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William Huassmann
August 22, 1972

Interview conducted by S. Herbert Evison
Transcribed by Beverley A. Foltz
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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
OF
WILLIAM M. HAUSSMANN

INTERVIEWED BY S. HERBERT EVISON
August 22, 1972

Tape Number 144

WILLIAM M. HAUSSMAN – 1906

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FINAL

(Tape Number 143 & 144)

TYPED BY: Beverley A. Foltz

April 8, 1981

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Herbert Evison: Today is August 22, 1972. I'm Herb Evison, and today I'm out in a very hard-to-find place in Arlington, Virginia, and it's the home of William M. Haussmann, and that's H-a-u-s-s-m-a-n-n. Bill, let's start this off by getting on the record some of the basic facts of your life, including when and where you were born and something about the family you were born into.

William Haussmann: I was born in a small suburb just outside of Philadelphia, June 28, 1906, of parents who had come here from Germany but not the same part. My father came from Stuttgart, which is in Wurtemberg; my mother from a small subdivision of Saxony. She was a very blond person. He was very dark. I should have been red headed, but I wasn't.

William Haussmann: I lived there, went to school both there and near there, attended the University of Pennsylvania from 1924 to 1928, got my degree, Bachelor of Architecture, from the University of Pennsylvania in 1928. I am married, we have two children and seven grandchildren.

Herbert Evison: Let's get a name of the lady you married and when.

William Haussmann: When. Oh, brother! That's a question you shouldn't have asked. Her name is Marie. Her maiden name was Vroom, V-r-o-o-m, which is Dutch. My wife is partially of Dutch ancestry, partially Welsh, partially English. 1934 - and she'll kill me! That's not the right year.

Herbert Evison: Well, let's not even tell her.

William Haussmann: Don't let it be known.

Herbert Evison: And you say there are two children?

William Haussmann: Yes, a son who is now living in Texas but just about to move to St. Louis, and a daughter who lives in Eastern North Carolina, and they're both married with children.

Herbert Evison: And how many grandchildren all together?

William Haussmann: Seven.

Herbert Evison: Seven. Touché. I've the same number.

William Haussmann: Well, good.

Herbert Evison: From a son and a daughter. Now, you got your degree in architecture in 1928.

William Haussmann: Right.

- Herbert Evison: And those were high flying times for architects and landscape architects and engineers. There was a chicken in every pot and two automobiles in every—
- William Haussmann: Two cars in every garage. Yes, that was the theory at least. They wound up selling apples.
- Herbert Evison: What did you do first when you got through school?
- William Haussmann: When I first got through school, I got a job - jobs here and there doing anything that I could find, and as you know, things were not good. I had a job as an interior decorator; two other ones with men who manufactured and designed wrought iron. One was Samuel Yellin, who, in his day, was oh, undoubtedly the best wrought-iron designer in the country.
- William Haussmann: I did have a job with an architectural firm, and I had it when a friend told me about the possibility of working for the government. So, I send for an application, filled it out, forgot it. Six months later they asked me to come to Yorktown. I stopped in Washington, met Arthur Demaray, and Charlie Peterson, and a day or two after drove down to Yorktown. As a matter of fact, I drove completely through it, and was on my way down to Newport News and finally stopped, I asked somebody where Yorktown was, and was told, "You've gone through it. Turn around and go back."
- William Haussmann: That was to work on the Yorktown Sesquicentennial in 1931, which was my first job with the government.
- Herbert Evison: You worked under O. G. Taylor?
- William Haussmann: Under O. G. Taylor and Charlie Peterson. That was the eastern office of - what did they call it?
- Herbert Evison: Plans and Design.
- William Haussmann: Plans and Design, I think. They changed its name so often, that I don't quite remember. I don't think I have it now, correctly. There were two offices, one in San Francisco, one in Yorktown. And the one in Yorktown worked primarily, to start with, only on the Sesquicentennial, and then, of course, came along the Colonial Parkway. We did, or I did, practically all of the bridges on the Parkway, - bridges and overpasses - all of which were very, very colonial in design, and required research and whatnot, - and also did some restorations in Yorktown. The Swan Tavern was one.
- William Haussmann: And also, the first restoration of the Moore House – I have to say “the first” because it was restored twice - but my restoration was in order to make the house useable for the Sesquicentennial. After that it was restored very carefully by Perry Shaw & Hepburn of Williamsburg fame. Williamsburg was the Rockefeller endeavor, you know.
- William Haussmann: Then we were all moved into Washington, and a variety of things, - I considered myself to be an expert in the design of comfort stations, but

other things did come in, some things in the West, and eventually among lots and lots of other things which we played with like - oh, goodness - Shenandoah, the Great Smokies, Acadia, things again in Yorktown, things in Washington, and I found myself eventually in Seattle in connection with the McKinley Park Hotel. I don't recall just what year that was, but that was something I did, or went out to do, with about 48 hours' notice. Of course, that was not unusual in the Park Service.

Herbert Evison: Did you design the McKinley Park Hotel?

William Haussmann: Yes, I did. I would have to say I designed the first part of it. I don't know who did the second part when it was increased in size. There were also a dormitory and a heating plant, - they were the original installations there. They were changed later, but I don't know by whom or just how.

William Haussmann: There were many restorations in Philadelphia, in Washington, in other places, and, oh, one of the interesting things but considerably later - I hope I'm not going over this too fast for you - was the Washington Carillon, the Carillon Tower. I went to the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe to do a lot of research, although the building itself was done by a Dutch architect.

William Haussmann: And then I began to have a lot of experience with recreational buildings. The National Park Service for years did all of the buildings for the District of Columbia Recreation Department. I believe it no longer does them, but it did at that time. I designed most of those over the period of a good many years.

William Haussmann: During the war, the Second War, I did all of the bridges, overpasses, and whatnot on the Suitland Parkway. That was a military road, primarily to get from Camp Springs to the city. Fortunately, it was never needed for the purpose that it was originally designed for. And also, the bridges (at a somewhat later date on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway), just the federal part of it from Washington to Jessup, - I think, - Maryland.

Herbert Evison: I think that's right.

William Haussmann: And also, all of the bridges at a still later date on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, when it was extended from Rosslyn to the Beltway. I designed or supervised the execution of all of these bridges and several more on the Maryland side, that is the Maryland portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

William Haussmann: There's a Virginia portion, as you know, on the south side or whatever of the Potomac, and a Maryland portion of it. Among other recreation structures, there were the Harry T. Thompson Boat Center and a nature center in Rock Creek Park.

Herbert Evison: Did you design that?

William Haussmann: Yes.

- Herbert Evison: Well, my wife and I commented on this. Today I wondered why that should be the most popular, probably, of all the things you have done. And I said I thought that was properly so because it was done for children. It is a structure which was designed for one of the phases of an education of a child. And it's a fascinating building, but it's fascinating for the use which is made of it. Of course, the people who operate it are doing a beautiful job.
- William Haussmann: The boat center was recreation in another direction, to get people out on the Potomac.
- Herbert Evison: Now, all this time you were working - much of the time you were working on National Capital Park matters.
- William Haussmann: Yes, that's right.
- Herbert Evison: I suppose you were a part of the - what used to be the National Capital Parks Office of Design and Construction when there were three of those, EODC, WODC AND NCODC.
- William Haussmann: Oh, yes, that's another thing. I suppose you could say I organized it, but I didn't start from scratch. We were basing it on what the other two agencies, had done. I went through a period of gestation and birth with this thing and carried it on for another year or so until it was sort of able to stand on its own two feet. Then I retired to do something else I wanted to do, which was to see what I could do as an architect myself, - for me, not for the government.
- Herbert Evison: That was in what year?
- William Haussmann: That was in 1963, May of 1963.
- Herbert Evison: Well, you just retired yesterday. I retired in 1958.
- William Haussmann: Was it that far back, really?
- Herbert Evison: Yes.
- William Haussmann: Ah! And prior to that I had done also a couple of things for the NCODC, National Capital Parks, the headquarters building, which is at 1100 Ohio Drive, and a very large maintenance building, the use of which I think may possibly have changed a little, but it was their main maintenance structure at that time out on New York Avenue.
- Herbert Evison: That replaced the one that had been behind the Bureau of Engraving and Printing?
- William Haussmann: Right. You have a remarkable memory. You know, I can just barely recall that structure. There's nothing there now, of course. It was all demolished but the New York Avenue one replaced that.

- Herbert Evison: Yes. Then there was the Carter Barron Amphitheatre. And we want to come back to that.
- William Haussmann: That was 1950. That covers general categories, I think, fairly well. You were talking about NCODC. Well, you know as well as anybody, perhaps better than most, how many times things have been reorganized that they got to the point at which people used to say the current reorganization was the reorganization of the reorganization of the reorganization. It was during one of those that NCODC was set up and I became the chief of it.
- William Haussmann: Prior to that time there had been the National Capital Region, of which I was associate chief of the construction part and at the same time, Bob Horne, of course, was the chief. I was also the chief architect, that is the chief of the architectural branch. The chief architect is something else again. This went on at various times all the way back to 1931 through 1963 just sort of climbing up the ladder to chief of the NCODC. That was the last job I had in the Park Service, and I enjoyed it thoroughly.
- Herbert Evison: One of the things that I've been struck by - you mentioned the fact that you found yourself increasingly involved with the design of recreational structures. But I was impressed with the number of bridges that you built; you seem to have worked into that as a specialty of design.
- William Haussmann: Yes, and you know, sometimes I wondered how that happened. Of course, I had done those at Yorktown on the Parkway - or some of them, at least - and I guess my name became associated with this sort of thing, "Bill Haussmann, he does bridges." Well, the old Bureau of Public Roads, - which, of course, underwent many reorganizations of its own, very fortunately I think - adopted the idea that bridges were architectural in their nature, as well as purely engineering.
- William Haussmann: And, of course, I could not agree with that more. I was the chief of the architectural branch, and before there was an architectural branch, I was for a while the only architect on the staff. The bridges I am speaking of were done for the Park Service. So, for those which were done around Washington I was just simply the natural guy to do them.
- William Haussmann: Here I was. I had done some. I was very familiar with the Bureau and its way of acting. They knew me. And we worked together very, very well. There are a few bridges on which I think we worked together exceptionally well. They had as years went on some younger designers who came in, and we did the Spout Run Bridge, which I once said was the only thing I had ever done that I found no fault with whatever. Everything else I can tear apart, but that I still can't.
- William Haussmann: And two bridges of a rather unusual design, this is the Cabin John Bridge in Maryland, just down below Montgomery Meigs' very famous bridge which he designed in the last century, a great, huge arch; and downstream a few hundred yards is this one which I did, which is concrete. And it is

not really an arch. It's a bridge on stilts, sort of, with a hollow box "arch" construction.

William Haussmann: And the pleasure in doing that sort of thing with the Bureau was working with young people with fresh ideas who had a feeling for the esthetics of bridge design and who worked with me and I with them. So, we produced a few structures which I think are quite interesting. All of those on the George Washington Memorial Parkway from Rosslyn on up, on both sides, are all largely concrete. The older ones on the Suitland Parkway are stone, that is, stone-faced. I like them. I enjoyed doing them, but there is no, - if there is such a word, - contemporaneity in the design of those bridges. They are if anything, sort of medieval in aspect, I guess. That was the Gilmore Clark influence. Gilmore Clark was responsible for the design of all of the bridges on the George Washington Memorial Parkway from Rosslyn to Mount Vernon, and they became sort of a prototype of the kind of thing which one does around here. So, for year we did them like that. Eventually we outgrew it.

Herbert Evison: We were fortunate, as I remember it, in having a quarry within reasonably good reach out there in Maryland, which had a varicolored stone, - bronze, grays, blues, purples, what have you, - that they used in those bridges. I've always assumed that they did because I knew of that quarry.

William Haussmann: They did, and that quarry still exists, and as a matter of fact, I'm using some of its stone in a building which I am doing now.

Herbert Evison: Really?

William Haussmann: Yes. It's a perfectly beautiful stone, and it lends itself to that kind of structure very well indeed. We use that, which was local material in combination with granite, all of which, I guess, came from North Carolina, and all from the same general veins. Some of it is gray. Some of it is sort of pinkish, but it is basically the same material.

William Haussmann: That which is pinkish has a little iron which has filtered in, heaven knows how many eons ago, to change the appearance. So that was used. And the combination of that stone, the North Carolina stone, and the local stone is what gives those masonry bridges, I think, their attractiveness, and they have held up very well. They still look well.

Herbert Evison: Oh, yes. I think they are really handsome bridges, and that makes me think of many bridges on the Blue Ridge Park- way, where I strongly suspect there still was Gilmore Clark influence through Stanley Abbott.

William Haussmann: There could very well have been.

Herbert Evison: Don't you think so, because they used very many bridges there which have the same general appearance as those on the old section of the George Washington Parkway?

William Haussmann: I would think that. I would also think perhaps through Charlie Peterson, who, of course, was for a long-time head of the Eastern Office of Plans and Design.

Herbert Evison: Yes.

William Haussmann: And, of course, some of the things which were designed were often influenced by them, and they were seen by him, and he made suggestions. Since he admired the kind of work that Gilmore Clark did, I think that may have entered into it, too, besides the sort of thing that Stanley may have done.

Herbert Evison: Now, here's another interesting facet of this thing. You designed bridges. But when everyone thinks of a bridge, one thinks of it as an engineering job, the design of a bridge. So, you had to be both an architect and an engineer to become a good bridge designer?

William Haussmann: No. I'm glad your voice went up at the end because today this does not work this way. Bridge design today is so vastly different from what it once was, that it would either have had to have taken a man who was both an architect and engineer, which I am not, or conversely, cooperative design between an architect and an engineer.

William Haussmann: Basically, the engineering was worked out by the Bureau of Roads. And when the problem required particular esthetics - I shouldn't put it that way, but when it appeared to necessitate more than the current amount, an unusual amount of architectural design, say, something which wasn't just an ordinary getting from here to there, then we had a very good chance to work together.

William Haussmann: On the other hand, sometimes the basic design was mine, and it was up to them to try to make it functional.

Herbert Evison: I see.

William Haussmann: One bridge which suddenly came up is the connecting bridge over the George Washington Memorial Parkway from the airport access. Now the whole thing goes over to Route 1, which I designed (the overpass, that is) over a weekend, because they needed some idea of what could be done in a great hurry.

William Haussmann: That was one of those weekends when the mind works, you know, sometimes better than others. So, I went back to the office and spent, I guess, most of two days with 68 pencils and whatnot and turned-out sketch after sketch more of them great, rather flat, arches, getting down to the maximum span at that time - it's since been exceeded - of what you can do with an arch like that. And when we had something which I thought I liked, we asked them, work this out. So, they worked it out. It really was no particular problem for them. A lot of those designers were pretty brilliant people.

William Haussmann: And there were also - and I think this is important - there were also some men there who were highly practical, extremely patient and not the imaginative kind of designer but a very pragmatic, practical group of men who were at the same time willing to go along and do whatever they could to make the ideas which we developed work out.

Herbert Evison: I think that has been a very interesting and profitable discussion. I've learned something from it. Now there's another thing, one of the things, I think, that Herb Kahler mentioned when he wrote me about you was your having designed the Carter Barron Amphitheatre.

William Haussmann: Oh, yes.

Herbert Evison: And that reminds me that not long since, I taped Irving Root, he credited the late Donald McHenry with having really discovered the site. He wasn't looking for an amphitheater site, but he uncovered it for some other purpose, but it was a site that Donald McHenry spotted which was chosen finally for the Carter Barron Amphitheatre.

William Haussmann: Now, that could very well be, but I must say I cannot remember, but I would not doubt it for a moment. It was a natural amphitheater site but, curiously, it was a double amphitheater. It was an amphitheater, that is, two valleys with a small spine in the middle. And to create what was done, the spine was removed, combining these two valleys together to make one much bigger one.

William Haussmann: And the acoustics, which we tested by simply going down to the bottom and talking, were very good. You never know if they're going to be or not. They had to be augmented, of course. They had to be amplified electronically, but even the natural voice did carry very well there. Now, Donald may have done this discovery. I remember tramping all over that woods, and it may have been - it must have been with him that I did it, because I think he was the chief naturalist at the time.

Herbert Evison: Yes.

William Haussmann: That being 1950, I think.

Herbert Evison: Yes, just about that. Now, you've told me about one of the characteristics of that site, that bone that you removed. And how by the grace of God or something, it ended up with good acoustics. What problems if any, did you face in the design? I presume, having designed it, you were concerned also with its construction. Did you run into any problems or any unusual situations with it?

William Haussmann: I don't know whether anyone would disagree with me about this, but I would say we had problems with it from the beginning to the end, and the reason - not in design so much was because it was done for the Sesquicentennial Commission, and the Sesquicentennial Commission, like a great many clients, kept changing its mind about what it wanted.

- William Haussmann: It was originally intended to be something very simple and to seat, if my memory doesn't fail me, only 2,500 people. And it grew and grew, as the Sesquicentennial program grew and grew. And naturally it became, oh, I think 45 or 4,600, a very large concrete platform, big enough to put an opera on, and we did (and did in a hurry) a great deal of research on this thing because speed was one of the important things.
- William Haussmann: After the research, - and we got a great many people in on this, - we worked very hard to get the drawings out. I think Bob Horne would have more problems with construction than anyone else because it was done by a series of contracts. There was not, as I recall it, one general contract. There must have been five or six, which makes it, of course, quite difficult to supervise; and drawings were being made as work progressed. The architectural drawings were all made at the beginning, but the structural ones not.
- William Haussmann: And as I say, we called in a great many consultants, some of whose ideas we used and some of whose ideas we did not use, some of whose ideas were ahead of their time - perhaps just a little. Today if we were to do it, we would probably do what many of them had suggested. But money, of course, was also another thing. The Commission wanted a lot, but they wanted to spend, let's say, as little for that lot as they could, which is, of course, not unusual. Clients are basically like that.
- William Haussmann: I think we gave them a great deal for their money, and it was a lot of fun to do. As I say, we researched a great many things. We researched stage design. We researched seating design, the shape of the bowl, which I think is described as an inverted - it can't be an inverted catenary. I guess it was parabolic. It's a bowl which is designed on the mathematical principle of the farther up it goes, the steeper it gets to be. There would get to be a place at which you'd have to stop.
- William Haussmann: In other words, it's not a straight line. Each seat is above the row of seats in front of it, but by an increasing amount, as it progresses. And there were sort of building code requirements, although locally there were almost no requirements at that time for the design of a thing like that. There are now, but that was an unusual thing and the only thing of its type that I know of at that time anywhere in the Metropolitan area.
- William Haussmann: There were other amphitheaters - one at least - but of a totally different design and for a totally different purpose. This was, of course, designed for Faith of Our Fathers, which lasted just two years. And by a very odd coincidence - and you will not believe this - I get Newsweek, and as I heard you walking up the walk to my front door, I was reading an article about Paul Green, and Paul Green was the author, playwright - whatever - of Faith of Our Fathers. And Faith of Our Fathers is neither a play nor a happening nor—
- Herbert Evison: Is it sort of a pageant?

William Haussmann: Yes, it has everything in it, ballet, music, instrumental, and voice, dancing, anything you could think of which would explain what he was trying to explain. This is a historic episode or series or episodes which he was trying to present and by any means which he thought would best do it.

William Haussmann: For some reason - I don't know what the reason would be - it did not turn out to be a very successful thing. At Williamsburg, of course, they have done something like that for years. At Manteo they have also done one for years. And I believe there are several others where they have also gone on for a long time. But this lasted only for two years. I think that's right. And then it was used for - and still is - of course, for a variety of other things.

William Haussmann: The Feld Brothers have operated it for, oh, goodness—

Herbert Evison: Fifteen years?

William Haussmann: Perhaps. And they put on the summer program designed for the type of person who goes there now, who is usually rather young and interested, of course, in contemporary sound, which produces—

Herbert Evison: Just noise.

William Haussmann: —music that I don't care much for. Having discussed this with my grandchildren just last week, I'm right fresh in my mind about it.

William Haussman: I discovered just what the difference is between what I like and what they like - not the same at all.

Herbert Evison: During our coffee break - and a very welcome one it was - two unusual projects in which you were involved were brought into the conversation, I think by your wife in both cases. One was the - what did you, how do you call it - the Concert Barge?

William Haussmann: Yes, that's what it was called.

Herbert Evison: Used at the Watergate.

William Haussmann: Yes, one of the concert barges. There were three or four, actually.

Herbert Evison: Oh, really?

William Haussmann: Yes.

Herbert Evison: And, of course, the other was one of the most unusual reconstruction and restoration jobs the Park Service has ever done, undoubtedly - the Ford's Theatre job, and I think we ought to get on the record anything that you have to say about both of those jobs. Let's go to the Watergate first.

William Haussmann: Well, there have been, as I said, quite a few concert barges anchored at that location. The Watergate was designed years and years ago to provide just that kind of thing. The steps lead down, of course, from the Lincoln Memorial to the lower level. And barges, so called, have been anchored

out in the river or some things have been built on shore - all for the purpose of providing summer music.

William Haussmann: As time went on, of course, and National Airport began being used more and more, and Dulles came into the picture, so much sound was generated that it became a wee bit unpleasant. But they still do use it. The particular concert barge that I am most familiar with was the most elaborate, I guess, of all of them. It was done not too awfully long after the war, and it really was built on a barge. So, when the other - come to think of it, we always think of it as a concert barge. It was built on a military or a naval barge - I'm not sure which - and other people in the Park Service and I traveled around and looked at these things. We finally found one down in the James River. We got it as surplus for, I guess, very little, if any cost, and erected on it a barge, which was actually an acoustical shell very carefully designed. I'm not responsible for the design of the shell. I'm responsible for the drawing of the shell.

William Haussmann: But the shell was really designed by RCA Victor, the RCA Victor acoustical laboratories in Princeton, it was a very complicated design, and they did this without any cost. They were glad to do it. They showed me how it could be done, why it was done that way, and we designed it, or drew it, rather, and it was called a, believe it or not, polycylindrical diffuser, and that's exactly what it was - polycylindrical - many cylinders intended to diffuse the sound.

William Haussmann: The sound was diffused by bounding against these polycylindrical shapes, which were made out of plywood with a hardwood base. They were in different sizes, as I recall it, and the structural supports for them were all somewhat different, so that you did not get any lateral transfusion of transmission of sound. We worked this all out acoustically. Sound hits these things and bounces off them about the way light bounces off a mirror, for instance. The angle of incidence is equal to the angle of - what is it? Diffusion? Distribution? (Refraction)

William Haussmann: So, we worked that all out from the location of the seats. So, we knew what it was going to do, and it worked pretty well. I could say more than pretty well; there were a few dead spots but by no means the number of dead spots which any preceding barge had produced.

William Haussmann: Then included or added to that was electronic—

Herbert Evison: Amplification.

William Haussmann: Amplification, yes. So, the combination of the two worked very well. But, of course, the electronic amplification would amplify only the sound which was produced. So, it was necessary for that shell to be properly designed, so that the sound produced in it would be amplified, and the sound which you got, hopefully, was the same as the sound in the shell. And it worked rather well.

William Haussmann: The rest of it was dressing rooms and that sort of thing for other uses. But that was the Concert Barge. There was a model made of it - I have often wondered what happened to it - done by Rudy Bauss, you may remember.

Herbert Evison: Oh, yes.

William Haussmann: A beautiful workman. I mean everything he did was absolute perfection. I have downstairs a framed sketch which I made of the amphitheater which was given to me when I retired. It had been framed, and the frame is birch.

William Haussmann: It has seven coats of varnish on it, each coat carefully rubbed down before the next one was put on, and that, of course, is one of my great prizes - a sketch which was made to show on television when television was fairly new and made in a great hurry and made as an imaginary thing.

William Haussmann: I had a pretty good idea of what it was going to look like, but we had very few drawings on it. And it looks like that, actually. Anyhow, that was the Concert Barge, and it eventually wore out. It was intended to be used only for a short length of time. It was used for much longer than that. I don't know what eventually became of it. It doesn't exist, of course, any longer. It has been replaced.

William Haussmann: One of the funny things about that concert barge is that someone from the Australian Embassy with whom I had lunch one day said, "You know, I wonder if, when you people are finished with that, we could buy it." And I said, "For what purpose?" And he said, "Well, to use in either Sidney or Melbourne." And, you know, every once in a while, I have a mental picture of that barge being towed by a tug over the Pacific Ocean, going up and down like this, and it amuses me every time I think about it, because, of course, it would never have made it. Naturally, it would have been at the bottom of the Pacific somewhere. But I thought: What a funny idea!

William Haussmann: Well, that was that concert barge. Now, Ford's Theatre, of course, goes way, way back, and there are a great many people who can tell you a great deal about it. Sutton Jett can tell you about it, and maybe he already has. And Randall Truitt can certainly also tell you a great deal about it.

William Haussmann: I won't go into the history of the building because that would take up more time than you could possibly have. But the history of the restoration is not at all that lengthy. It does go back, I would guess, though, probably about 20 years. It was talked about on occasion, and we tried to get all the information on it we could over this period of time.

William Haussmann: We put together drawings, several sets showing what could be done with the building, and every year the Interior Department would ask for an appropriation. Every year they were turned down. Suddenly one year, much to everybody's surprise and amazement, the appropriation went through, and there we were with a necessity of turning something out.

What they appropriated was something over two million, one hundred and some odd thousand dollars.

William Haussmann: We went into the restoration of that, with the most careful, painstaking research it was possible to do with the information available. As you may know, Matthew Brady or one of his employees - of whom there were many - photographed the interior of the theatre in every direction - except one, unfortunately - the day after Lincoln was assassinated, the reason for that was for use in some - I don't quite know how to put this because they weren't sure. But obviously, somebody eventually would have been caught and would have been accused of the assassination. They knew who had done it, of course, because it was seen by thousands of people at the time it happened.

William Haussmann: These were record photographs; they were enlarged, and we reconverted these photographs by a reverse perspective. A photograph, of course, is a perspective of something you've seen, a two-dimensional showing of a three-dimensional actuality. So, we reversed this and came back to the third dimension as nearly as we could.

William Haussmann: He photographed it, as I say, in every direction except straightforward from the stage. We have no information on that. But we knew what it had to be. So, I think that the building as you see it - I hope I'm not boasting about it - is about as close to a restoration of what the building originally was, as it could be.

William Haussmann: Reports were written on it and relied on very heavily. About the time that I left the Park Service we had just let a contract to a local firm of architects who were very well known in the field of restoration, and I did actually go to work for them, not for that particular reason, but because I knew these people. I eventually did do a lot of work on the restoration drawings.

Herbert Evison: After you had retired?

William Haussmann: After I left, yes. It was a continuation of the work that I had been doing.

William Haussmann: And I want to add one more thing to that, and that is that what we were able to do here as architects was due to the fact that so many people in the Park Service had spent so much time on accumulating material on it. Randall Truitt, I think, of all people, was the most enthusiastic, the most optimistic for years, that it would eventually be restored, and he was right. And other people who worked on it and contributed so much in the preparation of the report, which was the basis for its restoration.

William Haussmann: What we did was to develop the information which the report produced. We did further research, looked at other theatres, and there are not many done about the same time, only one I can think of. There were two more which had been torn down just a few years before. That was a great pity. We should have investigated them, but we did not. One was in Boston; one was in Baltimore.

William Haussmann: One we did investigate was in Wilmington, North Carolina, of all places, which was built in - I think it was late in the '50s, when Wilmington was a fairly prosperous town, being a port. And we used some information we got from that and other sources; we read many books, - no book written at the time, but one written before the time, one written after.

William Haussmann: So, it was really a fascinating thing to do. It's being used for other purposes now, of course. They have a sound and light production there. But the interior, I think, and will say again, was about as close, with the exception of the contemporary lighting, heating and air conditioning and wiring and all that sort of stuff, but, excluding those, I think the interior is just as much like the interior must have been, as it would be possible for a building to be.

Herbert Evison: Now, were you the architect in charge of the drawing of plans for this restoration?

William Haussmann: That is actually the way I have constantly referred to myself, as architect in charge. Macomber and Peter were the architects, both Mr. Macomber and Mr. Peter were expert in the field of restoration. But I was what one might refer to in architectural parlance as the architect in charge of the drawings and of the supervision of the work from the architectural point of view. And I spent the better part of two years doing that.

William Haussmann: I have done a lot of work in restoration and enjoy it to the fullest. But that was by all odds the biggest. Work in Yorktown, which I mentioned, the Swan Tavern, work here in Washington for the Park Service in Falls Tavern; the Old Stone House, which was a lot of fun; the Peterson House, which is the house in which Lincoln died, directly across the street from Ford's Theatre. Now, on most of these, I didn't actually bend over a drafting board and do the drawings, I supervised the execution of the drawings. I had a great deal to do with the restoration of the Morris House in Philadelphia, which was a house which was occupied by Washington one winter during the Revolution. And a very great deal of fun because the house, even when I saw it the first time, was still very much the way it had always been. And there were records of what people had done to it. The interior finish was the original interior finish. We were able to produce the original colors on the walls, one of which made some of the people most unhappy. It was what they did at the time, a duplication of wood but in paint. It was to be operated, I think, by the Germantown Historical Society, it was called. And they came in and they saw that, and they were horrified.

William Haussmann: That was, I think, at the time when Arthur Demaray was director. And I told him what their reaction had been. And he said, "Bill, do you think that is the original color?" And I said, "I'm positive about it, it had to be. It was the first thing on the original plaster." And he said, "If that's the way it was, that's the way it's going to be. Don't change it because somebody doesn't like the color; if that's the way it was, then do it that way."

William Haussmann: And other things, some very new. Since I left the Park Service, I've done one or two. But that is the great proportion of the group. I like restorations, I'm thoroughly in favor of restoring what we can. It is always better to restore a thing than it is to build something which "looked like what was there." In Ford's Theatre, of course - the government tore out the whole inside, and if I do say so, it was a stupid thing to have done, stupid in more ways than one. So, we had to attempt to just put back what we think was there, and I still feel, as I've said twice already, it was a successful job.

William Haussmann: But in things like the Morris House, and the old Custom House in Philadelphia, those were and still remain, when they were restored, just about as they had been. So, the word restoration in this case is correctly used. It's not a reconstruction. There has always been a great deal of discussion as to how those terms should be used. To me, a reconstruction is putting something back, something which had disappeared, and a restoration is to restore it as it was, but on the basis of largely what you have to work with.

William Haussmann: I admit, this is a little ambiguous, but that is the way I use these terms.

Herbert Evison: I'd like to ask about that old building up on the Canal which I think is now a museum, up at Great Falls.

William Haussmann: Oh, the old Great Falls Tavern, yes. Yes, it is - or at least it was the last time I saw it being used as a museum. Now, that was built as a tavern, and in two pieces. The original part of that building is literally one of the original lock houses, of which there were a great many. And then, about in the '40s, or thereabouts - (1840s, of course) - they decided - I hope I have the right dates - to increase the size of it. And they added on the front part, which is the part that you see now when you photograph it. It's a very photogenic unit. That was a tavern, with presumably on the first floor, public rooms, and on the second floor sleeping quarters, bedrooms. People could come down from as far as Cumberland, I guess, to Washington or from it, because the Canal went across the river on the old aqueduct and down to Alexandria.

William Haussmann: But it was, about one night's journey out, I would imagine; one night before you got to Washington. So, using it as a tavern - it was built definitely to be used as a tavern, the big part of it. And at the same time, they of course, did over later the original lock house which became a part of the old building.

William Haussmann: It's a fascinating building, it's a very interesting, very photogenic building.

Herbert Evison: Now, did the Old Stone House involve any particular problems of treatment when you—

William Haussmann: Yes, it did. But there again, it was possible, without too much difficulty, to really restore that building, because we had some records, and by

careful research, almost of an archeological nature, really, we were able to determine just about what that building was.

William Haussmann: We were able to determine quite accurately what it looked like, because the outside had not been that much changed. We were able to even find out what the original roof had been, and you can climb up to it there and see it, because we put a bubble over it to protect it and illuminated the roof.

William Haussmann: It was built in two parts. The front part was probably four-rooms and a cellar. And it was probably a tavern. Then the back end was put on, and it consisted of a kitchen with an enormous fireplace. And a room up above it, a very nice one, built out of an assemblage of paneling, something we were never able to find out about. But the paneling that is there, I'm quite sure, the paneling that was there, although it must have been gotten from several different sources and patched and put together. But it makes a fascinating room.

William Haussmann: And then there was a bedroom over that, and a flight of stairs. Now, they had been moved. We think we know where the original stairs must have been, on the front part which is the part on M Street. But when the back part was built on, they had to build a little hall and there's a set of semi-spiral stairs which go up to the upper level.

William Haussmann: It probably is what they think it is, the oldest remaining house in the District. Nobody can know for sure, but surely, from its appearance and what we were able to find out, if it's not the oldest, it certainly is pretty darn close to being the oldest.

William Haussmann: It is designed curiously like a lot of Pennsylvania houses. We are not sure about that. It may have been originally built by someone who came down from Pennsylvania, for all we know. But stone houses around here, except for the Canal, were the exception rather than the rule. They were built very seldom in urban Georgetown or urban Washington. I make that distinction because, of course, Georgetown was once a separate city, and it belonged to Maryland, and that's where the Georgetown records are, in Rockville, not in the city. And Georgetown was absorbed into the city, and I think that was something like 1852, again, sometime around there.

William Haussmann: But that house must certainly be, as I have said, if not the earliest, one of the earliest, and probably the last remaining early house, because everything else that was done there was federal and that is not a federal house. Federal houses were built during the Federal period, early after the nation was established. But this is a pre-Revolution, very definitely.

Herbert Evison: You know, one of the very strong impressions that I have from talking with you this way is that you've had just a heck of a good time, a wonderfully enjoyable- and satisfying time, doing these jobs of yours.

- William Haussmann: Well, there were occasional moments which were not, but basically, I liked what I was doing. It was interesting, it was fascinating, it was unusual. And was, as you say, fun to do, for the most part.
- William Haussmann: In every job there are things you would rather not have bothered with, but they come with the job. But basically, the things which I had to do were things which I enjoyed doing - I liked doing.
- Herbert Evison: Well, frankly, I'm just immensely please with what you've had to tell me about it. It's made this extremely worthwhile afternoon for me - what you had to say - and also, of course, from my personal viewpoint, even more importantly, just getting acquainted with you and meeting Mrs. Haussmann.
- Herbert Evison: I thank you very much for it. I'm not going to cut you off if there is a single word more that you would like to add onto this.
- William Haussmann: I never speak in single words. I talked too much and too long, but I think this just about sums it up. And it's been a great pleasure to do this.
- Herbert Evison: Well, thank you.
- Herbert Evison: There was one interesting thing I think you said about the Park Service at the time you went with it.
- William Haussmann: One very unusual thing, and that is the group of people that were there at the time. We were all about the same age, we were all very interested in what the Park Service was doing. We had the philosophy of what the Park Service was doing, very, very deeply at heart.
- William Haussmann: I couldn't emphasize this too much. And I think you'll find or have found from those to whom you have been speaking, that they all felt the same way. It was more than a career; it was a definite belief. And you could get terribly involved architecturally in discussing with people what sort of a thing should go where, and you could discuss this by the hour.
- William Haussmann: It was the philosophy of the fitting of the building to the ground. It was the philosophy of the use of the entire park by people, how deeply should the public be allowed to use this - and if you have watched television very recently, George Hartzog was on just the other night.
- Herbert Evison: In a very beautiful short of Yellowstone and Yosemite.
- William Haussmann: Right. And it took me back; the more things change the more they remain the same, you know that expression. We argued about that thing 40 years ago and it's still a very serious problem, more now than then because there's so many more people.
- William Haussmann: Well, that was the point I wanted to make, the great fascination with what we were doing and the great sense of involvement. That's a much-overused term, but I can't think if—

Herbert Evison: It's a good one, though.

William Haussmann: We don't - we were very much involved.

Herbert Evison: Just as dedication is a much-overused word. But it's true.

William Haussmann: That's a good one there, too. And I have felt it was a privilege to work with these people and fun to work with them.

Herbert Evison: Well, I'd go along with that, after my 25 years with them.

William Haussmann: I thought you would.

[END OF INTERVIEW]