"Early History of the San Fernando Valley Oral History Project"

REVEREND HILLARY T. BROADOUS

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Reminiscences of Pacoima/Black Experience

December 22, 1977

Interview conducted by

Dr. William Huling

Interview transcribed by

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[Final transcription - August 1988]

[PDF Version - September 2003]
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The oral history interview with Reverend Hillary T. Broadous was conducted by Dr. William Huling, counselor at the Counseling Center of California State University, Northridge on December 22, 1977. The interview features Broadous' reminiscences of Pacoima. The interview were donated to the Urban Archives Center by Dr. Huling in March 1983. The final transcript of the interview was completed by Xiaoquan Han, a CSUN graduate student, in August 1988.

Rev. Broadous came to Los Angeles from Arkansas in January 1946. Finding no place to house his large family, he moved to San Fernando Valley in 1948 and opened a barbershop. His career in ministry started in 1952 and, in 1955, he organized his own church on Mumford Street in Van Nuys. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Council of Churches. In the following interview, Rev. Broadous shares some of his remembrances of Pacoima in its early days.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minute/Segment</th>
<th>Topic Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>000/050</td>
<td>Broadous, originally from Arkansas, came to California in January 1946 when he left the Army. He wanted to enroll in barber school. A friend living in California convinced him that his chances were better in California. He lived with his mother and father-in-law in Los Angeles. Broadous intended to finish school and return to Oregon to live. He didn't like Los Angeles. At the time he had five children and couldn't find a place to rent. The youngest became ill.</td>
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<td>051/100</td>
<td>The doctor said there were too many people living in one house and sent Broadous to Aliso Village. They had no home for his family and sent him to the San Fernando Valley in January 1948. Broadous and his family moved into Bacelon Homes. As a barber, Broadous soon was no longer qualified to live at Bacelon because he made too much money. He moved out in 1953. He bought property and began constructing a home. His family moved back to L.A. in the meantime where his oldest daughter graduated from Jefferson High School.</td>
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<td>101/150</td>
<td>While living in Bacelon Homes, Broadous' intent was to someday buy a home in the Compton area. He ended up staying in the Valley where the rest of his children went to school. In 1952 he entered the ministry. He was given a church on Mumford Street in Van Nuys.</td>
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<td>151/200</td>
<td>He bought property in Pacoima and moved the church. The first years were spent worshipping in a tent. In 1958 a chapel was built and other buildings in the complex followed over the years. Broadous has a total of ten children--one born in Oregon, four in Arkansas, and five since they came to the Valley. When he came back to the Valley in the 1950s there were about 20,000 blacks in the general area. This was before areas like Arleta, Sylmar, Hansen Hills, and Lakeview Terrace were designated.</td>
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<td>201/250</td>
<td>When he first came to Pacoima, there were only about 100 blacks in the area. Bacelon Homes was located in Sun Valley, which Broadous describes as Pacoima's &quot;downtown.&quot; Sun Valley had everything necessary to a community except a church. There was one black business in the Valley--a &quot;chicken shack&quot; run by a woman. It was on San Fernando Road next to the &quot;Black and White.&quot; People came from all over the Valley to eat there. Glenoaks Blvd. didn't go through at the time. One had to use San Fernando Road or Foothill to get to Pacoima. There was one paved street--Van Nuys Blvd., and no sewers or sidewalks when he first came.</td>
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The residents used petitions to get lights and sidewalks. Eventually, many of the original street names were changed. He recalls the Marshall family living between Arroyo and Vaughn—the only black man Broadous ever knew to own a broom factory. In 1950 the Joe Louis tract was built. They were the first new homes that blacks bought in the San Fernando Valley. They were bought by middle class blacks mostly from Bacelon Homes and Rodger Young Village. The Joe Louis tract was bounded by Paxton-Mumford and Glenoaks-Herrick. Other tracts were built, one extending out to Mumford-Fillmore.

Two other tracts were built at Harris-Bradley, Paxton-Ustes and at Paxton-Vaughn, Glenoaks-Herrick. By 1955, homes were declining in quality. When Broadous first bought his house, there was no one living around him. After he moved in, tracts began going up all around him. People were upset over the inferior building practices and arranged a meeting with the tract owner to protest.

They put pressure on the owner to fire his white sales representative and hire a black instead. Most of the area residents worked at Lockheed, Olive View Sanitarium, or were school teachers or construction workers. At that time, Broadous didn't know any professionals in Pacoima, except one nurse.

He remembers one man named Cooper who would pick up people's trash at their residence and then incinerate it. Later on when incineration was stopped, the L.A. By-Products Co. was formed. There was one elementary school and no high school in Pacoima. San Fernando had one high school which became San Fernando Junior High when a new San Fernando High School was built. Later on, Sylmar High, Pacoima Junior High, and then Maclay Junior High were built. There were no PTA associations in Pacoima when Broadous arrived, only one black church, and people were still using outhouses.

Panorama City hadn't been built yet. Everything between San Fernando Road and Van Nuys Blvd. came as the result of a construction explosion. Granada Hills used to be fields of tomatoes, apples, and citrus. Broadous remembers the Little Red Barn Cafe in on Van Nuys Blvd. in Panorama City when it had just 12 tables and a bar. Broadous' brother-in-law in Compton got him a job working at the cafe.

A new tract went in around the cafe. The "Barn" owner was hoping for increased business for the cafe but it didn't happen. Pacoima attracted young families with husbands just out of the service because there were good jobs in the Valley, land and homes were cheap and could be bought on easy terms.

Around 1953 people were making more money and home builders built nice homes, but around 1956 when people weren't doing as well, the builders began producing inferior homes. Broadous doesn't think people were looking for a Valley residence but it was thrust upon them when they couldn't find a better place in Los Angeles. One of the last tracts built was Hansen Hills, overlooking
Bacelon Homes' former site. From Dronfield up to Terra Bella was an all-white area where blacks couldn't buy a home. Nice homes were then built across Foothill and that became a white area. Presently, Broadous feels that Pacoima is diminishing in the black population and increasing in the Mexican population.

The projects were built in 1953 as a replacement for Bacelon Homes. Broadous had started a barber shop in the area in 1950. At the time there was only one storefront at Lehigh and Van Nuys. He thinks Fantastic Blacks was the first store in Pacoima, followed by Safeway.

Safeway occupies was first built by Country Farms. Rev. Pledger came out in 1942 to start a church in the Valley. At that time there only four black families. It was because of Pledger that blacks had help in coming to the Valley and finding homes.

Broadous feels that most young families with education and a good income are moving out. Pacoima needs to attract more businesses.

Broadous personally knows of only about 15 of the original Joe Louis tract families that have stayed in Pacoima. There was a tendency to move out to Los Angeles and areas like Granada Hills, Sylmar, and Lakeview Terrace. In 1958-59, there was a desire to close the railroad crossing at Vaughn and San Fernando Road and open one at Paxton because a young boy had been run over by a train. When Certified Groceries wanted to build in Pacoima on Vaughn, some residents wanted it in and others wanted to keep it out.

The church presently runs the RSVP Program. It is sponsored by the Los Angeles Council of Churches but is headquartered in the church's buildings. Broadous is on the Board of Directors of the Council of Churches and is expected to provide leadership as its' representative. RSVP provides transportation and meals to the elderly who are working at non-profit places.

There are five people on the RSVP payroll--a director, secretary, van driver, and two aids. Participants in the program must be 60 years of age or older. If they drive their own car, then they get mileage reimbursement. The church has recently formed a social club for seniors called the Advanced Age Group. It is not yet fully organized.
HB: I came to California, came to Los Angeles in 1946. And in January 1946 I was trying to get into barber school. And it had a waiting list to December, 1946. I had a friend here who came from Arkansas with me. He was here going to school. He had his barber license and was working. So he wrote and said, "Come on to California, you can get in right away." So I came to California and was living in Los Angeles with my mother and father-in-law. I couldn't find a place nowhere. My intent for coming to California was that when I finished school, I was going back to Oregon to live. I loved Oregon. I didn't like Los Angeles at all. But that was the only place I knew. At that time I had five children. And I couldn't find a place to live in Los Angeles because of the number of children I had. I mean to rent.

As providence would have it, my youngest child got sick. I had to call the doctor. The doctor came and said, "You have too many people in this house." I said, "I can't find no place." Doctor wrote me a note and I took it down to Aliso Village. I had been to Aliso Village a number of times. They wouldn't even talk to me. Then he said, "We don't have anything here but we can send you out in the San Fernando Valley." He gave me a note and directed me out here. I came to Bacelon Home. You know Bacelon Home?

WH: Yes.

HB: So I went there. That was in January.

WH: What year was that?

HB: 1948. Then I moved out immediately. I moved out. Stayed there, and all of my kids except for the first three. I had to move out. At this time I had bought a piece of property and I was building a house. I started building a house in 1953. Then I had to move out of Bacelon Home. I moved back to Los Angeles.

WH: Did they close down Bacelon then?

HB: No. At that time I was making too much money and didn't qualify. I was a barber, but I didn't qualify. I didn't want to ... [inaudible]

WH: You're not damned as a barber. Or they didn't teach in school.

HB: Right. We've got to have programs that teach. And then I moved back until my house was finished. I moved back, I guess, in January. And of course my oldest daughter was graduating from high school in June. And pulled her to San Fernando. So she was going to continue out
here to finish, but it got to be such a hassle, transportation-wise. You know. She'd come out to learn and I wouldn't leave here until late at night and come by early. That made it difficult. So anyway she graduated. She went to Jefferson High School and graduated out of Jefferson. She got out and I had to move back out here.

Then I moved back up. When I moved out here to Bacelon Home, my intent then was to, when I got ahead, buy me a house. And all of a sudden, we went to some area out in the Compton area. They were building a new project, building a home out there. And I'd move out of that area. But I got out here and built this house. The kids were brought up and going to school. And they liked it out here. They all graduated from school out here.

Well, in 1952, I went into the ministry. That was my calling. In 1955, we organized this church. So it looked like I was stuck for the Valley. That's how I got into it, not a planned thing, not on my own move to come. As I looked at it, providence did this kind of thing. We organized our church on Mumford in Van Nuys in a one-room house, a living room. We worshipped there from May to November, bought this property and moved up here. We worshipped in a tent and then we built this building with the expectation that we'd be able to build a sanctuary. This is just for the chapel. We built this building in 1958 and moved in here. We borrowed the mortgage in 1962.

WH: That was fast.

HB: In 1958 we built that building over there. We borrowed the mortgage on that one in 1972. Now we're in the process of building this one over here. When we came to the Valley, we had five children. Let's see... four were born in Arkansas, one in Oregon and we've had five since we've been to the Valley. We have ten children. So this has, by and large, been our situation here in the Valley.

WH: What are some of your early remembrances of Pacoima when you came out talking to other people? I'm still trying to pin-point. I think right now Pacoima has about 50,000 people there.

HB: All told?

WH: Um hum. Pretty big.

HB: That's not big. I mean in the 1950s we had 67,000.

WH: In Pacoima?

HB: Right.

WH: Right in this area?

HB: Well, of course you are talking about the area. It's interesting. Sunday morning in my message I would talk about Pacoima in general. I said to the people that in the 1950s there were 20,000 blacks right here.
WH: In this area?

HB: Um hum, right here. Since then I laid Sylmar and Hansen Hills and Lakeview Terrace. An this is true. You have to educate yourself. When I think about Pacoima and black people, I think about Pacoima. And when I think about Pacoima, I think about the black people. When I came here, there wasn't a hundred black people in Pacoima.

WH: That's the kind of information I'm interested in.

HB: And that's all--Bacelon Home was called Sun Valley. That is Sun Valley. Okay. And at that time people from Pacoima came over and was shocked. That was town over there. They had a doctor's office, drugstore, dentist, barber shop, theater, and everything. You name it. They had garage, police station, school. Anything but a church.

WH: In Bacelon Home?

HB: Yes. It didn't have a church, then, of course because the government made that. They had everything you name. They had everything in there, particularly with their golf course. And the people from Pacoima, from over here in Pacoima proper, they came over here to shop from the town over there.

WH: And the black population then in this total area, you say, was about 100. And the rest were...?

HB: Mexicans. There was only one black business in Pacoima. That was a lady who had a "Chicken Shack." It was on San Fernando Road right in that area between black and white... that liquor store, and Woodman Furniture Store. It would more or less be right there where the plumber shop is right now. This lady had chickens and people from all over the Valley came out here to see her butcher the chickens.

WH: Now Glenoaks wouldn't cut through.

HB: Oh no. Glenoaks. To get to Pacoima you had to go up to the San Fernando Road, go up to Foothill and turn left. Pacoima had one paved street that was Van Nuys Boulevard when I came in 1940s. It had one paved street. There was no sewers, there was no sidewalk. I, along with others, walked the street, and got a petition for street lights and sidewalks. And the street I live on now ... [inaudible] It was Dyrt. D-y-r-t. Not Dryen, D-r-y-e-n, but over in Sylmar it's still the same name. But they changed the name of the street. And there was no mail service, that kind of thing. Just the phone company.

WH: This was really just a rural little town.

HB: Yeah. Only there was a family alone in there between Vaughn and Arroyo. There was a black family. And many of the kids are still around here as grown men. The man named Marshall had a broom factory. Black man. Only black man I ever know to make brooms. He was making brooms. He had a broom factory, and he was a pastor. But he is no longer a pastor like what he was. Okay. Now what brought the folks out of Bacelon Home? They built what they
called Joe Louis Tract. You know about that. The first new home that a Negro bought in the San Fernando Valley was in the Joe Louis Tract.

WH: I remember when my dad came out here he was interested in buying one of those.

HB: Okay. We bought a home. Most of the people that bought these homes come from Bacelon Home and Roger Young Village. You ever heard of Roger Young Village?

WH: Um, hum. And the Joe Louis Tract?

HB: The Joe Louis Tracts. That was successful. Then after he built that, then he built some little tract, went from Paxton over to Mumford. From Glenoaks over to here. That was a success. Then they built another tract, and tied on to Joe Louis, from Mumford over to Sylmar. That was a success. Then they moved over from Paxton, oh, back from Harris and Bradley, from Paxton over to Ustes. With another guy. Then they come from Harris, from Paxton over to Vaughn. From Herrick back to Glenoaks. But near the ghetto we built another tract.

Okay. They were building real nice homes then, or what I call nice ones. But now by 1955, they'd start getting down on the quality of building houses. So when we bought this property in 1955, there wasn't any of these houses. There was a couple of houses on Vaughn Street--those old houses over there. Whereas these multiple houses in here weren't here. And back in here they were building. Robert Willestein was right on the corner, where he had a corner but not when we moved up here. But let me go on. As a matter of fact, the reason why the man sold it, he knew that these houses were coming in, but we didn't know it. We saw a sign-up, "For Sale," we just came in and bought it. It was fine. But by the time we got purchased and moved in here in November, we saw bulldozers going on around here. Start building those flat topped things, dry wall on it.

But then after all this was built, just all this around the place. And then people got to screaming about them. So, as a matter of fact, my church and along with other people protested. Called the building company and me directing it in our building in order to protest. Still they were building houses.

WH: Just throwing them up?

HB: Throwing them up. So then they moved across over here and they built these houses from Vaughn back over to Glenoaks. Nice houses. Then they built these over here. Oh, built these first. That's across the lawn. They built them first, because there was a problem there. Yeah, they had the problem there. As we called the man. As a matter of fact, we made him. He had a white boy, a salesman. We made him, we pressured him, I should say, to get rid of the white boy and hiring a black boy to sell these homes. Then that was successful. All this built up around, all this was coming up. Back over here on Weeden. All that was built.

WH: This just happened, just...

HB: On all street[s], at that time, it's where you build, you have to improve the street. That was a part of the building. So that's, by and large, what happened here.
WH: So the people who moved out--where was the work? Were they driving to L.A. to work?

HB: Those people who were working out here? Well, a lot of them was working at Lockheed, and some were school teachers. Like in Bacelon Home those people were summer school teachers over there. There was a lot of people who worked in Lockheed and moved over here. Between Lockheed and the school teachers and construction work. Construction work was a thing that was always going. That's all you can do. People that lived in Pacoima were construction workers. Well, a few worked in the hospital, like maintenance and ... [inaudible] I didn't know any--I think there was one nurse out here that I knew. We had one nurse. There wasn't a teacher in Pacoima, or any professor, any professional people or preacher. Nobody out here that I knew of had a trade. Everybody was [inaudible], plasters, brick layers and building trade, I mean professionals. And then they had Olive View [Sanitarium] up here. A bulk of people worked at Olive View. And there was another thing going on at the time when I came up here. There was what you call the garbage. They didn't call it garbage. What did they call it? Trash.

WH: L.A. Byproducts Co. was working out here.

HB: No. No way. Cooper, a fellow named Cooper had this Valley sold out. And all picked up trash and this kind of stuff. I guess he had over a hundred black males working for him. If you worked for Cooper, you were a big wheel. And I was working for Kuple. That's all I thought I could Cooper, Cooper. At that time they had incinerators burning your trash. People, small people like home owners, burned their trash. And so, burned their trash and garbage and everything. Then they stopped that. When it was first stopped, it was burning at certain hours in the day. Then from that point, get away from the incinerator. Then they started this cans, but you put them out. There was one elementary school in Pacoima when I came. No high school. Closest, let's see. What was the closest high school? Well, San Fernando Junior High was a high school at the time.

WH: It was a high school.

HB: Oh yeah. San Fernando Junior High was the high school. So finally they built the present San Fernando Junior High, and then they made that a Senior High.

WH: Sylmar High School, that's very new.

HB: Oh yeah. Then Pacoima Junior High, they built that. And the kids from Pacoima area started going to Pacoima Junior High. Finally built McClay [High School]. And let's see, one church. Oh, come on, black church now. In Pacoima when I came, one elementary school. They didn't have any PTA. They didn't have a relief time school. And ... well, I know they didn't have any sewage or that kind of stuff. And when I came out here, a lot of people was using outhouses. They didn't even have sewage. They used an outhouse.

Let's see. Glenoaks was not through. At that time you could only go up through the middle of the mountain, not all the way across. Panorama City was not in existence. From here, from
Van Nuys, from San Fernando Road back to Van Nuys, all that loose stuff in there. Most of the houses are newly built.

**WH:** This part of the Valley just bloomed.

**HB:** Yeah. All that over in Granada Hills. Tomato patches. Citrus trees. Used to go there to pick tomatoes, apples and oranges, that kind of stuff. I mean oranges. Well, the homes around the bowling alley, just as you're going to Panorama City, the little Red Barn Cafe, right there. On that little corner? Okay. I knew that fellow didn't have but twelve chairs in there. I mean he only had twelve tables. Twelve tables and a bar. I used to work there. And he would wait, Tuesday or Wednesday, he's take hold of your check until Saturday. He wouldn't pay you, covered your check. And you know, they were different then. But I didn't think because of that I wouldn't do it. As a matter of fact that's why I moved to the Valley. I did. I was working there. Yeah. I started working there after I came out.

But my brother-in-law was in Compton and he did a lot of the town work, like working in the kitchen. I didn't even like it. I thought it was sweetwater. So I couldn't find no work, so I sat there one day, I said, "Hey, man, can you get me one of those sweetwater jobs," and he laughed at me. He said, "I got a call to come to a job in the San Fernando Valley. You live right there. I'm going to take you by." He took me by, I got the job. I worked there.

And, oh, I was about to say. When those houses were built across there, those houses were called the Kaiser Tract. I don't know why they were called the Kaiser--but they were built on it. The man who was on that place, boy, he just lit up because he thought he was going to get a lot of business on it, you know. Those folks couldn't come and give him no business, you know, because they were trying to pay their homes. They'd just moved in; they didn't know how to get money. But anyway all of that, all the way across down there, those are all old houses. All the way. There was no such thing as Panorama [City]. Never heard of it.

**WH:** Yeah, I noticed how, you know, Pacoima is so unusual because it grew. It wasn't one of those things like Compton or Watts, because they are just spread out. But especially blacks just came here. There had to be some attraction.

**HB:** Well, I don't think it was attraction. I think it was the force.

**WH:** You mean jobs, and ...

**HB:** Well, big ones. They were people in the early marriage, or mostly their 30s, 25 or 30, this kind of thing. Up to 35 at the most.

**WH:** So it was the young...

**HB:** Young group coming out of service. They want to set up residence. They couldn't find it nowhere else. So they came out here. It was cheap. Put five dollars down and they'll hold it for you. Come by next week and we'll write you deeds; and fine. We'll pick you out one, and big deal. Okay. This is more or less how it happened, because that was still there.
Any number of the people who bought a Joe Louis home as soon as they were able, you know, about as comfortable, they moved to another section. Okay. There was no attraction by a long shot. It was more of the force. We need to buy a place; we can't get no other place. There were no places to be built. So when your little tract went so well, then the builders said, "Hey, there're lots of folks with no home. Let's build over here." And by that time, by about 1953, it meant that people were stabling off and they had a little more money than they had in 1950. So they'd build a little better home. Okay? They had a little better home. Then about 1956 people started stabling off. They didn't have any.

So they started building inferior homes. This is the thing that happened. And as I say, I don't think there was a lot of people looking for the Valley. I think most people are in my case. It was thrust upon them to the extent, "Hey, I got to have a home; this is being advertised; so I'm going to take a look at it." And "Hey, this is a little better." You like it, you'll take your wife down. You looked at anything.

WH: Now the last tract built, oddly enough, was the Hansen Hills. Supposed to be prestige homes. Now that's looking right over Bassilon Homes.

HB: That's right. Now you take from Dronfield, mostly Dronfield, on up to Terra Bella. Van Nuys to Terra Bella. From there to Foothill. From that field, there was nothing but whites. You couldn't buy a home. They wouldn't let you do it. All whites.

WH: So they just came in on the outskirts of the black population, these state homes.

HB: Then, without the whites moving into those fields so fast, they'd build across Foothill. The whites took that in. That again, as I view it, was kind of a force issue. Whites wanted a place to live, and to build them, so this was a good thing and a good place to build, so they built. And the white folks bought it because it was cheap. It was cheap. The first houses they built there, the highest one sold for $9,000. And it didn't even settle for four sometimes. The people settled in a little house for $4,000 dollars.

WH: That's amazing.

HB: And so there weren't any parks, any recreation. Things around here, there was no park. They didn't give too much for recreation as I think of it. Because I've seen all the development come through, you know, and the development has come through, and yet it looked to me like now, as I see it, in which I can't, this certainly isn't a true evaluation or situation because most time I'm within these walls, unless I've got a meeting, and I'm on the inside there, you know, going here to there and to the meeting to here to there, to this and that, and I can't say this is true. It looks to me like Pacoima is diminishing to the extent that people are moving out. Sylmar, Lakeview Terrace, Arleta, Hansen Hills, they call it, but like I said earlier, to me it's all Pacoima here.

WH: Yeah, it seems like there's an influx of Mexicans moving in.

HB: Right. This is true. Very true. It wasn't true with the case earlier in the development of Pacoima. But now, they're moving in real fast.
WH: **What about the projects?** Could you tell me anything about when they came in?

HB: The project was built in 1953. Now, was it 1963? Wait a minute, wait a minute. Let me see. Yeah, 1953, because it was being built when I moved back down to Los Angeles. They were getting ready to tear Bacelon Home down.

WH: And so they were a replacement for Bacelon [Home]?

HB: Right.

WH: And the people that stayed in Bacelon [Home] more or less moved over. That is something that nobody really knows much about, believe it or not. Everybody I've talked to.

HB: Yeah. I had my barbershop right there, the barbershop right now where it was. That little building wasn't there. When I came, you couldn't find a storefront. No kind of storefront. There's one right on the corner of Lehigh and Van Nuys. Somebody living in that area. It used to be a kind of--it's just a square-back. But you couldn't find a storefront.

I wanted to open a barbershop in 1950, I couldn't find nowhere to open up a barbershop. Like down in Los Angeles you had to start a church or a business or something, you'd go out and find a store. I was going to find a little front out here and start a church. No kind of front to find. It wasn't here. It wasn't a matter of I couldn't pay the rent or something. It wasn't here. And so when I opened my barbershop, this boy built this little building. I guess it's about, oh, I guess it's about 15. Well, I'd say it was about 20. About a 20 by 20 in equipment, divided by two walls. So I rented it when he was building it. I went in, put in for it to use for a barbershop. And a lady rented the other side for a beauty parlor. And that was the only building with a storefront out here. That was the only one for a long, long time.

WH: Services, you were talking about. **Now, Safeway, I think, was the first store that came into Pacoima? Did everybody else lead on the outskirts?**

HB: It seemed to me like Fantastic Blacks came in first.

WH: **“Fantastic Blacks”?**

HB: Yeah. Fantastic Blacks came in first. And, Safeway, I mean the store that came, some builders told us, was called some kind of farmer market. It was an offshoot from a store down in Los Angeles.

WH: **Country...**

HB: Yeah.

WH: **Country Farm.**

HB: Country Farm. Doesn't build that big. And they stayed there for a while until Safeway opened.
Country Farm was the first opened, built in this place.

WH: Yeah. Does it operate in South L.A.?

HB: Yeah. Country Farm. That's why they are first. Then came Safeway.

WH: Those early days there was no business here and this was all different. I really learned a lot from you. It's hard. Most of the people I talked to didn't get here until the 1950s. And they didn't see that very critical part in, what you say, 100 blacks.

HB: But you know who you need talk to? Bill Fletcher.

WH: Yeah, I got him on the list, if I can catch him.

HB: Yeah. He came out here in 1942-43 and I'm telling you, there were only four black families when he got here.

WH: Oh, now you know I'd better hurry up and catch him.

HB: That's a man you could talk to. You know... [inaudible]

WH: Yeah, I got him on my list.

HB: Now, he came out here and started his church with four black families. And mostly--when I got here, most of the people in Pacoima came when I was here on, how would you say? Well, we brought him out here. Like somebody said, "Well, my aunt is back here, and my son, and they want to come out here." "Yeah, send him down." And this is the kind of--he is the man for this Valley. And I'm not talking about Pacoima. He is the black man for this Valley. And everybody, every black person in this Valley, and I say it so often, owes to this man something. Because it was his pioneering that started the thing of moving into this Valley.

He came out here with his wife. Well, I won't tell you his story. He'll tell you about it. His father-in-law, and his brother, and his nephew and their family, and then these different people from Mississippi, Alabama, you know. People wrote and said, "Well, my brother wants to come and my sister wants to come here." He would help them come out. Well, he would go back to home in Alabama. Every time he'd go out, he'd bring back someone.

WH: That's the man I need to talk to.

HB: Yeah, that's the man you need to talk to.

WH: Now with everyone coming here, as you said, the same age group have lived here through these years, getting older, aging, and approaching retirement. Some are; some are getting close to it. I know your involvement with senior programs. What do you think of the community as it is now? You think it is going to be supportive for retirement? Are there enough services?
Do you think that the changing population is, you know, Chicanos moving in and the younger people; do you think that it's going to be conducive for people to stay in their homes?

HB: I don't know. I haven't given it too much thought from that light. But it's... as I said earlier, it seemed to me, from what I can just see, reasons to. I'm not out there in the different civilian committee meeting like that. It used to be when I first--back earlier when I was younger. I came back... [inaudible] and otherwise I kept that one. And I really don't know. It seems like that most of the people, young people who are, let's see, have a stable amount of education and a stable amount of income, they're moving. And to me this is not good for Pacoima at all. We had a meeting on Sunday and a CP meeting. We were talking about trying to keep some businesses from coming out of Encino and Foothill. This kind of thing. Well, my point was that if you don't get some of these things in here, what are you going to do? You got to have something. So I really couldn't speak on that. I just feel that way.

WH: I know that, for example, when the first people came out, the first wave, they were young. And there were no services in the community, such as hospitals or anything. Well, do you think a person could have made it under those conditions? Because you got to be close to service.

HB: Oh, that's true.

WH: I'm just thinking now that some of those original settlers and a lot of them are still here in places they like, as far as having a lot of schools and hospitals and all of those things.

HB: I'm trying to figure out what category am I in now? How many of those people, I'm trying to figure out, how many of those people on Joe Louis Tract that I know. And I knew everyone of them that was there when they came out here. There was a time that I knew everybody, every black person in Pacoima. Everybody because I was the barber. And for a long time I knew every black person in Pacoima.

Now I'm just trying to think. There's the Doyne family. The Lewis family. And we're talking about Joe Louis homes now. And I think there were about fifty of those homes. Okay. Doyne, O'Neill, Lewis's, or Lewis himself because the wife passed away this year. The children are gone. They are all grown-up and gone. They have one son there, I think 16. And I think the Tokens are there. I don't see them anymore. But I think--I don't think--I wouldn't make a decision based on that. I would eventually say there isn't 15 of those families on Joe Louis. I would venture to say. Because I knew most of them, you know, when they moved up. They have been moving out for years. Do you ever know Tiesdale?

WH: Sure. They're still here.

HB: No.

WH: Al and Roxy.
HB: No, not that Tiesdale.

WH: No, a different one?

HB: Yeah, James Tiesdale and Grace.

WH: Grace Tiesdale.

HB: Yeah. She was the ...[inaudible] for black women.

WH: Yeah, I knew her.

HB: They lived in Bacelon Home. Their son and my old son are along the same age. They moved in to builders' home. When Michael finished high school, they moved to West Los Angeles. And that has been a trend. And naturally at this point they have--both of them were teaching. They have got their family stable and economic, and so on. They moved away, to Los Angeles.

WH: Or Granada Hills, Sylmar.

HB: Right, right.

WH: Even up here to Lake View Terrace.

HB: Right.

WH: I made contact with a couple of the senior clubs. The one they called Lewis was here. And then the one that Ed Lewis works with over in--I can't remember the name. But you know I was talking to some of the people there. Either came out to be with their children, or something like that, and stayed.

HB: This is the most case you'll see.

WH: Like this case.

HB: Right. This is the most case you'll see. Last time I was there about three years ago, there was one person that was there in that group that was in the Valley when I came here. I think they used to live down here. A real black lady. She had a sister. A sister or mother? And her daughter and her son-in-law, and they had two boys. They lived down here. Her sister was run over by a train, down there on Vaughn and--no, Paxton was that road. Paxton wasn't through. She had to go across in this area where now Vaughn had crossed San Fernando Road. So in 1958 or 1959, somewhere in that line, there was a move to close Paxton. To close Vaughn and open Paxton. Okay, and that was moved to bring ... [inaudible] Paxton at that time. And at a place down there they were doing things for food and stuff.

WH: Springfield?

HB: Certified Grocery.
WH: Yeah.

HB: Well, there was a move to bring that in. Some of them were fighting to keep that out. We had some funny ideas. Another time I think we feel that the fight progressed.

WH: What about--you see you had your RSVP program. The people that it reaches, those are the ones that I'm interested in. I should say that I don't know how I got interested in gerontology. That's one of the newest, legitimate--I call it legitimate. That got together sciences, and my field is sociology. I went down to USC and that's where I got my doctorate. And my option was gerontology, the study of aging, because about the year 2000 all these war babies, the baby boom, are supposed to be kind of critical. So I guess that's why I'm interested in aging. I've been working with the seniors here and contacting them as I go through organizations. So I'm getting double mileage right now.

HB: Oh. You have the history.

WH: Of course I would. I'm trying to contact as many of the group as I can. Does your RSVP have any official club that it works through or is it just run through the church which picks up individuals?

HB: No, no. I don't see how that comes about. I have been inactive, you know, in different things. I feel that my ministry is dealing with the total man. Because of my involvement in so many different things, I don't get called on often. A lot of times I can't respond and I'm not equipped to do the kind of thing that I'm asked to do. So I would call to come to a meeting. In fact, I'm on the board of the L.A. Council of Churches. Well, let me tell some particular details on that. This is totally run by the L.A. Council of Churches. They are the sponsor. Our church is not the sponsor. They are housed in our building. And one of our members is the director of the program. But our church is not the sponsor. I'm on the Board of Directors of the L.A. Council of Churches. Thus, they expect me to give the kind of administrative work that is needed from the Council. Thus, I'm involved.

Now, who they reach? What is designed to do? It helps seniors be active, help them be active. Help them be active by working in non-profit places, such as hospitals, convalescent homes, churches. Anything that is non-profit. What they do and what the program is to do is to take these people to these places, give them a meal, and pick them up, deliver them, backward and forward. And whatever expenses they incur during that day in the line of their duty, then this program takes care. The program here, they have about five persons on the payroll. The rest of them are secretaries and van drivers, and two aides.

Now how that happened, how that goes? They have a pickup. Let's see. Pick up the person at the same time of the day. Some of the workers, they got to be 60 or over to be working in the program. Some of the workers drive their own car. There's somebody in the West Valley. They want a part in the program. They drive their own car and then give their mileage. The program pays their mileage for the use, or for what they're incurring--the expense. And this is how this program works. It's the action.
WH: Um hum. I just wondered, I'm trying to find as many pockets of seniors as I can. This isn't even anything to do with what we're doing now. But I was just wondering if you had a club at your church of seniors.

HB: Yeah.

WH: You do?

HB: We do. Reason they formed the club, they have not, you know, you might say they're not really fully organized. They're called the Advanced Age Group. We've set them up, oh, some months ago that they might feel a part, not feel left out, that there would be--deal with things on their own level. Excuse me just a minute. [pause] I've got a film to do.

WH: Yeah. Time is running out. I really appreciate it. I'm really learning so much from you. Now one thing that we kind of overlooked, I think. Is there anything else about Hillary Broadous, the man. I know about your many, many awards, and for the record I should get some of them on the tape.

HB: Let me give you this. I think this will--

WH: Hey, have you got something printed up? Let me see.

[End of Interview]