmichael,¹⁶² the head of SNCC lived here,¹⁶³ the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

¹⁶⁰ The Piedmont Driving Club is a private social club in Atlanta, Georgia with a reputation as one of the most prestigious private clubs in the South. Founded in 1887 originally as the Gentlemen's Driving Club, the name reflected the interest of the members to 'drive' their horse and carriages on the club grounds. The club later briefly used the adjacent grounds as a golf course until it sold the land to the city in 1904 to create Piedmont Park. The club's facilities include dining, golf, swimming, fitness, tennis, and squash. In May 2000, the club built an 18-hole championship golf course and Par 3 course several miles away on Camp Creek Parkway.

¹⁶¹ White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) is an informal, sometimes disparaging term, used to describe a closed circle of high-status and highly influential white Americans of English Protestant ancestry.

¹⁶² Stokely Carmichael (1941-1998), born in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, was a civil rights activist, leader of black nationalism in the United States in the 1960's, and originator of its rallying slogan, "black power." While enrolled at Howard University, he joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Nonviolent Action Group and was one of the Freedom Riders who traveled through the South challenging segregation laws when he was arrested and jailed for about 50 days in Jackson, Mississippi. After he became the chairman of SNCC, he split from Dr. Martin Luther King's ideology of nonviolence and racial integration. He founded the "black power" movement, which espoused self-defense tactics, self-determination, political and economic power, and racial pride. He traveled abroad denouncing U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and upon his return, his passport was confiscated and held for ten months. He left the United States in 1969 and moved to Guinea, West Africa where he changed his name to Kwame Ture. In 1971 he wrote *Stokely Speaks: Black Power Back to Pan-Africanism*.

¹⁶³ The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was one of the major Civil Rights Movement organizations of the 1960's. It emerged from the first wave of student sit-ins and formed at a May 1960 meeting organized by Ella Baker at Shaw University. SNCC played a major role in the freedom rides in the South, the 1963 March on Washington, Mississippi Freedom Summer, the Selma campaigns, the March Against Fear, and other historic events. SNCC's major contribution was in its field work, organizing voter registration, freedom schools, especially in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. In the later 1960's, inspired by leaders such as Stokely Carmichael, SNCC focused on black power and draft resistance to the Vietnam War. In 1969, SNCC officially changed its name to the Student National Coordinating Committee to reflect the broadening of its strategy. It passed out of existence in

Ray Ann: Stokely Carmichael?

Sam: Yes. The head of the region for NAACP,¹⁶⁴ the large regional office. Each organization had a big position here. They weren't sent from out of town. They lived here. That helped. For some reason, we had a lot more young leadership than some of our neighboring cities. I remember being impressed in a negative way when I saw the riots in Birmingham and the news reports on television. Everybody being interviewed was in his sixties, old guys, like I am now in my sixties. Our leadership was in its thirties. I think that made a lot of difference. Being a regional city as we are because of its real estate benefited from having the space, having the transportation . . .

Ray Ann: When do you think Atlanta actually became regional? When did it become . . .

Sam: I don't know. The fact that we were, that brought in people from all over with fresh thinking and new ideas. We weren't just local or parochial. That helped a lot. We were fortunate, for whatever reason, for having real good leadership and media at that time with Ralph McGill¹⁶⁵ and Gene Patterson¹⁶⁶ and people like that in the Atlanta newspapers. Put all that together and you've got a lot going for you.

Ray Ann: What about now? Our last little thing after the Atlanta riots¹⁶⁷ and the way Mayor Jackson¹⁶⁸ handled it. I was at the park recently for the Black Arts Festival¹⁶⁹ and there were

the 1970's following Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) actions led by J. Edgar Hoover.

¹⁶⁴ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is an African-American civil rights organization in the United States. It was formed in 1909 and its mission is "to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination."

¹⁶⁵ Ralph Emerson McGill (1898-1969) was an American journalist, best known as an anti-segregationist editor and publisher of the Atlanta Constitution newspaper. He won a Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing in 1959. He became friends with Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, acting as a civil rights advisor and behind-the-scenes envoy to several African nations. After his death, Ralph McGill Boulevard in Atlanta (previously Forrest Boulevard) was named for him.

¹⁶⁶ Eugene Corbett Patterson (1923-2013), also known as Gene Patterson, was an American journalist and civil rights activist who was born in Valdosta, Georgia. After graduation from the University of Georgia, he served as a tank commander in the United States Army with General George Patton's 10th Armored Division during World War II. He was awarded a Silver Star and a Bronze Star with oak leaf cluster. He served as an Army pilot after the war until he left the military to pursue journalism in 1947. He was vice president and executive editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, managing editor of *The Washington Post*, editor of the *St. Petersburg Times*, and president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He was awarded the 1967 Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing. In 2010, he was inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame.

¹⁶⁷ Beginning on April 29, 1968, two days of rioting took place in Atlanta protesting verdicts in the Rodney King beating case that acquitted all four police officers of police brutality against King. Black rioters gathered downtown near Underground Atlanta and vandalized police equipment and stores. Police arrested 320 rioters and 40 people were injured. Six Atlanta-based photographers and five reporters were attacked during the riots.

¹⁶⁸ Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr. (1938-2003) was an American politician, a member of the Democratic Party, and the first black Mayor of Atlanta, serving three terms (1974-1982, 1990-1994).

¹⁶⁹ The National Black Arts Festival was founded in 1987 by the Fulton County Arts Council in Atlanta, Georgia to

petitions going around asking for an investigation about the containment and the way the police handled the students from the AU [Clark Atlanta University]¹⁷⁰ campus. What do you think about that and what's going on now?

Sam: Let me start with this. It's interesting. If Eldrin Bell¹⁷¹ was white, he'd be run out of town. I support Eldrin. We're personal friends. We have breakfast almost every Saturday morning. I was glad he was named chief because we had gotten to the point where nothing else was working and the crime was really damaging the community. The image and the conception of everything about Atlanta was deteriorating because of crime. We needed . . . It was time for a tough cop. That flies in the face of my liberalism, passiveness, and other sensitivities, but he is a tough cop. He is bringing down the crime status month after month in Buckhead. I looked at the others but I can't remember them. In Buckhead ours have been down every month since January over the previous same month for last year—January over January, February over February, and so forth—now for seven months. You can't ask for much better than that. Part of his tough policing is sometimes going beyond equity or civil rights He might have done that on the campus. I wasn't there. In hindsight, I'd say . . . He wasn't there at the beginning. Unfortunately, he was out of town. In hindsight, I would say I would not have gone on the campus but I would have gone quicker to the Korean store. You've got to make those decisions quickly and on the spot, and I'm not very fond of [unintelligible] . . .

Ray Ann: What happened is we didn't lose a good portion of our city because whatever they did do contained what could have happened.

Sam: Nobody got killed. Nobody got hurt. It was much better than what it could have been.

Ray Ann: When Martin Luther King was killed, what happened in Atlanta? How was that being handled?

celebrate the work of artists of African descent. The Festival was first held in 1988. The annual festival in Atlanta showcases African-American accomplishments in music, dance, film, visual arts, theater and the literary arts.

¹⁷⁰ Clark Atlanta University is a private, historically black university in Atlanta, Georgia. It was formed in 1988 with the consolidation of Clark College (founded in 1869) and Atlanta University (founded in 1865). Clark Atlanta University is a member of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) and is the largest collegiate institution in the Atlanta University Center Consortium which included Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Spellman College, Morris Brown College, and the Interdenominational Theological Center.

¹⁷¹ Eldrin Bell was a police chief in Atlanta, Georgia (1990-1994) and a member of the Atlanta police force for 33 years. He was Chairman of the Board of Commissioners in Clayton County, Georgia, its first black chairman (2004-2012).

Sam: It was handled as well as any situation of that magnitude could possibly have been handled. My hats off to [Mayor] Ivan [Allen] who was really calling the shots on that and Helen Bullard, who I mentioned earlier, who was counseling everybody. He immediately went to Coretta [Scott King]¹⁷², was with her, and showed the concern of the city. During that time, incidentally, my assignment was to be at Hanger One, which is a private hanger at Hartsfield Airport,¹⁷³ to greet all of the dignitaries that came in and offer what help we could be. This included Jacquelyn Kennedy¹⁷⁴ and [Nelson] Rockefeller.¹⁷⁵ Everybody who was anybody came, just about, several senators and governors. It was handled very well. The law enforcement, the relationship with the state which was still conservative, the care for the family . . . Everything was handled very well. I helped Coretta later in getting the home site put on the historical list—whatever you call it—and was on her board for several years and has since dropped off of it.

Ray Ann: It's interesting how a person can have many ties and it's not as well-done as so many things that took place [unintelligible]. Why do you think that's so? It's a private foundation I'm guessing, rather than any city involvement.

Sam: That's true.

¹⁷² Coretta Scott King (1927-2006) was an American author and civil rights leader. The widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King helped lead the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Mrs. King often participated in many of her husband's exploits and goals during the battle for equality. She played a prominent role in the years after her husband's 1968 assassination when she took on the leadership of the struggle for racial equality herself and became active in the Women's Movement and the LGBT rights movement. She founded the King Center in Atlanta and sought to make her husband's birthday a national holiday.

¹⁷³ Hartsfield Airport is the predecessor of the current Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. The airport was first developed in 1925 on an abandoned auto racetrack and was named 'Candler Field' after its former owner's family, including Coca-Cola magnate Asa Candler. In the 1940's the airport's name changed to the 'Atlanta Municipal Airport.' Atlanta Mayor William B. Hartsfield died on February 22, 1971 and on February 28, what would have been Hartsfield's 81st birthday its name was changed to 'William B. Hartsfield Atlanta Airport.' In 2003 to honor late Mayor Maynard H. Jackson, the Atlanta City Council legislated a name change to 'Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport' in recognition of the leadership that both had for the airport.

¹⁷⁴ Jacqueline Lee Bouvier Kennedy Onassis (1929-1994) was an American book editor and socialite who was First Lady of the United States during the presidency of her husband, John F. Kennedy. She was a native of Southampton, New York and a graduate of George Washington University. After graduation she was a photographer for the Washington Times-Herald. Following the assassination of the president, she married Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis and after his death, she had a career as a publishing editor in New York City.

¹⁷⁵ Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller (1908-1979) was an American businessman and politician. He was Vice President of the United States (1974-1977), and Governor of New York (1959-1973). He also served as Assistant Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs for Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman (1944-1945) as well as Under-Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1954). He was the grandson of Standard Oil co-founder John Davison Rockefeller Sr., who along with his brother William made one of the world's largest fortunes in the oil business during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Ray Ann: I worked for the city when we were putting planters on Auburn Street,¹⁷⁶ that sort of thing. This probably is one of the most famous places of this city.

Sam: It draws a big number of people, too. That's a very good question. It has really not been adopted as such by the city with any great pride and that may be a personality problem because of Coretta. I don't know that to be true. She's wanted to manage it and control it completely. That may be the reason. I've been removed from it, so I can't say.

Ray Ann: I think one of his sons was removed from it, too. That sort of gave me a little inkling that maybe it wasn't [unintelligible]. I was thinking, even for the Olympics,¹⁷⁷ a good [unintelligible] can take those exhibits and really do something well-done, really terrific. It's going to be covered with visitors. It is already heavily visited. I bet more people go there than to the Jimmy Carter Library.¹⁷⁸

Sam: Yes. Bus loads come here to go there. Bus loads don't come here to go to the Carter Library.

Ray Ann: Any other thoughts about your relationships with the black community before you were mayor?

<End Tape 2, Side 2>

<Begin Tape 3, Side 1>

Ray Ann: Today is February 8, 1993. This is Ray Ann Kremer interviewing Sam Massell. This is our third tape, first side and we are doing this for the Atlanta Jewish Oral History Project, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, the Atlanta Jewish Federation and the National Council of Jewish Women. We stopped on our last tape talking about the blacks and when Martin Luther King died, and pretty much got through it. What we really didn't cover was other points of interest, things that happened when you were vice-mayor, and what led up to and what went on behind the scenes of you running for mayor.

¹⁷⁶ Auburn Avenue is at the center of the Sweet Auburn Historic District, a historic African-American neighborhood east of downtown Atlanta, Georgia. The name Sweet Auburn was coined by John Wesley Dobbs, referring to the "richest Negro street in the world," one of the largest concentrations of African-American businesses in the United States. A National Historic Landmark District was designated in 1976, covering 19 acres of the neighborhood, significant for its history and development as a segregated area under the state's Jim Crow laws.

¹⁷⁷ Held in Atlanta, Georgia from July 19 to August 14, 1996. A total of 197 nations and 10,318 athletes took part in the games.

¹⁷⁸ The Jimmy Carter Library and Museum in Atlanta, Georgia houses United States President Jimmy Carter's papers and other material relating to the Carter administration and the Carter family's life. The complex opened in 1986 and is located next to Freedom Parkway, which was originally called "Presidential Parkway" and at one point, "Jimmy Carter Parkway" in its planning stages.

Sam: When you say things that happened when I was vice-mayor, at random?

Ray Ann: Yes, at random. Things that you recall that were either controversial or positive or historic.

Sam: First of all, did I tell you how I was drawn into the vice-mayor's contest?

Ray Ann: No.

Sam: . . . because I don't recall what all we've discussed already. It's an interesting story to me, and to politicians it might be. At the time, I was secretary of the Atlanta City Executive Committee which was a very minor elected office charged with the responsibility of conducting the city elections, establishing the rules for the elections, and establishing the qualifying fees. This meant that I came in contact with everybody running for office. They had to come to me, qualify, and sign an oath that they would support the nominee in the general election. At the time, I was concerned because in the mayor's race we had two able candidates among some others competing with each other, one being Ivan Allen and the other being Muggsy Smith. It was my opinion that it was a waste to lose one of these and that Muggsy Smith, instead, should run for the president of the Board of Aldermen or vice-mayor, as it's called in some quarters. [I] kept trying to encourage people to try to persuade him to do that. Each time a political figure would come in and qualify to run for whatever office they were seeking, I would say, "Let's talk about Muggsy Smith. He shouldn't be running. We're going to lose him. He should be running for this other and later he can become mayor." One of the people that qualified to run for the Board of Aldermen for re-election was Everett Millican. He had been a state senator and a very prominent government official locally at several levels and highly respected. When I mentioned to him that we should try to get Muggsy Smith to run for president of Board of Aldermen, he said, "Yes, somebody needs to beat Lee Evans." He was considering the need to run for that office for an entirely different purpose. He was not one to help Muggsy, but because he was upset with Lee Evans who was the incumbent, president of the Board of Aldermen. The reason was because Lee Evans . . . his principle reason was because Lee Evans had voted against the . . . I'm trying to make sure of the name . . . I'm pretty sure it was called the Egleston Housing Project which would have been the first break-through in public housing in a predominantly white area.

Ray Ann: Where was that, what area?

Sam: I'm pretty sure it was just south of North Avenue, east of Juniper [Street], in that quadrant, somewhere in there. Maybe a little further east, maybe as far as Glen Iris [Drive]. I

can't remember exactly where it was. I had a great deal of respect for Edward Millican. I started thinking about that. We talked about it at length. He felt Lee Evans was not doing a good job and somebody needed to run for that office. I went home that night and discussed the possibility of my running with my wife. She offered her support and encouragement. The next day I called on Helen Bullard who was a well-known political consultant who had managed the campaigns for Bill Hartsfield before as mayor and, at that time, was managing Ivan Allen's campaign for mayor. I called on A. T. Walden who was the black lawyer member of the Atlanta City Executive Committee that I think I mentioned earlier. All three of them encouraged me to do so. The next day I qualified myself and decided to challenge.

Ray Ann: What happened to Muggsy? He just didn't run?

Sam: Muggsy continued to run for mayor and got defeated. That was the end of Muggsy. In fact, he got bitter in the campaign over his defeat, feeling that the black community had deserted him. He had been a very liberal member of the state legislature on black issues, particularly. This was back in the days when representatives were extremely powerful, in that Fulton County had three for the whole county. Today we have 23 or something. They had one state senator who was Edward Millican—who I had mentioned earlier—so they had tremendous influence over any legislation that affected Atlanta or this county.

Ray Ann: Do you remember when blacks became a significant factor in Atlanta politics?

Sam: The beginning, the first ones were A. T. Walden and Miles Amos, the druggist, who together qualified to run for the City Executive Committee. Did I not give you the whole . . . but that's when it started.

Ray Ann: Yes, you did that, but that was when, even the electorate, even the voters . . .

Sam: The voters were influential before that. They had what they called the Atlanta Negro Voters League¹⁷⁹ which was a very powerful group that put out a slate the night before the election, delivered by hand, house to house, in the black community. If you were on that slate, the probability was that you would get elected.

Ray Ann: What year was that? Do you remember when that started?

¹⁷⁹ The Atlanta Negro Voters League (ANVL) was a bipartisan political organization started by black leaders in 1949 to form a united front to maximize the strength of the black vote. One of the group's purposes was to register black voters after a 1946 federal court ruling invalidated Georgia's all-white primary. Between 1949 and 1953 ANVL supported moderate white candidates since no blacks ran for office during this period. The death of ANVL Chair A.T. Walden in 1965 and the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 marked the end of ANVL as a political force in Atlanta.

Sam: I'd have to go back maybe 40 years ago, roughly. I could look it up and tell you but that's about when it was. I went yesterday to an autograph party for a book authored by T.M. Alexander, a black Republican who ran for the Board of Aldermen and got defeated back in those days. I think he was defeated as much because he was a Republican as it was because he was black. Republicans were definitely in the minority and for the most part in the closet. That was the beginning of my campaign efforts for the president of Board of Aldermen, known also as vice-mayor. It was quite an upset for me to defeat Lee Evans, who was older, the incumbent, had been there for many years, was not Jewish, or that he had any other minority designations. Lee, incidentally, had been my law school teacher, one of them. I know he went to my Uncle Ben [Massell] to try to get him to talk me out of running. Ben said, "He couldn't do anything with me." That's the way it started.

Ray Ann: What happened to the housing project? It didn't get built, did it?

Sam: No, I don't know. No, I take that back. I think it did. I don't know. That's terrible. I'd hate to be quoted as saying that. I don't know. My memory is what is failing me, not my knowledge. I think it did not get built because he was the deciding vote, Lee Evans was. The chair only votes in the case of a tie, so he blocked it at that time. Four years later, incidentally—I'll come back if I can think of some other things—I ran for re-election for president of Board of Aldermen and vice-mayor. I had, as far as I can remember, five opponents. One of them was black. One of them was Jewish.

Ray Ann: Who were they?

Sam: I'd have to go back. I won without a run-off which was very unusual. I got a majority of the vote the first go around of all six of us running. One of the things that I achieved as the president of the Board of Aldermen was the creation of the Community Relations Commission. When I became mayor, incidentally, I appointed Andy Young¹⁸⁰ as chairman of the Community Relations Commission. The fact is as vice-mayor I was the one who got that introduced and adopted. Another piece of legislation was the creation of the Urban Design Commission. When I became mayor, I appointed as chairman of that the wife at that time of my

¹⁸⁰ Andrew Jackson Young (b. 1932) is an American politician, diplomat, activist and pastor from Georgia. He has served as a Congressman from Georgia's 5th congressional district, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and Mayor of Atlanta. He served as President of the National Council of Churches USA, was a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) during the 1960's Civil Rights Movement, and was a supporter and friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

main mayoralty opponent, Rodney Cook, a Republican. Another thing that was probably the most significant legislation when I was president of the council . . . I use the word council because that's what it's called now. The Board of Aldermen and council are the same thing and vice-mayor, they all three are the same title. For this I'm not entitled to full credit, because there were three of us, Rodney Cook, who later ran against me for mayor, and Richard Freeman who is now a Federal Judge. Both of those were Republicans, and—incidentally, I think I gave you on an earlier interview—were able to run for the Board of Aldermen because of the change I had introduced in the City Executive Committee in making the city elections non-partisan. For the first time we had Republicans run and get elected. The major legislation [that] there were three of us working on with great determination and dedication, was doing away with what they called ward courtesy. We had wards instead of districts. They were sections of the city. Ward courtesy was the procedure by which the alderman in any ward could veto anything happening in his ward. Most particularly, it had to do with liquor licenses which became extremely valuable and reportedly created opportunities for graft by those who had licenses paying off to prevent anybody else from getting one or those who wanted one, paying off to get one. It was, we thought, a very bad system. It was interesting that it created a rather unholy alliance of the liquor people together with the churches fighting us. The churches were saying, "You'll create more liquor stores," which indeed it would and did. The Baptist influence was very powerful in opposition to us together with the liquor barons. Incidentally, I might mention, it was difficult personally because it adversely affected a number of my Jewish friends. It happened that a lot of Jewish people were in the liquor business. It was unfortunate but. I felt that it was progressive legislation.

Ray Ann: Did you get a lot of heat from those people?

Sam: Yes. Some probably have not forgiven me yet. They made a lot of money at the time. I guess I shouldn't feel too badly about it. I'm trying to remember what else during that period. I guess that was pretty much the major actions or activities that I can recall right now.

Ray Ann: This was right after you became mayor?

Sam: No, all that was when I was vice-mayor. When I became mayor, incidentally, I mentioned appointing Andy Young as chairman of the Community Relations Commission. I had created the Community Relations Commission when I was vice-mayor but the appointments came from the mayor, so I didn't make the appointments until I became mayor. A Jewish person

was chairman of it before and that was . . . I'll think of his name in a minute. He's since deceased, but he was a good friend. He also was upset when I didn't re-appoint him. I felt that it was important to have a black head it.

Ray Ann: There were a lot of Jewish people involved in city politics then. I keep hearing you mention that. I haven't gotten any of the names. Do you know the names?

Sam: Yes, they were active. The Jewish community had very few votes, although a lot of the non-Jewish community didn't realize this. They did raise money. Abe Goldstein,¹⁸¹ who was the president of Pryor Tire Company and whose son is Leon Goldstein,¹⁸² was the grandfather of the political influence and power in the Jewish community. In fact, Mayor Hartsfield used to go by Abe's office every couple of weeks on Saturday and sit and talk to him about the city and business affairs. They would get together groups that would have lunches for candidates running. They would make sizable contributions to help them get elected. There were Irving [Goldstein]¹⁸³ and Marvin Goldstein,¹⁸⁴ Marvin, particularly, was active in political affairs for years and years and years.

Ray Ann: Marvin Goldstein the orthodontist?

¹⁸¹ Abe Goldstein (1889-1982) was a business and Jewish community leader. He was active in Ahavath Achim and Israel Bonds, the Anti-Defamation League, the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Federation and many other community causes. He founded Prior Tire Company in 1920 and remained active in the business throughout his life.

¹⁸² Leon C. Goldstein () succeeded his father Abe Goldstein as president and chairman of Prior Tire Company. He served in the United States Navy during World War II and graduated from Emory University in Atlanta. He held leadership positions in Ahavath Achim Synagogue, the Anti-Defamation League, and Gate City Lodge of B'nai B'rith, and the Atlanta Jewish Federation. He was a member of Shearith Israel Juniors (SIJ) youth organization. An avowed proponent of meritocracy, he challenged affirmative action quotas in 1995 by suing the Atlanta Public School District for awarding a contract to a higher bidding minority contractor.

¹⁸³ Irving H. Goldstein (1905-1979) was a prominent dentist and businessman in the Atlanta area. He and his brother Marvin C. Goldstein, also a dentist, built the Atlanta Americana Motor Hotel, Atlanta's first integrated hotel, which opened in 1961.

¹⁸⁴ Marvin C. Goldstein (1917-1997) was a prominent dentist and businessman in Atlanta. He was a graduate of Boys' High School in Atlanta, had a combined undergraduate and master's degree in dentistry from Emory University in Atlanta, and trained in orthodontic dentistry at Columbia University and the University of Michigan. He served as a dental surgeon for the United States Army Air Forces in Europe during World War II. He and his brother, Irving Goldstein, also a dentist, built the Atlanta Americana Motor Hotel, Atlanta's first integrated hotel, which opened in 1961. Marvin was international president of the Alpha Omega Dental Fraternity, editor of the American Journal of Orthodontics, president of the Georgia Society of Orthodontists, trustee for the American Fund for Dental Health, honorary fellow in the American College of Dentists and International College of Dentists, and chief of staff of the Ben Massell Dental Clinic. He was a president of Ahavath Achim Synagogue, Atlanta Jewish Federation, ORT Atlanta men's chapter, Tichon Atlanta, B'nai Brith's Atlanta chapter; vice-president of the American Jewish Committee; and a vice-chairman of the board of trustees for the Martin Luther King Center for Non-violent Social Change.

Sam: Yes, not in elected office but in helping candidates, working with candidates. Jimmy Kaufmann¹⁸⁵ is still involved. He's involved mostly as a lobbyist, you might say, for the medical society fraternity and mostly at the state level. He's also been involved locally in raising funds. Irving Kaler¹⁸⁶ was the lawyer I was thinking about. He was head of the Community Relations Commission before . . .

Ray Ann: How do you spell his name?

Sam: K-A-L-E-R. His wife is still living. I started to tell you an interesting story. In naming people to the Community Relations Commission, I had reached the decision that there was more than just white, black, Jewish, and Gentile representation that needed to be appointed, that there were other human relations problems in the community with youth, with the aged, and with the gay community, which was very new at the time and controversial, to say the least.

Ray Ann: About what year did we start getting a large gay community here?

Sam: In the 1970's and in the hippie¹⁸⁷ movement is when they came. I started to tell you on the Community Relations Commission, I went out and found a beautiful woman—I think in her eighties—to be the representative for the senior citizens. She was a crackerjack member. I picked a student, a black high school student, to represent youth. He was Michael Hollis,¹⁸⁸ who

¹⁸⁵ James Aron “Jimmy” Kaufmann (1923-2002) was a physician in Atlanta, Georgia who was born in Detroit, Michigan. He was a graduate of Vanderbilt University and the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. He founded the Kaufmann Clinic in 1954 in Atlanta. He was a president of the Gate City Lodge of B'nai B'rith.

¹⁸⁶ Irving Kohlman Kaler (1919-1986) was born in Pittsburgh, but moved to Atlanta with his family in 1921. He attended Washington and Lee University and graduated from the Lamar School of Law at Emory University. He became the national president of AZA at age 23. He was a World War II Navy war veteran and was youth consultant to Eleanor Roosevelt during the early part of the war. He was honored with the “Outstanding Young Man of the Year” award by the Jaycees, “The Man of the Year” award by the Jewish War Veterans, the Abe Goldstein Human Relations Awards from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and voted “Outstanding Citizen” by the Gate City Lodge of B'nai B'rith. He was a founding partner in the law firm of Kaler, Karesh and Frankel. He was the first chairman of the Atlanta Community Relations Committee. He was also on the executive committee for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and involved with the Urban League.

¹⁸⁷ The ‘hippie’ (or ‘hippy’) subculture was originally a youth movement that arose in the United States during the mid-1960's and spread to other countries around the world. The word hippie came from ‘hipster’, and was initially used to describe beatniks who had moved into New York City's Greenwich Village and San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. Hippie values and fashions had a major effect on culture, influencing popular music, television, film, literature, and the arts. Since the 1960's, many aspects of hippie culture have been assimilated by mainstream society.

¹⁸⁸ Michael Robinson Hollis (1964-2012) was an Atlanta entrepreneur who founded Air Atlanta, Hollis Communications, Hanover Credit Co., Blue Sky Petroleum Co. with his older brother James B. Arnold, and Nevis Securities with his brother Julius Hollis. He was executive director of the United States Virgin Islands Housing Authority, which provided housing for nearly 10 percent of the island's residents. He was a board member for the Atlanta-Fulton County Hospital Authority (Grady Hospital), Emory University, and Atlanta University. He attended the University of Virginia where he earned a degree in law.

later became president of AirAtlanta.¹⁸⁹ [He was] a very prominent businessman locally. The part that was most interesting is I appointed a person who was head of the gay rights movement¹⁹⁰ openly. This was unheard of, to represent the gay community. The embarrassing part, to show you how far we've come, was that he worked for the Atlanta newspaper, the *Atlanta Journal*—they may have been separate then.¹⁹¹ When the newspaper reported the names of the people I had appointed with their business affiliations, they did not list his employment because they were too embarrassed to say that they had somebody who was gay working for them. The Community Relations Commission served a very important purpose and is now being recreated by Mayor Jackson.

Ray Ann: When did it stop?

Sam: I don't know . . . sometime after I came out of office. You asked about the gay community. It happened about the time of the hippie movement, in the mid-1970's, early 1970's, excuse me. I was still in office. They had overflowed what they call a tight squeeze area in Atlanta, in Midtown, Peachtree Street, about 8th Street to 14th Street, more or less. It was a tremendous problem at the time. I could go on and talk about that for hours. I don't know how much you want to talk about that.

Ray Ann: I'd like to hear a little bit more because it's definitely very much a part of Atlanta. It used to be that you thought of those communities as being in San Francisco or New York. It's kind of interesting that this would be the big place in the South.

Sam: We had so many. Part of it is probably because of my liberal philosophy that they felt they would not be mistreated here. I was very firm in my philosophy that they should not be mistreated. I ran an ad once in all the underground or alternative newspapers around the country that would take it—some of them refused to take our money—addressing the flower children¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Air Atlanta was an airline based in Atlanta, Georgia in the 1980's serving over a dozen cities from its hub in Atlanta. It shut down in 1987 when it filed for bankruptcy.

¹⁹⁰ Gay rights movement is a civil rights movement that advocates equal rights for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transsexuals, and calls for an end to discrimination against gay men and lesbians in employment, credit lending, housing, public accommodations, and other areas of life. An important event in the gay rights movement occurred in the United States on June 28, 1969, when a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village was raided by the police. A riot resulted and resumed on succeeding nights. This event is commemorated annually in June with Gay Pride celebrations in United States cities and in other countries.

¹⁹¹ In 1982 the *Atlanta Journal* (founded in 1883) combined staff with the *Atlanta Constitution* (founded in 1868) to become the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, which is Atlanta's only major daily newspaper.

¹⁹² An expression that broadly refers to hippies, members of a counterculture, originally a youth movement, that began in the United States during the mid-1960's and spread to other countries around the world. The expression "flower children" derives from 1967 when the lyrics of the hit song *San Francisco*, "If you're going to San

of the country, telling them that they are welcome here, that they would be treated fairly, however, they shouldn't come without bread¹⁹³ and a pad.¹⁹⁴ We couldn't feed them. We couldn't house them. The purpose of the ad was to really just set the record straight because they were coming in such droves. A lot of them were sleeping in the parks and places.

Ray Ann: Are you saying flower children is the euphemism for gays?

Sam: No, for the hippie movement . . . the drug scene . . . the drugs, the long hair, the whole phenomenon of that period, anti-society, anti-structured life, anti-government.

Ray Ann: You were just saying that the welfare of the city couldn't handle . . .

Sam: Yes. We didn't have enough places to take care of them, enough food, enough personnel, enough funds, but they would be treated fair if they came. A lot of people think they were just the poor and the homeless, but many of them were the children of bank presidents, department store heads, and other big business people. One side story that got me in trouble is that during that period—and they were wall to wall—we had a bunch of bikers come into town, these motorcycle guys in leather jackets and chains. Their interest was beating up gays, flower children, or hippies. I issued strong orders of how they would be controlled, again through feeling that they had a right to exist, a right to live in freedom, and whatever anybody else had. If they did not have mufflers on their motorcycle, they would be arrested. If they got their motorcycles on the sidewalk, they'd be arrested. The next week, after I issued that order, the International Shriner¹⁹⁵ convention came to Atlanta. Anybody that's ever seen one knows that they put their motorcycles not just on the sidewalk but in the lobbies of hotels. They ride them all over the place without mufflers and everything else. I had to see that the law was evenly enforced. I issued orders. We spent hours over two or three days with the head—potentate or whatever he was—[and] me personally, on the phone with him explaining why they had to follow this rule. They couldn't understand it. This was a local judge, you understand; a friend of mine, but he just couldn't understand. He just couldn't get it through his head. I finally had to order him arrested. The police captain on the scene was a member of the Shrine and would not

Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair," inspired thousands of young people to travel to San Francisco, sometimes wearing flowers in their hair and distributing flowers to passersby.

¹⁹³ A slang word meaning money.

¹⁹⁴ A slang word meaning a place to live.

¹⁹⁵ The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, commonly known as 'Shriners,' was established in 1870 and is part of the Freemasons. Now called 'Shriners International,' it has nearly 200 chapters around the world. It is best known for the Shriners Hospitals for Children it administers and the red fezzes that the members wear.

arrest him. I had to go down and arrest him myself. I was assured that I would never get another Shrine vote for the rest of my life. There are a lot of Shriners out there. In fact, in later years, when I was in the travel business, when one of the outside sales people came back having called on a jeweler who was a Shriner and said, “What did you do to the Shriners? They won’t give me a penny worth of business.” That was years after being out of business. When I was in office, I’ll have to confess, at one time or another I stepped on everybody’s toes whether it was the Jewish community, the black community, organized labor, and the Shriners. You name it and I could give you an illustration of sometime that they didn’t approve of what I did. The reason was because I didn’t approve of what they did. That was the . . . One other time that nobody has ever heard about I’ll expose. The night I gave a major address on the hippie movement which was broadcast live on one of the TV stations. I think it was a 20-minute address to the community. After which I walked through the area, about seven or eight blocks with my . . . can you cut that off a minute?

<Break in tape>

This was following the address to the community about the hippie problem or condition or situation. I walked the area, about eight blocks, in the company of one security aide, my press secretary, and one personal friend. When we got to the end of the area we went to a little restaurant to have a cup of coffee. At that point I realized, noticing that when the coat was opened, my friend was carrying a pistol which almost made me faint away dead to the world. He was such a loyal, close friend that had anybody pushed me or shoved me, he would have shot him. That would have been a riot, as well as the end of a political career and everything else. I wouldn’t have let anybody carry a gun near me like that for anything in the world. You can’t imagine how hostile this situation was [and] how tense it was. You could hardly walk on the sidewalks. What we had during that period . . . We had all the rednecks¹⁹⁶ from all over Georgia coming up here to look at them, to gape at them, because they were on television all the time. They would be bumper to bumper down Peachtree Street, the automobiles of people looking, because this was something they had never seen before.

Ray Ann: Where were these young folks moving in from?

Sam: All over the country.

¹⁹⁶ Redneck is a derogatory slang term referring to poor, uneducated white farmers deemed to be insufficiently liberal, especially from the southern United States. Southern whites have reclaimed the world using it with pride and defiance as a self-identifier. Similar to ‘cracker’ and ‘hillbilly.’

Ray Ann: They just picked Atlanta.

Sam: I explained why. I did have a, like I said a . . .

Ray Ann: The ads . . .

Sam: Before that, I was known for my liberal philosophy. I believe they have a right to wear long hair. I was on national television about it. I believe they have a right to not work if they don't want to work as long as they can support themselves. They have a right to wear funny clothes and funky stuff. I couldn't say that anybody had the right to take drugs because they were against the law. I just had a . . . As far as I could see . . .

Ray Ann: Did they have a lot more drug activity here?

Sam: A tremendous amount.

Ray Ann: Did you have organized crime here at that point?

Sam: Not to my knowledge. You're talking about the mafia level?

Ray Ann: Yes.

Sam: No. There was never suggested that we did. I didn't even object to their sleeping in the park. I tried to get a little place set aside on 10th Street, where there used to be a school that burned down, to set aside as a park for sleeping purposes. I found in all of my 22 years in elected office, I never had any problem from anybody who was asleep. They never burglarized anybody, raped anybody, or robbed anybody. They don't even use profanity when they're sleeping. That never bothered me when they were sleeping.

Ray Ann: We had a lot of problems when they wanted to do a park for the homeless here not too many years ago.

Sam: Yes, but it was a difficult time. It was difficult for a lot of the retailers along that strip of Peachtree Street. For the most part, most of them were practically put out of business by these kids because they weren't patrons of the kind of stores that were there. By the same token, some new stores opened, head shops and whatever they called them. Some of those thrived during that period. A lot of buildings burned. I had one that was subsidized for a half-way house, a home for drug addicts. It was burned to the ground, I don't think on purpose, but for whatever reason I had a major loss because of that. Times change.

Ray Ann: When did that period end?

Sam: About . . . It just lasted a few years. It started in late 1960's—1968 roughly, 1969—and ended probably about 1973 or 1972. As well as I remember that's . . .

Ray Ann: That's related to when you were in office. Who else opposed you this time?

Sam: A couple of Jewish groups got upset because I didn't come and speak to their group. I just had other commitments and couldn't be everywhere all the time. Some gentile groups got upset when I ruled that we wouldn't have Christmas decorations in city hall anymore, which we had always. Organized labor was the biggest one because they had supported me. Shortly after I took office as mayor, they had a major garbage strike and felt that I had not supported them the way they wanted me to. They had bad leadership which was unfortunate for them, for the workers. They ended up right back where I told them they would from the beginning.

Ray Ann: Did you run a second time?

Sam: Yes. That's when Maynard [Jackson] got elected when I ran for re-election. At that time, the black community had gained the majority of the population and the voting registration and wanted to elect their own. I can't blame them. Jesse Hill, who was sort of a top black business leader at that time—and had been one of my major supporters in years past—met with me and told me that he would have to switch to a black even though I had appointed the first blacks to the [unintelligible] positions in the city's history. Even though I had supported their causes and needs at every turn, they saw now where they could elect their own. You really can't blame them. In a previous race, when I ran for mayor, I had a formidable black opponent, Horace Tate, who had already been elected city-wide to the Board of Education, who was attractive, articulate, and had a big following in his employment being head of a teacher's union-type of operation . . . organization. He didn't even make the run-off. The black community knew they did not have enough to elect him, so they supported me. When they later found they had enough to elect one, they supported him.

Ray Ann: What happened? Did the population switch during that four years? I don't understand.

Sam: Yes. It was switching. It was growing constantly—I don't remember at what year when there was 20 percent black population, then 25, then 30, then 35—every year. It is still increasing every year, the black percentage of population in Atlanta. Around 1973 when I was running for re-election, it had gotten up to where it was 55 percent black and that was enough to win.

Ray Ann: Do you think we will ever have a white mayor again?

Sam: I think probably so. What we've seen . . . The first move, starting back, a quick political history . . . The first move that I alluded to earlier when I mentioned the Atlanta Negro Voters League was when they realized that they had power. Prior to that time they weren't allowed to vote even. They got the vote and they organized as voters, not as candidates but as voters, a small number. The percentage was very small but it was a block. They were able to convince the black community that if they stuck together, they would have influence. They would put out a slate. These are our candidates. Some people say, "They were selling out." They weren't selling out. They were voting for those they thought would do the best for the black community. You can't blame them for doing that. After they had numbers enough where they could actually get people elected . . . In the first instances they were by wards, by districts, so a district, or a ward at that time would get a black majority and they'd get blacks elected. The stage they're going through now, the third stage, is where you have prominent blacks running against each other. We never had that before. Now you have Maynard Jackson and Michael Lomax¹⁹⁷ running against each other for mayor.

Ray Ann: They took care of that. Michael dropped out.

Sam: It was only because he couldn't win. It wasn't because the black leadership asked him to, I guarantee you that, which is what it was before. Before, if two blacks wanted to run against each other, the black leadership would get together with those blacks and say, "You're not going to run. You are." They would obey and for their own benefit. Even though we had a majority rule, you couldn't communicate that to the man on the street. What they were able to communicate [was], "We must stick together." I'm saying they graduated to a more sophisticated, healthier stage where they run against each other [unintelligible], same as whites have done through history. Same way with John Lewis¹⁹⁸ and Julian Bond¹⁹⁹ running against each other.

¹⁹⁷ Dr. Michael Lucius Lomax, born 1947 in Los Angeles, California, is chief executive officer of the United Negro College Fund. He served for 12 years as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County, Georgia, its first African-American Chairman. In 1989, he was an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for Mayor of Atlanta. He taught literature at Morehouse College, Spelman College, Emory University, the Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Georgia. He was president of Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana.

¹⁹⁸ John Robert Lewis (born 1940) is an American politician and civil rights leader. He is the U.S. Representative for Georgia's 5th congressional district, serving since 1987, and is the dean of the Georgia congressional delegation.

¹⁹⁹ Horace Julian Bond (1940-2015) was an American social activist and leader in the Civil Rights Movement, politician, professor, and writer. While a student at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, during the early 1960's, he helped to establish the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He was elected to four terms in the Georgia House of Representatives and later to six terms in the Georgia State Senate. He ran for the United States House of Representatives from Georgia's 5th congressional district in 1986, when he lost the Democratic nomination in a runoff to rival civil rights leader John Lewis. From 1998 to 2010, he was chairman of the National Association

You're going to see more and more of this, of prominent blacks running against each other. The point I'm making, that I'm getting to, is that now you're getting to that stage where the black community is more sophisticated. [They] can see the value of the independence that they can exercise in voting for the best person. That's the decision you have to make. If you've got two prominent blacks running against each other; you've got to decide not on race, you've got to decide to vote for- the best person. Once you get into that frame of mind, the next stage is going to be where indeed they will elect a white if he's the best person. Whether that's 20 years from now or when, I can't pinpoint. I'm of the opinion that's the same way we got whites—and I was very involved in it—back in the 1960's to vote for blacks because that black running was the best person. I don't mean we got all the whites, but 10 or 20 percent of the whites, to vote for that black which was a real breakthrough. I think you'll see that happen. I think there is a possibility, a probability that you'll see some whites . . . We have some whites now elected city-wide on the City Council, in a city that's overwhelmingly black, who have black opponents. They have won because they are the best candidate. Blacks did vote for them. City Council is not as significant as mayor but we'll reach that point.

Ray Ann: The last election that you ran against Maynard [Jackson], what was that election like? Was it really rough? You lost the black support. You say you stepped on lots of people's toes. Did you find that the white community really rallied behind you? Is that what happened? Was it a black- white issue?

Sam: It was definitely a black-white issue. I got 90 percent of the white vote and 10 percent of the black vote. Maynard got 90 percent of the black vote and 10 percent of the white vote. In my first race I got 90 percent of the black vote and only 10 percent of the white vote because the white business community opted to support my opponent who was a more conservative individual, Rodney Cook, and he was not Jewish. I think that played a role in the eyes of the electorate.

Ray Ann: Was there antisemitism?

Sam: A little, but not much. I had a cross burned in my yard. There was some but it was not an issue. I did not feel that, other than the subconscious philosophy—more a prejudice—of a non-Jewish white who would opt to go for another non-Jewish white rather than a Jewish white. I'm satisfied that existed but that's not unusual and that's understandable. The same way the Jews

voted for the Jews. Ninety percent or better of the Jewish people—you can't trace it—voted for the Jewish candidate and will because they feel they have a closer relationship and that that person would represent them better. This is to be expected. In the race between me and Maynard, one thing that happened which was unfortunate for me. I don't think it would have changed—I'm positive it would not have changed—the outcome of the election. It was unfortunate because it tainted what I'd like to think is an otherwise progressive and local philosophy and reputation that I have. My campaign staff adopted a slogan that “Atlanta is Too Young to Die.”²⁰⁰ Incidentally, this was written by Ralph McGill Jr.,²⁰¹ the son of a Pulitzer Prize,²⁰² extremely liberal former editor and publisher of the *Atlanta Constitution*. It was approved by Helen Bullard, this person I mentioned earlier, the political consultant who ran Ivan Allen's campaigns and Bill Hartsfield's and was an extremely progressive liberal force in the city. Nobody in the room at the time this was mentioned hinted that it was a prejudicial or anti-black slogan. Had anybody even hinted that it could be taken that way, I would never have agreed to use it. I would never have accepted it. I believe, to this day, you could go to any other city where somebody has not heard that and say, “Have you heard this term? Do you think that's anti-black. Is that a racist statement? New York's too young to die, or any other city?” The Maynard Jackson forces picked it up and said it was racist. The newspapers picked it up and said it was racist. First thing you know, even some of my white supporters—I say white, responsible people—were saying it was racist. It put me in a terribly embarrassing position because I would never have used anything racist. I, to this day, don't interpret it as being racist. It's just saying, “I'm the best man.” It's saying, “This guy ain't going to be able to run this city.” If you can't say that, you'd better not run for office. If you don't have an ego, and if you don't think you're the best, you shouldn't be running. It's not a game. It's a business, to help, to be of public service. It really did bother me. They were very successful, either accidentally or by design, in painting this as a racist statement. It's interesting because years later—not too many years, two or three years later—the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran big full page pictures of empty buildings downtown and trash in the streets and had a heading,

²⁰⁰ The slogan “Atlanta's Too Young to Die” was a racially divisive slogan during the 1973 Atlanta mayoral race. It was seen as a warning to voters that a black Mayor would kill the city.

²⁰¹ Ralph Emerson McGill Jr. (1945-2010) was an Atlanta advertising copywriter. He was the son of Pulitzer Prize-winning *Atlanta Constitution* editor and publisher Ralph McGill.

²⁰² The Pulitzer Prize is an award for achievements in newspaper and online journalism, literature, and musical composition in the United States. It was established in 1917 by provisions in the will of American (Hungarian-born) publisher Joseph Pulitzer, and is administered by Columbia University in New York City. Prizes are awarded yearly in 21 categories.

“Atlanta is dying” or something like that. They didn’t label it racist, obviously. They just meant. “Hey, you’re not taking care of business.” That was a sad part of the campaign.

Ray Ann: When did Atlanta have its big real estate bust? Was it at the end of the 1970’s?

Sam: That was after I came out of office, right at that time. I can’t blame that on Maynard, though. Ivan Allen says, with tongue in cheek, and he’s not too far wrong . . . He and I worked so hard boosting Atlanta, building Atlanta, and getting everybody excited about the prosperity of Atlanta that we over-sold it. It got too big. The depression really hurt. It brought everybody down. There was too much building. Ivan had a wall in his office filled with silver shovels like that one I have over there—dedication ground breaking shovels—to show all the different developments under way at the time.

Ray Ann: On to Maynard, what significant really happened then? Were you still involved in politics at all or just an observer?

Sam: When?

Ray Ann: After you went out of office and Maynard came in. It must have been a tremendous transition.

Sam: It was. In fact, I’ve remarked to a number of people that I never knew what pressure I was under until I came out of office and had it taken off my shoulders. It’s just part of the job. While you’re there you’re doing it day and night. Let me divert very quickly back to the hippie era. I wanted to mention something that happened one night. I was in Washington D.C. I came home. We had a kid shot in Piedmont Park. I was really concerned. It was overflowing with the flower children. I sat down on the edge of the bed of my son Steve. Let me think how old he would be. He was about ten years old. I said, “What am I going to do about this?” He said, “Why don’t you,” . . . I don’t remember what he called it, “get mounted patrol.” That was the beginning of the horse force. That was when we put in mounted horses, mounted police, first city in the country to go back to this. New York still had them. All the cities had them originally, a hundred years ago, but everybody had gotten rid of them...

<End of Tape 3, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 3, Side 2>

Ray Ann: This is side two of tape three on February 8, 1993. This is Ray Ann Kerner interviewing Sam Massell.

Sam: I was just saying, that was the beginning of the horse force, mounted patrol. We had horses donated free of charge. We had men on the police force who already knew how to ride horseback. It was wonderful because they were good for crowd control. They could go in the parks. They didn't have to stay on the streets. They could go over the grounds. It helped a lot and they're still using them very effectively.

Ray Ann: I have three questions and they're all related to each other. When you were mayor, there are three things: what was the most controversial thing you did in office, what is the thing you are most proud of, and what is the thing you regret the most?

Sam: The most controversial . . .

Ray Ann: Any editorials in the papers . . .

Sam: I didn't get many bad editorials.

Ray Ann: Controversial doesn't mean bad.

Sam: The garbage strike was probably the most explosive type horror, the most intense period that I can remember right now. It affected the largest number of people who were concerned directly with it.

Ray Ann: How long did the strike go on?

Sam: Seems like six weeks.

Ray Ann: No one had garbage pickup for six weeks?

Sam: That 's correct. We handled it beautifully in that the public rallied behind our support. I can just tell you a lot about it and there's probably much more you want to know. First of all, I have to confess I did not know anything about handling a strike or negotiating with the union. Although I won the strike, in retrospect I'd say I should have called on a labor expert to counsel me. When I told the union at the beginning, here's what we can do, ABC, I didn't know you were supposed to say less than you can do. Then they demand more. You increase it a little bit. They demand a little less. You keep coming to the middle until you settle it. I said, "You want more pay, you want more time off, you want more this, here's what we'll do. That's all we can do. Period and paragraph." They didn't know I didn't know how to negotiate. They thought I was kidding, that it was just the first stage and they would negotiate. Seriously, this is exactly what

happened. One of the head men met secretly with me in my breakfast room, Joe Jacobs.²⁰³ He's still living. He's a union man to this day, a good man in Atlanta.

Ray Ann: Is he Jewish?

Sam: Yes, he is. We discussed this. I said, "I'm sorry, Joe. I didn't know I was supposed to start low and come up. I told you the truth. I've been honest. I told the public the truth: here's what we can do and that's all we can do." Let me explain. They had told me, too, when they started this, "It's only going to be a three-day walk out. It's just to make a point. We'll negotiate with you later." I said, "Fine." It didn't work that way. They had very poor management or leadership at the local level with the union. We took away the check-off which is a very fatal action for a government to undertake against a union. It did put them out of business. Check-off means that we would collect the dues. They said it wouldn't kill them, but it was obvious that it would and it did. I even went around to the sanitary collection stations in the mornings and told the men, "Hey, join the union. Don't worry about it. You can join. We're not collecting the dues." In fact, they did away with dues to make it, because they knew they couldn't collect them. I said, "You ought to all join. It's free. Go for it. Maybe they can help you along the way." We weren't fighting the union. We were fighting what we thought were unreasonable demands. The public believed us. We even got Avis Rent-A-Car. They had the little metal buttons that folded over on a shirt pocket that said, "We try harder." We got them to print us some of those because they were very inexpensive little metal things without a pin on the back, one piece that said, "I'm an honorary garbage collector for the city." We handed those out all over the city and everybody was wearing them proudly. Housewives were wearing them. We set up collection points at schools with big dumpsters asking people to bring their garbage there. People started meeting neighbors they had never talked to. It just turned into a very favorable bottom line.

Ray Ann: What year was that?

Sam: [It was] 1970, I think. It was right after I took office, so it had to be 1970. It was just that first month or two after I took office. The union finally backed down and went back to work. They got exactly what I'd offered them from the beginning. In the meantime, they lost all that

²⁰³ Joseph Jacobs (1908-1998), a graduate of the Atlanta Law School, was a labor lawyer in Atlanta, Georgia and the southern United States. He was a union organizer during the 1934 Textile Strike and the 1936 Lakewood-General Motors Strike. He served as an officer and member of the Workmen's Circle for more than 50 years. He was the first recipient of the Organized Labor and Workmen's Circle Award Banquet award in 1969. He was elected three times to the Democratic National Convention and as chairman of the Fulton county Democratic Party.

salary while they were out. One quick anecdote. One Sunday we had prisoners—volunteers from the city stockade who we paid—on trucks to go downtown and pick up garbage in downtown streets. Fearing some violence from threats we'd received from union organizers, we had a lot of police downtown, all over the place. This was on a Sunday. I was very anxious to see how it was going. I normally, throughout my term as mayor, did not drive a car but we kept the mayor's limousine at my house. The aide would come there in the morning, leave his car, pick me up, and drive me for the rest of the day. In fact, I had two shifts because I'm a workaholic. I would work at night. He'd drive me home at night, and he'd take his car and we'd swap cars. This Sunday I was very anxious to see how the collection system was going, but I hated to call my driver and ask him to come all the way from his house to my house just to drive me downtown and drive me back. I decided that I'd drive down myself. I was driving very quietly and very slowly. [I was] going down one street and down another, looking down this way, and looking down that way, to see how it was going. I wasn't going probably more than five miles an hour. I bumped into another car because I wasn't looking. I took the police radio that's in the mayor's car and 80 is the signal for the identification of the mayor. I said, "This is 80. I've got a problem at the corner of Forsythe Street and Marietta Street, wherever I was." All of sudden, about ten police cars came flying over the hill. This poor man who I hit didn't know who I was and didn't know what had happened. He got out and threw his hands up and said, "I didn't do anything. I didn't do anything." It was funny at the time. It's funny now, I guess.

Ray Ann: Tell me what you're most proud of, if you had one thing on your stone about being mayor.

Sam: I guess structuring the program that pulled the MARTA²⁰⁴ referendum through. Mass transit. The big business people who had primarily opposed me in the earlier election had tried it and failed, so. I guess there was some ego boosting there to succeed with a different approach. I designed it with a sharp pencil in a maverick manner that shocked a lot of people, which involved subsidized fares which had not been suggested before. The fare at the time for the public transit which was privately owned was about . . . I think 60 cents plus a nickel transfer. I was suggesting that we go to 15 cents, which we did. Actually, I was suggesting free fare. They

²⁰⁴ MARTA is the common term for the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, which was created in 1965. During the 1970's, MARTA began acquiring land in and around the city of Atlanta, Georgia for construction of a rapid rail system. Today, MARTA operates a rail system with feeder bus operation and park-and-ride facilities throughout the metropolitan Atlanta area.

compromised it with 15 cents, which they kept for seven years. This was a dramatic campaign to sell this.

Ray Ann: What was the purpose of doing that? Was that to get more people to ride it?

Sam: It was several purposes. I guess the main purpose was to pass the referendum. As I was explaining, the referendum had failed before because they were going to pay for the system with ad valorem taxes. I was adamant about not funding it again with ad valorem taxes. I was satisfied the public would not vote for it to tax themselves from their real estate. I had to come up with a way that the public would vote for it. The public or a large percentage of the population was of lower income, primarily blacks, but of lower income. The lower income are the people who use public transportation the most. If I could show them that they would benefit by voting yes, then I could win the referendum. I went with the black board to school after school after school and showed them that if they would vote themselves another one percent sales tax based on their average income of x dollars a week, and add that one percent onto that . . . then you take off the difference between 15 cents and 60 cents, and the fare . . . They were all riding public transportation back and forth to work each day which by that time was five days a week. I showed them where the day after they voted yes—because we were going to buy the existing bus system before we even started the rail—that they could start putting money in their pocket the next day after they voted yes. It wasn't easy. I had one city councilman, alderman, Henry Dodson²⁰⁵ who later became a County Commissioner, a black, who ran around town in a little Volkswagen²⁰⁶ with a PA [public address] system saying, "If they can't make it on 60 cents, how are they going to make it on 15 cents?" It was hard to overcome because I was trying to explain it to a less educated constituency. It wasn't a question about making it. It was going to be subsidized. Just like the parks don't pay their own way, the libraries don't pay their own way, the schools don't pay their own way, public transportation shouldn't pay its own way. I could go on and on about it. The reason that's my proudest is because it was the largest public works program in the state's history, meaning a tremendous amount of employment, meaning great human

²⁰⁵ Henry D. "H.D." Dodson (1932-2016) was one of the first two African Americans to be elected and serve as a Fulton County Commissioner in Georgia (1975-1978). He had also been an alderman for the city of Atlanta and a photographer.

²⁰⁶ Volkswagen is a German automaker founded on May 28, 1937 by the German Labour Front under Adolf Hitler and headquartered in Wolfsburg, Germany. Volkswagen literally in German means "folk's wagon." The Volkswagen Beetle is a popular compact car with a distinctive round shape and a rear-mounted engine. By 1972, total sales of Volkswagen Beetles surpassed the record set by Ford's Model T.

opportunity for the public providing mobility, freeing these people from their own neighborhoods, being confined, and getting to church, school, parks, and work. It gave opportunities for minorities in the management and operation. Overall, I'd say it touched all lives more than anything else.

Ray Ann: When did they start with the train?

Sam: They started right away.

Ray Ann: That was part of it?

Sam: That was part of it. It was all one program.

Ray Ann: You bought the buses along . . .

Sam: We bought the existing buses. We started immediately and started the plans for the construction. I don't remember when we dug the first hole.

Ray Ann: You got grants, federal grants and things like that .All that was done during your administration.

Sam: Right.

Ray Ann: That certainly is a significant impact on the city.

Sam: I went around the country and speaking on it to other cities that put it in. At the time, the approach was unique.

Ray Ann: Has anyone done it since?

Sam: Yes, a number of cities have.

Ray Ann: LA [Los Angeles, California]?

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: Not many. A lot of spread-out cities are without transportation systems. What would you do over again if you could do it differently?

Sam: The thing I got the most flak over . . .

Ray Ann: . . . that you regretted the most, not the most flak, that you were sorry about.

Sam: That's a good point. I got flak on some things that I didn't care how much flak. I did what was right. The appointment of a police chief, that turned sour. I don't think the appointment was a bad appointment but for some reason . . . Incidentally. I got recommendations on him . . .

Ray Ann: Who was it? You regret it so much you can't even remember his name. [You] put it out of your mind. How long was he there?

Sam: He was there a long time. Maynard had to sue him to try to get him out.

Ray Ann: You couldn't just fire him?

Sam: No. Our appointment system at that time—we've got a new charter now—was the police chief was appointed for life on good behavior or something like that. So was the fire chief, personnel director. I think there were several positions, supposedly to remove it from politics. I started saying, I got recommendations from the head of the GBI [Georgia Bureau of Investigation], from the head of the Cobb County Public Safety Department which was highly respected, Judge Luther Alverson,²⁰⁷ [and] several top judges. A lot of good law enforcement people recommended him.

Ray Ann: Was he white or black?

Sam: White. Because of his independent state, which I mentioned is built-in, he would not take any direction from me. He turned out to be more conservative than anybody had believed or at least than I had believed or had been led to believe. John Inman²⁰⁸ was his name. He just got very independent. The blacks thought that he condoned black brutality. He didn't talk this way to me. I'd go with him to meetings in the black community and he sounded . . . He seemed to be sincere about wanting to work with everybody, but they didn't feel that that was the case. One controversy led to another. It was just turmoil that I could have avoided by having appointed somebody else. We interviewed a lot of people. We offered the job to somebody else who wouldn't take it because of the salary. They said he's having that problem now of the department heads not having high enough salaries to attract top people. We offered it to the guy who is . . . he was with the Secret Service²⁰⁹ and had been an aide to President [Lyndon Baines] Johnson,²¹⁰ I think. That was probably the one that if I had it to do over again, I would have done differently.

Ray Ann: You came out and you helped Maynard transition as the mayor or you just went.

²⁰⁷ Luther A. Alverson (1907-2002) was a native of Atlanta, Georgia. He was a Fulton County criminal court judge from 1952 to 1956 and superior court judge from 1956 to 1995. He was named the country's outstanding trial judge by the American Trial Lawyers Association in 1974.

²⁰⁸ John F. Inman was chief of police for the city of Atlanta from 1972 to 1978. Mayor Maynard F. Jackson responded to allegations of police brutality against African Americans and the low percentage of black officers on the police force by attempting unsuccessfully to fire Inman in 1974. A lawsuit ensued with the result that he was Police Chief until 1978, but only as a figurehead whose job was superseded by a newly created position of Public Safety Commissioner.

²⁰⁹ The United States Secret Service (SS), or Secret Service, is a federal law enforcement agency under the United States Department of Homeland Security. The SS is charged with conducting criminal investigations and protecting the nation's leaders. From 1865 to 2003, the SS was under the United States Department of the Treasury and was originally founded to combat the widespread counterfeiting of United States currency.

²¹⁰ Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973), often called 'LBJ,' was the 36th President of the United States from 1963 to 1968. He came into the office with the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963. He was a Democrat.

Sam: No, he never asked, but that's alright. It wasn't necessary that he do so. I decided after 22 years of elected office that I would not continue in public service. I had enjoyed it thoroughly, no bitterness. I was richly rewarded, not monetarily but many other ways. I felt good about the achievements of my administration and, for that matter, all 22 years of office. I had heard all my life, like everyone else, that once you got politics in your blood you can't get it out. That became a challenge. I happen to be motivated by challenge in whatever direction, whether it's business, political or whatever. That's probably the reason that I run so hard on the tennis court. I'm not good but I run hard. I said, "I'll prove that I'm the exception. I can get it out of my blood." The way to do that is to overtly shift gears entirely. That I did. Whenever somebody would ask me to speak to a rotary club I'd say, "Yes. I would be glad to but I'm going to talk about the travel industry because that's what I'm in. If you want to ask some questions about politics, yes, I can speak. I'm not going to come give political speeches. I'm not going to attack the administration or in any other way be a participant because I've shifted gears entirely." It worked. People have asked me, "Do you ever miss it?" There have been one or two times.

Ray Ann: What you're doing now is kind of more political.

Sam: Yes, it is. It's more political but it's more of a soft involvement. The travel was far removed. I went to the fiftieth anniversary of the National League of Cities meeting in Houston a few years after I came out, as an invited guest because I had been president of the National League of Cities. I'll admit that I missed it then. In fact, I left early because I found myself encircled by all these friends of mine, mayors, talking about issues and problems. That's when I missed it. I said, "This won't do. I'm going home." I miss it when I look at a policy. I think government's role is to solve those problems that are just too big for individuals . . . Recently, when Haiti was exploding with the AIDS²¹¹ epidemic, with the country-wide poverty, and with the governmental revolution, I said, "There's an opportunity for government. That's where government is needed to step in and take over something and find a solution." I guess one of the reasons . . . Going back to why I was proud of MARTA, one of the main reasons that I probably made clear was that I was able to design something and to achieve something that was not achievable before. The same way with the development of the Omni Coliseum.²¹² Every sports facility in the country has been built at a deficit, at a loss, where the taxpayers are constantly

²¹¹ Acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

²¹² Omni Coliseum was an indoor arena in Atlanta, Georgia. Completed in 1972, the arena seated 16,378 for basketball and 15,278 for hockey. It was part of the Omni Complex, now known as the CNN Center.

having to feed it. Although I voted for the Atlanta-Fulton [County] Stadium²¹³ where the baseball and football are played, and knew at the time, and said at the time that it would not make money—although they show you all these pro formas that suggest it's going to make money with all the beauty pageants and high school games and things that never occur—I felt it was worth it. When it came time to build a coliseum when I was in office—the Omni—I insisted that it be structured in what was then a unique manner, that the taxpayer would never be called on for a deficit if they never sold a single ticket. I was able to do this with my real estate experience, business experience, and arrogant manner. I just insisted. I got up and walked out of the room twice from friends. Tom Cousins, who had supported me and given me money during my campaign, he was the main one to benefit. He owned the property. He owned the Hawks²¹⁴ basketball team. He owned the Flames²¹⁵ I think later, but he had the Hawks then. I said. “You’re either going to do it this way or we’re not going to do it at all, to structure in a way that if you never sell a ticket, the public doesn’t have to pay.” It was leased, in effect, to Cousins for the principle, interest, maintenance, and management of the building. He pledged income from the existing parking decks over the railroad as security. He had to pay the total debt service every month. Things like that that you put together, that’s what makes government fulfilling.

Ray Ann: For 13 years you were in the travel business. You must have done a lot of traveling.

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: You pretty much stayed out of politics?

Sam: Yes.

Ray Ann: Built your business.

Sam: I shifted gears.

Ray Ann: What happened that made you sell your business and do this?

²¹³ Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium, often referred to as ‘Fulton County Stadium’ and originally named ‘Atlanta Stadium,’ was built to attract a major league baseball team. In 1966 it succeeded when the Milwaukee Braves relocated to Atlanta. The stadium was built on the site of the cleared Washington-Rawson neighborhood, which had been a wealthy area and home to much of Atlanta’s Jewish community. The Braves continued to play at Fulton County Stadium until the end of the 1996 season, when they moved into Turner Field, the converted Centennial Olympic Stadium originally built for the 1996 Summer Olympics. The stadium was demolished in 1997. A parking lot for Turner Field now stands on the site. In 2016, the property was purchased by Georgia State with plans to build a new park for its baseball team within the footprint of Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium.

²¹⁴ The Atlanta Hawks are a professional basketball team based in Atlanta since 1968.

²¹⁵ The Atlanta Flames were a professional ice hockey team based in Atlanta, Georgia, from 1972 until 1980. They played out of the Omni Coliseum.

Sam: I had just achieved about everything I could in the travel business. I had become president of the Travel Industry Association of Georgia. I was a certified travel counselor which is a major academic program. I was advisor to the Bahamas Tourist Board and to the Alamo Rent-a-car Company.

Ray Ann: Were you advisor to the Bahamas when Bill Schwartz²¹⁶ was the ambassador?

Sam: Yes. I visited him and his wife there when I was visiting there. I went there often, to the Bahamas. I had conquered that mountain, I guess, and enjoyed it. Maybe I was getting a little tired of it, number one, and number two, it just happened that this thing fit like a glove. They offered it to me. They made it very attractive.

Ray Ann: Who put it together?

Sam: Charlie Loudermilk²¹⁷ was the principle mover who designed it, and Jerry McFall is our new chairman who just took office.

Ray Ann: It was put together when they came to you or were you involved in putting it together?

Sam: No, I was not involved in putting it together.

Ray Ann: You still had your business when they came to you?

Sam: I had my business. They did not have an office. They were not in operation but 13 guys had gotten together and said, "Let's form this association. Now we need to go out and find somebody to run it." Actually, they had a head hunter that they paid \$25,000 to go out and find me . . . or \$50,000. I think they paid \$50,000. I can't remember. Korn Ferry²¹⁸ was one of the largest in the country. They interviewed and talked to a lot of people. One of the funny side stories on this . . . to show you I had no interest. It had not even occurred to me . . . A young man whose name I don't recall—he might be Jewish too—called me and said that he was interested in getting this job, would I help him, and could he come talk to me about it. I said, "Sure, come talk

²¹⁶ William Bernstein "Bill" Schwartz, Jr. (1922-2010) was a United States Ambassador to the Bahamas from 1977 to 1981, appointed by President Jimmy Carter. He was a graduate of Druid Hills High School in Atlanta and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served in the United States Navy during World War II. He was vice-president of National Service Industries, and president of Weiner Investment, a private family investment firm. He was president of The Temple in Atlanta when it was bombed in 1958 and president of the Atlanta chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

²¹⁷ R. Charles "Charlie" Loudermilk, Sr. (born 1928) was an Atlanta native who founded Aaron Rents, an Atlanta-based rent-to-own chain in 1955, and retired as its chairman in 1910. He founded the Buckhead Coalition and was a board member of the Piedmont Hospital Foundation, the Atlanta Community Food Bank and the Lovett School. He was a member of the group that built the Omni in Atlanta and once owned the Atlanta Hawks and the Flames.

²¹⁸ Korn Ferry is a management consulting firm headquartered in Los Angeles. It was founded in 1969. It specializes in organizational strategy and executive search.

to me about it but I don't have anything to do with it." I was active in the Buckhead Business Association which is a civic duty. He came to see me and he wanted to know if I would call Charlie Loudermilk or some of the others and recommend him. I said, "I can't do that. I don't know you, so I can't recommend you. I'll be glad to sit here and talk with you about what I think they'll be looking for. If you're going for an interview, here's what I would think that they'll be looking for." I spelled out the different background needs and everything because I know that much about organization work. He thanked me and went on his way. Well, it wasn't until later—I don't remember how much, maybe a month later—that they contacted me. He's sitting somewhere right now thinking what a scoundrel I am that either he gave me the idea or else I was planning it all along. It was just the furthest thing from my mind. I was selling dreams, traveling the world, and working without a tie. I didn't wear a necktie unless I went south of Pershing Point.²¹⁹ I was enjoying the good life. My wife worked there. All three of our children at one time or another worked there.

Ray Ann: After you accepted this position, then you sold your agency?

Sam: Not immediately after. My wife stayed there and worked for maybe another year, a year and a half or two, then I sold it. She got tired of working there. We had a grandchild. That influenced her. We had bought a townhouse and it needed decorating and other interests at the time. She was losing interest.

Ray Ann: Tell me about the Buckhead Coalition. Where do you see it going? What difference has it made so far?

Sam: I'm going to give you a copy of our annual report to take with you if you're interested.

<Break in tape.>

The Buckhead Coalition has been very successful. It's in its fourth year . . . in its fifth year, starting the fifth. It's gone from those 13 original to 77 members. It's got a major study underway for Buckhead at a cost of \$200,000 of its own funds for a long range plan to coordinate orderly growth in the community. We get accolades from every direction for our involvement and services to individuals, businesses, and groups. We are aggressively marketing Buckhead. We're starting this year a program which is being provided, pro bono, by one of our members who has a

²¹⁹ This may be a reference to either Pershing Point Park, the demolished Pershing Point Hotel, or Pershing Point office building, all located in Midtown Atlanta.

big public relations firm. We're going to market Buckhead nationally, which I've not done much with. I've done it locally.

Ray Ann: Market it for what?

Sam: As a place to live, as a place to visit, and as a place to work. All three. Our organization is unique in that our members not only work here but live here. They're equally as interested in the residential aspect as they are with the commercial areas. They are what is technically called a downtown association. They have these all over the country. There's one in central downtown called Central Atlanta Partners [CAP]²²⁰ in Atlanta. We belong to a national association of downtown associations, International Downtown Association.²²¹, IDA. Most of them organize downtown associations for the purpose of rehabilitating run-down central downtowns. Pretty much like CAP was organized. That's not our case. There are others like us that are in areas where the main intent is to protect what they have, not to try to rebuild, to nurture the quality of life, and to coordinate an orderly growth. The membership is by invitation. It's limited to CEO's of major firms. It's quite interesting. Incidentally, most of those guys are conservative Republicans and they know that I'm a liberal Democrat. I think I'm changing them and they think they're changing me. They are not people who were ever political supporters in any of my campaigns. In fact, I guess if I searched the records, I'd find they were opponents. I don't feel I have a problem working with them or for them. If I ever do, I'll quit. In the meantime I found that I don't have to compromise my principals. So far, there has not been any hint of any problem in that direction. They really impress me with what I construe to be a very genuine desire to be good citizens. Maybe it's more interesting to me because I have not been this close to the power structure before. I'm seeing it first-hand. I'm seeing their sensitivity to their fellow man. I think it's very commendable. The dues are very high. It's \$5,000 per year per person, so they're very serious about what they're trying to do.

Ray Ann: What are the goals?

Sam: We work in three directions. The above-all goal is that of nurturing the quality of life and coordinating the orderly growth of the community. Part of that is marketing. We run full page

²²⁰ Central Atlanta Progress (CAP), founded in 1941, is a private, not-for-profit corporation that strives to create a robust economic climate for downtown Atlanta, Georgia. The Board of Directors includes business leaders from the Atlanta area. CAP is funded through the investment of businesses and institutions.

²²¹ International Downtown Association (IDA) is a non-profit organization with headquarters in Washington, District of Columbia, which connects professionals involved with rebuilding urban areas in cities.

ads in several magazines. I had somebody call me the other day who saw our ad in *Seasons Magazine* down in Naples, Florida at a Ritz Hotel and called me for more information about Buckhead. So, some marketing the community as a place to visit and as a place to work, live, and play . . . We have this planning process which would be a necessary element to coordinate the growth in an orderly way. Not only do we have this major—what we call—Buckhead Blueprint²²² by EDAW²²³ out of San Francisco for which we are paying \$200,000 that's being done now. We have another study for an equal price, \$200,000, that we got from the federal government being done by the Atlanta Regional Commission²²⁴ for us on a people mover study. We're working with the Buckhead Business Association²²⁵ with a study being done by Emory University²²⁶ Business School on the retail in Buckhead. Studies of planning is a major part of it. In fact, we have a full-time planner on our staff who's a certified professional planner. The third area is one like a little city hall, I guess. I smile when I say that. We don't have any power. We don't pretend like we're a city hall but we take any and every call we get. If somebody contacts us because the noise in a night club is keeping them awake at night, we contact the night club and use our influence to try to persuade them to reduce the noise. If that doesn't work, we'll go to the police department and see if an enforcement of certain regulations is already on the books. If that doesn't work, we'll go to City Council and see about getting new ordinances adopted that would control an adverse condition. You'll find in the annual report a letter from a lady who lives in one of the public housing projects which we do have in Buckhead, a lot of people don't realize that—a high-rise on Piedmont [Road] near Habersham [Road]—thanking us profusely for getting her dumpster cleaned up. It was overflowing with trash.

²²² In 1994 the Buckhead Coalition commissioned the Buckhead Blueprint, a list of priorities for transforming Buckhead over the next 10 to 20 years. That blueprint included transformation of Peachtree Road in the Buckhead area of Atlanta into a boulevard more accommodating to traffic and pedestrians alike.

²²³ EDAW (an acronym derived from Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams, the names of four of the firm's original partners) was an international landscape architecture, urban, and environmental design firm that operated from 1939 until 2009. It was founded in San Francisco, California and at its peak had 32 offices worldwide. The firm was bought by the American engineering conglomerate AECOM in 2005 when it ceased to exist as a separate entity.

²²⁴ The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county metropolitan Atlanta region. The ARC is funded through a combination of local, state, federal, and private funds.

²²⁵ The Buckhead Business Association (BBA) was founded in 1951 by a group of merchants in the Buckhead area of Atlanta, Georgia. BBA is a private, membership-based, non-profit organization that strives to create an informed business community in Buckhead.

²²⁶ Emory University is a private university in Atlanta. It was founded in 1836 by a small group of Methodists and named in honor of Methodist bishop John Emory. Today it has nearly 3,000 faculty members and is ranked 20th among national universities in U.S. News & World Report's 2014 rankings. Emory University was officially desegregated in September of 1962 and admitted its first African American undergraduate in the fall of 1963.

Ray Ann: Piedmont and Habersham?

Sam: Right on the corner of Piedmont and Habersham. It's a high-rise public housing project.

Ray Ann: It has balconies?

Sam: I don't know. Not the one that's built on Habersham but the one that's facing, the high rise on Piedmont. That may be the one you're talking about. There's a mid-rise on Habersham. There are three others: one on Sidney Marcus Boulevard across from Broadview [Plaza], Lindbergh Center, and one on Peachtree near Peachtree Creek. We take these individual requests. We're very active, very busy.

<Break in tape>

Ray Ann: Anything pertinent, anything else about the Buckhead Coalition?

Sam: No, except I want to make it clear, this is a good segue for your next question. We feel very strongly, although I spend full time, day and night, including weekends, working on Buckhead's benefit . . . We feel very strongly that we must also have a very strong city overall in that Buckhead won't survive without the city being strong. I speak on this subject constantly. I'm going tomorrow morning to the Ponce de Leon task force, Ponce de Leon group, to tell them about our Buckhead Coalition and how it works. I've spoken to the south side public officials about it. I've spoken to almost every section of the city and encouraged them to create Buckhead Coalitions in their quadrants as well, regardless of what name is given. This is very important. Our members . . .

Ray Ann: Could they possibly get the funding we get in the south quadrant?

Sam: Not to the same degree but if they bring together . . . There's some powerful people down there. There's some influential people. There's some wealthy people. There's some successful people in that part of town. No, they may not get 77 but we never expected to have 100. I didn't know this but I was later told that they never expected to have more than 50 here. Maybe I've been pushing too hard. Not that we have membership campaigns or anything, but I provide suggested names to the membership committee in which they select people they wish to invite. Yes, they could have similar structures—similar effect—if they want to get together and pitch in some money. I think it needs a staff. It needs somebody who's dedicated to it.

Ray Ann: Where do you see Atlanta going in the year 2000, which isn't too far away? We're only talking about in seven years. Further into the next century?

Sam: Of course, you can talk about this all day. You'd have to break it down. If I were to give it a summary I'd say more of the same. That's not too optimistic. That's not too bright a picture because we've had a lot of problems that I think have grown and will continue to grow. I don't think they're insurmountable. I don't think that Atlanta's going to go down the tube or anything. There's a great deal of dissatisfaction with the way the city is moving by a lot of those who are the movers and shakers, as well as the man on the street. I think there's more negativism today than I've ever seen.

Ray Ann: Negative about what?

Sam: Even about the Olympics, the greatest thing that's ever happened to us probably as far as one event, one action to be here and be gone. Ninety percent of what you read in the paper or what you hear at luncheons is negative about even the Olympics. That's just the tip of the iceberg. The politics, the politicians . . . I've never seen such a division as we have in the City Council, where there's no apparent concern on the part of the council people to even correct this. I stopped and chatted with one of the council members not long ago and said, "Look, can we help? Can the business people get in there, mediate or something? Is there a way to get a third party in there to bring you all together?" In so many words he said, "We don't care." Each side is happy with its own little whatever you want to call it.

Ray Ann: They don't have a perspective for the whole city.

Sam: There's not a concern for the whole city. It's very disappointing. You've got that going on. You've got negative index after negative index. Population's going down.

Ray Ann: In the city or in the suburbs?

Sam: No, in the city. I'm talking about the city limits. I'm not just talking about the city limits. To talk about metropolitan Atlanta, that's an entirely different picture. I thought you were talking about the city limits.

Ray Ann: No, I am talking about the city.

Sam: In the city limits, the population is decreasing [and] the proportionate income level is decreasing. By proportionate, I mean adjusted to inflation, meaning that we're getting more lower income and less higher income. The pollution is increasing. You can just, by every index, [see] everything is getting worse instead of better. You don't see . . .

Ray Ann: . . . the things that we depend on our government to handle.

Sam: Not always government. I think the leadership in a number of areas has—I won't say disappeared—dissipated to some degree. When we look back to Atlanta's past and try to find the formula for its success, more often than anything else we point to the leadership, not just the political leadership but religious leadership, academic leadership. Even in the academic community we've got a president of one institution that's trying to be drummed out of office and everywhere you turn there's turmoil.

Ray Ann: Is that so different than it's always been though?

Sam: Yes, when we had. . . the leaders of this city, the young Turks . . . Interesting to me is that back in the civil rights crisis I watched television of events in Birmingham. One of the stark contrasts to what was happening in Atlanta was that everybody I saw in positions of leadership or responsibility or as spokespeople were old guys. They weren't the young vibrant leadership that we had in Atlanta: the Tom Cousins, the John Portmans, and the Jim Cushmans. I could go down and list all these young guys who really helped me run this city.

Ray Ann: Are you saying you don't see those young guys here now?

Sam: Yes, I don't see them anywhere like we had then. The media is playing a game with us now. They're having more fun than they've ever had but they don't have the Ralph McGills and the Gene Pattersons.

Ray Ann: We have Ted Turner²²⁷ who is broadcasting Atlanta all over the world.

Sam: He's broadcasting Atlanta all over the world but he's also saying that we need a new ten commandments, that the old one's outdated and that . . . What are some of the other crazy things that he says? Yes, he'd made millions and billions of dollars. He's definitely done a lot for Atlanta as far as just having a baseball team. Those are uppers, there's no doubt about it. The general sentiment, the letters to the editor, the people that you talk to on the street, there's more negative than I've ever seen.

Ray Ann: Do you think that's just in general in this country right now or are you saying Atlanta's different than the rest of the country?

²²⁷ Robert Edward "Ted" Turner III (born 1938) is an American media mogul and philanthropist. As a businessman, he is known as founder of the Cable News Network (CNN), the first 24-hour cable news channel. He founded WTBS, which pioneered the superstation concept in cable television. As a philanthropist, he is known for his \$1 billion gift to support the United Nations.

Sam: I'm not qualified to answer that. I know what you're saying and you may have an excellent point but I don't know. I'm not that close to it anymore like when I was in politics. I could give you the pulse of the rest of the country, maybe. It's interesting.

Ray Ann: Do you see anything that's going to change that right now?

Sam: Crisis brings about reform. That's pretty bad to say that we've got to wait until it really gets worse before it gets better.

<End Tape 3, Side 2>

INTERVIEW ENDS

Cuba Family Archives