

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

Interviewee: **Robert Glendell Gilmore**

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Interviewer: Karl Baungartner

Transcriber: Sylvia Vacek

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Transcript

BAUMGARTNER: Today is March 18, 2016. My name is Karl Baumgartner, and I am interviewing Mr. Robert Glendell Gilmore, at 1009 Hillcrest, Richmond, Texas. This interview is being conducted for the Fort Bend County Historical Commission Oral History Project.

By way of introduction, Glen was the City Manager for the City of Richmond for almost a quarter of a century until his retirement in 2013. During his tenure he worked the entire period under one mayor, Hilmar Moore.

What is your full legal name?

GILMORE: Robert Glendell Gilmore.

BAUMGARTNER: You go by the first name of Glen. What were your mom and dad's names?

GILMORE: My mother's name was Grace Louise Sink. My father's name was Glendale Gilmore; he just had the two names.

BAUMGARTNER: What are your children's names?

GILMORE: I have four boys. Glendale Gilmore, Edward Gilmore, David Gilmore, and the youngest one is Brian Gilmore.

BAUMGARTNER: And your wife's name?

GILMORE: Mary Hallmark Gilmore.

BAUMGARTNER: When were you born?

GILMORE: I was born Thanksgiving Day 1937, November 25, 1937. My mother always told me that I messed up her Thanksgiving dinner. [Both laughing]

BAUMGARTNER: Where did you grow up?

GILMORE: I was raised in Pecan Park and went to grade school there. This was right after the depression and jobs were hard to get. My dad was working for Reed Roll-Bit over on Navigation Street, and he got a transfer to go work in the field as a sales person in Pampa, Texas.

I went to Junior High four years in Pampa and we moved to Duncan, Oklahoma. The oil field in Pampa had begun to poop out and the one in Duncan was doing real well. I graduated high school from Duncan and went the next year at Oklahoma A&M.

BAUMGARTNER: So that would have been around 1955 or 1956?

GILMORE: 1957. I will never forget that in Duncan I played basketball. One year we played Stillwater High School and I had to guard Moe Iba. The coach told me that I was going to have my hands full, but I think we won the game. I really do not remember. His dad, Hank Iba, was the coach at A&M.

BAUMGARTNER: Hank Iba was a nationally recognized coach who coached two U. S. gold medal winner Olympic teams. Moe Iba was a friend of my brother's and used to come out to our house occasionally growing up.

GILMORE: I only had the one experience; I was just trying to guard him in basketball.

BAUMGARTNER: How did you get from Stillwater to Houston?

GILMORE: The field out in Duncan kind of pooped out, too, and things began to pick up in the shop here, so my mom and dad transferred back to Houston. I wanted to come back also since this was my home. We had neighbors two houses down who worked for Western Electric and at that time Western Electric was hiring people. I put in an application and went to work for Western Electric and started a career there that lasted 31 years.

BAUMGARTNER: They were affiliated with AT&T?

GILMORE: AT&T was a huge corporation. They owned Bell Labs, all of the western Electric facilities, the Sand Hill Corporation and the railroad in Chicago. People do not realize how large an organization AT&T really was.

The largest factory we had was in Chicago. There were 22,000 workers at that one factory! They still paid them in cash. You went to the pay window and got your pay envelope. It was a real, real enjoyable career working for them. I learned a lot. I still have a lot of good friends, they call all the time, and it was a good experience.

BAUMGARTNER: I did not realize that they were that big. That's bigger than the City of Richmond! You were also going to college at night?

GILMORE: At night if I was doing the day shift and if I was doing the night shift I would go in the day time.

BAUMGARTNER: What did the company do? The big companies in that era were in manufacturing?

GILMORE: We supplied everything for the Bell System, whether it was rope, a vehicle, a telephone set, just anything they bought, we supplied it for the Bell System.

BAUMGARTNER: Do you remember your first work there?

GILMORE: When I first went to work we had these creosote cross arms that are affixed to telephone poles. They would come in box cars and we used to have to unload those cross arms out of those box cars. It was like 250 degrees in the box car! They were creosoted and you would get that creosote on you and it would burn.

BAUMGARTNER: Tough work. Did it get better?

GILMORE: Later we were working right across the street from Weingarten's Bakery on Navigation and right down the street was Maryland Club Coffee. You could smell the coffee roasting and them baking all that bread. We didn't have any air conditioning; so all the windows were open.

BAUMGARTNER: Companies like that, were they integrated back then?

GILMORE: No, they started integration about the mid part of my career, in the 1950's. I remember we hired a black supervisor from Weingarten's who knew nothing about our business but they had to try to start getting integrated.

BAUMGARTNER: You said you were there for 30 years.

GILMORE: 31 years. I graduated from that up to a shop supervisor in different sections in the shop.

BAUMGARTNER: You left there and ended up coming to the City of Richmond as the City Manager. What kind of work did you do there to prepare you and give a resume?

GILMORE: Two houses down from where we lived in Katy was where Jack Tyler lived, who was the current City Manager of Richmond. Jack told me that he was going to quit and that I ought to think about sending a resume. He used to come down and borrow tools all the time. I was always working on an old car, and his big deal was a Mustang.

BAUMGARTNER: I remember Jack. In the late 1980s I went through a county program called Fort Bend Leadership in West Columbia. A group of different people were assigned to little cabins. My roommate was Jack Tyler.

GILMORE: I went through that course too, later.

BAUMGARTNER: So Jack Tyler suggested that you submit a resume to him?

GILMORE: My wife's great aunt, Mildred Hallmark, lived over here, and Mildred told Mary that there was going to be a job opening in Richmond. She knew that I was looking for something else and so I found out from Jack where to send the resume. I put it in the mail expecting I'd would never about it again.

BAUMGARTNER: So what happened?

GILMORE: I interviewed with Hilmar, George Wingate, and E. G. Guerrero, the Mayor and City Commissioners. I met with them on a Wednesday and Hilmar wanted to know if I could come to work that Friday [both laughing].

BAUMGARTNER: What were your qualifications?

GILMORE: I had sent the resume in about September 1 and the City budget needed to come out by October. Hilmar said, "We need a budget, can you do a budget?" My last job at AT&T was the finance job. We would forecast what our results were going to be for the month or the day when I left over there.

BAUMGARTNER: Was that for the facility in Houston?

GILMORE: That was just the facility in Houston. We were doing about a million a day when we were going and when we started out there we had a computer room that covered at least two rooms. It had the old card machines and tapes and a built up floor, with the air came under the floor.

BAUMGARTNER: The air came up for cooling?

GILMORE: Cooling. We had a backup system of batteries in case we lost the power. The batteries were as big as this room, big glass batteries that would make sure the power would hold.

BAUMGARTNER: So you interviewed with Hilmar and he almost asked you on the spot?

GILMORE: If I could come to work and how soon I could I get the budget? I looked at their budget and they had just about rubbed a hole in the paper erasing the different spots on the budget where they made changes [both laughing]. At AT&T we had a coin collector department, we had a switchboard, we did all kinds of switchboards, we did a Teletype, all these different things.

BAUMGARTNER: Were they computer driven?

GILMORE: They were computer driven. At that time we had developed our own model as to how to make it work. There weren't too many different budget models on the market way back then, so we did our own. There would be one for the employee salaries, one for social security, one for health insurance, and right on down the line. When I came over here I did exactly the same thing, just with a different account names. I took the telephone set department, and went through and I changed all the names to the street department and filled in the employee's names and made the model so it would work.

A city is not supposed to make money. The city's goal is to break even while a corporate goal is to make money. So what our guys here were doing in preparing a budget, they would fill in everything that they needed and see where they were short and then work a budget from there. Well if you have a computer you can very easily come up with the fact that if you want profit to be zero you can set it for that, and then you can come back and look at all the reductions that you can make to zero it out.

BAUMGARTNER: Hilmar hiring you on the spot like that, would you characterize this as his normal approach?

GILMORE: No, I wouldn't. I heard from two different people that about 15 candidates had put in applications for that job.

BAUMGARTNER: He must have seen something in you. Of course, he was a shrewd judge of character.

GILMORE: He knew his people.

BAUMGARTNER: Earlier you were telling me about your college studies and mentioned that your major was math with a minor in psychology. Did the college experience give any background that helped with city management?

GILMORE: I think that psychology was a big help and I actually tried it and used it, and it actually works. They were showing all these different experiments in psychology and whatever, and I always remember one way to stop an argument is to just agree with the fellow and that stops it right there. He has nothing to come back on.

BAUMGARTNER: Coach Bum Phillips, talking about how to deal with the public, used to say "the best advice that I can give you is to nod and grin, just nod and grin" [both laughing].

GILMORE: I used that. In talking to people, people are quite strange animals. They all have their own different ways to do things. You have to size up each one and see how the...

BAUMGARTNER: Everybody has to be treated a little bit differently.

GILMORE: A little bit differently, and it doesn't do a bit of good to argue with somebody. If they are in there hollering about their water bill, throwing it down or whatever, calling you this and calling you that, then you can just say, "Well okay, that is probably true," and go on down the road. One thing I think that is kind of neat that I thought someday I would write a book about, but it doesn't look like I'll get around to doing that, but every month we cut off about 100 city water accounts and it's surprising that the number does not change that much, it's always the same accounts and it is generally the same amount.

BAUMGARTNER: When you say you cut them off...?

GILMORE: The city's residential water bill accounts. We have to cut them off for nonpayment. We give them 30 days to reconcile their books and pay for it. If they don't do that, we have to cut them off. The surprising thing is that of that 100 people say that we cut off, about 70 of them live on the south side and 30 live on the north side, 30%. You can always expect a person from the south side to complain when he comes in.

He is going to say I have lived here my whole life, my family is so and so, and you don't have any right to cut me off. You have to let him go through his spiel. The poor guy from the north side will come and say, "Man, I don't have the money. If y'all will just turn it on I would sure appreciate it." It's just a difference between night and day of the attitudes that people have just because where they live here.

BAUMGARTNER: The south and the north side, the north side are predominately ethnic minorities?

GILMORE: The poorer side. They were always appreciative.

BAUMGARTNER: So you said when we were talking about the hiring process that it wasn't typical for Hilmar to make a snap decision...

GILMORE: I don't think so. I think he interviewed quite a few people. But of course you got to remember what the city back in those days was kind of like, if you grew up here and you played football you became a policeman, or if you grew up here you can always go to work for the city, or whatever. We were just getting out of that phase when I came here. In those days there was just one person who had a degree and he had to have it because of his wastewater permit. Today the guy in the Park Department that sprays the weeds has to have a certificate that says that he has been trained to do that job.

BAUMGARTNER: An Applicator's License. So would you say in hindsight that the city has benefited because there are now more vigorous academic requirements?

GILMORE: I think it has benefited big time. We have people who are qualified now.

BAUMGARTNER: The city has evolved quite a bit, as far as more professional backgrounds and credentials in the employees. Do you think that is like a Richmond phenomenon or is that just part of society today and Richmond is a sleepy little town following along?

GILMORE: It kind of has evolved, but it evolved because the city can financially afford it. When I came here our total income was like \$200,000 maybe and I am sure now it is over two million and we can afford to do these things. In the past, when I came I was the finance director, I have been the police chief, [both laughing] I have been the fire chief, or just whatever needed to be done. When Jack Tyler was working here they actually got a uniform they wore and he was telling me, he said, "Oh boy, that's really going to be neat, because they furnish you with a uniform every day." I never once wore a uniform. I wore a coat and a tie. I felt like that should go with the office being represented. But the city kind of evolved, I think, because it became able to afford to evolve. Before it couldn't. Sugar Land had us blocked, Rosenberg had us blocked.

BAUMGARTNER: What do you mean blocked?

GILMORE: As far as revenues, as far as businesses, different things like that, we didn't have any other choice. I kind of get discouraged sometimes, people will come in and they say, "You have to get some more grocery stores over here," or, "You got to get a Walmart," and, "You got to get this or you got to get that." We don't do that. It is always a deal between a buyer and a seller. The city can help, but legally there are just certain things that we can do. I mean we can give tax abatements, but it has to meet certain requirements and so forth. You just don't go get a supermarket until the supermarket decides to come here.

BAUMGARTNER: By the same token, the area out here in Rosenberg territory is getting lots of economic growth now because the stores have decided they want to come.

GILMORE: It's not because city council voted. We would have voted a long time ago if that were the case.

BAUMGARTNER: That's called free enterprise.

GILMORE: That is exactly what it is called, so there is a certain process that has to happen. You have to go through it in order for these things to work. We just work to a point where we meet the requirements for those things to happen.

BAUMGARTNER: So when you started here, it sounds incredible, but Hilmar Moore had already been mayor for almost 40 years, hadn't he? [Both laughing] So what was that like? He must have known everything.

GILMORE: He knew every politician, he knew how to get money, and he knew anybody that we needed to help. He worked with Ross Perot and knew him personally. The Walton's, he knew them all, and all of that helped. I used to get so upset to hear people sometimes say, "Oh, Hilmar held us back." He worked night and day as best he could to do things that were legal in order to encourage these people to come and you can only go so far or you are breaking the law. He was one of the most honest people that I ever been around.

BAUMGARTNER: Do you have any stories from when you worked for Hilmar?

GILMORE Hilmar told quite a few stories from time to time. One story I wanted to tell you that he told me, there used to be a pool hall between the bridges down there. I am sure the building is gone now, but every Saturday night they would go down there and play poker.

He and the county judge and the sheriff and all these people would come and play. Well, somebody in Houston put the word out that they were betting on high school and college football games and that was illegal, so they were down there playing cards one night when all these people busted in the doors. These guys came in with their guns drawn, told them all to keep their hands on the table and don't move. I think it was Johnny Hruzek who was sitting next to Hilmar and he had a stack of money in front of him and he kept running his hand up there real easy trying to pull that money back and Hilmar told him, "Put your hand on the table. They got a gun. Put your hand back up there." [both laughing]. When they got ready to leave one of the local reporters, said, "We will see you later, mayor." That got the Houston reporters excited and they all jumped Hilmar wanting to know what the mayor was doing playing poker with the county judge and the sheriff on Friday night.

BAUMGARTNER: You know I used to play Texas Hold'em with Hilmar at the Fort Bend Country Club. He played dominos there a lot, top dominos player, but poker was not his game.

GILMORE: Every now and then I would go there to get him to sign some official paperwork, if we needed a deed signed or something. Everybody would be playing dominoes and have their dominoes out in front of them and Hilmar would fold his dominoes down so I couldn't see them. [both laughing] He wanted to make sure no one saw his dominoes.

BAUMGARTNER: Yes he was a top dominos player, but as smart as he was, poker was not his game because he was too honest. So he was mayor from 1949 to 2012. All the time that he was mayor, he had to get re-elected every two years, or four years?

GILMORE: Every two years.

BAUMGARTNER: Every two years, for 60 years. Did he spend time running for office, or choose not to do any of that?

GILMORE: He didn't do any. He didn't put a sign up; the only sign put up was by A. D. Eversole's Barber Shop right here by Lamar Drive and Thompson Highway. It was put up because A. D. did it, and Hilmar never spent anything.

BAUMGARTNER: I would read or see something about him being referred to as a politician, as mayor for 60 years but to me it wasn't an accurate characterization because I didn't see him as a politician. He was just a city leader and never ran for office. He was just continuously reelected without all the garbage you have to go through.

GILMORE: One time these people here on Hillcrest Drive near where Hilmar lived got to raising hell that they wanted their street redone as it had a bunch of pot holes, so I went to Hilmar and said well it looks like we are going to have to do Hillcrest because it's getting pot holes. He said, "Well I tell you what. Don't you do Hillcrest until every street is done." [both laughing] and he didn't do it. There were some little streets on the north side that probably had never been blacktopped that we did first, but that was Hilmar.

BAUMGARTNER: Was he involved much in personnel decisions? It seemed like he was kind of involved in everything.

GILMORE Well, I won't say that. He felt like if he hired a good staff, that whatever the staff recommended, that's what he was going to do. He told me that he had always done that whomever he worked with, the King Ranch or whatever, he would get good staff people and they would be the ones to make the decisions. He would tell the staff, "Y'all make the decisions and anytime you need any help you come and see me, otherwise we will go with what you recommend.

BAUMGARTNER: You know I frequently hear when we talk about different cities' operating structure, a strong mayor versus a strong city manager. What does that mean?

GILMORE: Well it means that the mayor is more involved. I would say that Rosenberg is a strong mayor city because the mayor's got her hands into everything that is going on; and Richmond is more a strong city manager because they the mayor doesn't get involved unless there is a major decision or some problem comes up. In Rosenberg, I think, their mayor has an office down there in City Hall. Hilmar never once had the key to City Hall. He said, "I don't want a key to City Hall; I don't want people thinking that I came down here and did something." He never had a key one.

BAUMGARTNER: Wow, 62 years as mayor and no key.

GILMORE: This is another good example of him. He came to work one time, he had his boots on and his cowboy stuff on and it was a time the river was up. From his knee down he had mud all down his pants. He came to a city meeting that way, and I said, "What in the world have you been doing that you are all wet and muddy?" He said, "I would never ask a man to do a job that I wouldn't do myself." He was down there riding horses getting cows out of the river with the other guys who were doing the same thing. That's the kind of man he was and he meant that; it wasn't just something that he said. We were so fortunate. I kind of rub it on Terri Vela that I had the good times, and she's got to pick up what's left over now times. [Both laughing]



BAUMGARTNER: Terri was finance...

GILMORE: She was Finance Director. See what I told you awhile ago, when I came I was the Finance Director, and all these other things but it came to a point...

BAUMGARTNER: You were Finance Director and City Manager, you had multiple capacities.

GILMORE: Anything that came up that we didn't have a department for, well that ended up being my job. And the State became getting more and more involved in financing. They put in a new set of rules. Just to be a finance director you could spend almost two days out of the month or two weeks out of the month going to school and updating on finances. It came to the point that I couldn't do all that and I said its time.

BAUMGARTNER: Did you hire Terri?

GILMORE: Yes I did.

BAUMGARTNER: She certainly deserves everybody's respect.

GILMORE: I think she does. We are so fortunate that she came and stayed with us.

BAUMGARTNER: She was fortunate to have worked for Hilmar and yourself.

GILMORE: Her time with Hilmar was a little short, but we are really fortunate that she is available and doing what she is doing.

BAUMGARTNER: Well, there really wasn't a whole lot of expansion in Richmond, but it is picking up with Houston about to cross the river.

GILMORE: It is because the George Foundation is getting ready to sell something, the Wessendorff's are ready to sell something, and prior to that they wouldn't even talk about selling anything and that's why the expansion is beginning to come.

BAUMGARTNER: Availability has started, and now annexation is taking place.

GILMORE: We are already boxed in. We were boxed in before. We can only grow so many miles, maybe another three or four square miles, and that's it.

BAUMGARTNER: A few square miles, in real estate, its location, location.

GILMORE: That's right; it's going to make a difference.

BAUMGARTNER: So what about Hilmar's wife, Evalyn becoming mayor? I think it is neat that she took over the reins; she certainly has the credentials also.

GILMORE: Well it has been good working with her and its good she was agreeable to do that. There is a core group here of people that are trying to change the city big time and she could see that and if she hadn't run, I don't know what this city would be today. Hopefully we can continue getting some people in there that are knowledgeable enough. So many people get into politics who have an agenda; so many of them are, "What's in it for me? What can I get out of it?" We do not need those kinds of people, we need some good honest people that are willing to work and take the city on down the road. I mean we have come a long way in 100 something years, and we've got a ways to go; but we have to keep some good people in there, or we are going to be in bad shape. We have been able to fight it off. If we can continue to fight it off it we will be okay.

BAUMGARTNER: In other areas, ethnic relations are not easy for a city. How would Hilmar assist or be a facilitator as far as how Richmond has evolved?

GILMORE: Old-timers say when desegregation came and these towns around here needed to desegregate, that at one time there were some cafes' in town that wouldn't serve blacks or Hispanics. Hilmar told me he talked to the owners of restaurants in Richmond personally and convinced them that segregation wasn't going to ruin everything.

They came around. He was so proud that we never once had one demonstration over racial matters here in Richmond.

BAUMGARTNER: Would you say that he never got any particular credit for it or recognition for it but was definitely an influence?

GILMORE: He set the tone and it's been followed to my knowledge ever since.

BAUMGARTNER: One night I was playing Texas Hold'em with Hilmar at the Club and the guys started talking about political races. The poker players were very conservative, local businessmen and lawyers and so forth, very conservative and old time conservatives. Hilmar piped up and said he had voted for Obama. The rest of them weren't impressed. It surprised me to think of Hilmar, as a conservative, large landowner, longtime resident, you wouldn't think of him doing something...

GILMORE: That surprised me, too. I think he was fed up with the politics in Washington. As to why he voted that way, that it had been going on for so long and so much of it has been under the table and not on top of the table, I guess he could see a difference in Obama, but Milton Rabinowitz used to give him a hard time about voting for Obama, and he would just get to arguing with Milton [both laughing].

BAUMGARTNER: There is nothing that gets people going like talking about politics.

GILMORE: I will tell you another little funny story about Hilmar. It started out not too good. This was maybe 10 years ago. He was at church to do something and he tripped on the sidewalk and fell and he hit his head on a brick built up for roses. Of course, if you hit your head you bleed pretty bad. They called 9-1-1 and he wouldn't get in an ambulance. So they called me and I went down there. He's standing on the sidewalk bleeding pretty good, and I said, "Well, why don't we go on over to Polly Ryon or Oak Bend Hospital and get it taken care of and then we will go from there?" He finally agreed but he didn't want to.

After we got there for a few minutes Evalyn showed up. He wasn't too happy. They were asking him when he was born, this and that. He was telling them that he had been over there enough and that they had all that stuff, he didn't need it. Hilmar argues with the hospital a little bit, looks over at me and said, "Come on we are going, we are leaving." He and Milton and I were scheduled to go to lunch. I look over to Evalyn and her eyes were real big and I kind of asked her, "Well, what do you want to do?" She said, "He is going to do what he wants to do." [both laughing]

They had him temporarily wrapped up on his head and we go by and picked up Milton and we go to the restaurant, got us a seat, sit down, and Hilmar's got blood just dripping down his forehead. People are looking like I beat him up and brought him to lunch. (both laughing). He finally quit bleeding, we ate our lunch, and I took him back home.

BAUMGARTNER: Do you remember what Hilmar's comment was about that statue they built for him? They had it in the newspaper, he said "This statue business, that was the worse damn decision that I ever made in my life " and followed with, "Hell, I thought statues were for dead people." [both laughing].

GILMORE: It was really an honor to work for him. That statue, I don't know if you looked at it lately but we finally put on there his name, the year, and I put a little saying on it that Hilmar always said. It was his dad that said it to him, "You do the best you can with the amount of money you have for the most amount of people." Anyway when we got to figuring out what we were going to put on the statue as a Hilmar quotation we considered quite a few. There was one time that he had invited this guy to go outside and settle some bull, but that wouldn't go on there. We ended up putting on that one his dad said which Hilmar frequently repeated.

BAUMGARTNER: What was it again?

GILMORE: "Do the best you can with the amount of money you have for the most amount of people." He said his dad told him that if he did that he would really enjoy the job.

BAUMGARTNER: Wow. He kind of got thrown into the job.

GILMORE: He did; they elected him at Rotary Club.

BAUMGARTNER: About like you were hired as City Manager. How things have changed.

GILMORE: I think he got hired the same day.

BAUMGARTNER: What are some of the fun things you ever saw Hilmar do or that you guys ever did together?

GILMORE: One time he invited us to go to the King Ranch to hunt when he was on the King Ranch Board. He took George Wingate, myself, Dalton, Mark Skiba and we went down there and hunted for four or five days. Everybody killed a deer and they processed it and prepared it however you wanted.

We loaded up to come back and we got to that first check station where they check you coming across the border, where you have to pull over. They check for illegals and so forth. We drove in a couple hundred yards and Hilmar says, "Well, damn I forgot my turkey," and does a U-turn right thru the esplanade. [both laughing] We are all riding together and he made that U-turn and of course Hilmar only drives full stop or fast so he's gunning it to go back down there and get that turkey and I look up in the mirror and I said, "Hilmar I think those red lights are following us". He said, "What do you mean?" "Well look in the mirror, they got their lights on, I think maybe we ought to pull over." So we pulled over, and he explained that he was the mayor and he had forgotten his turkey [both laughing]. They let us come back.

BAUMGARTNER: What was the King Ranch like? You guys got a real bird's eye view of it. That was a privilege to be able to go to a place like that.

GILMORE: It was. He took that hunting vehicle he had, that red-dog truck and we rode all over. He carried us up to the main house, which we couldn't go into because you had to have a coat and tie on, but he carried us around to where the carriage house was and it was just a real privilege to go down there.

BAUMGARTNER: How did he get on the Board at the King Ranch that seems so distant?

GILMORE: When Mr. George died Hilmar bought all the cows from the George Ranch. Actually he ran the George Ranch for two or three years and then he bought them out. They used to buy all of their bulls from the King Ranch and he got to know them fairly well down there, and then he was put on that board. I think he was on the board for two terms, four years or six years. We stayed in a real nice little house when we were there.

BAUMGARTNER: Was it a camp house?

GILMORE: It was better than a camp house. It had a fireplace, cooking stuff, they served breakfast for us, everything. If you killed something they go get it and dress it and take care of it. It was wonderful.

BAUMGARTNER: What was that institution, 500,000 acres or something like that?

GILMORE: It was a crazy amount. We hunted in one pasture they called the Norias Division, that was 65,000 acres. We drove in and never crossed the fence. It was right down on the coast.

BAUMGARTNER: They say Hilmar loved to hunt.

GILMORE: Quail hunting. He kept a logbook of how many quail he got every year and where he shot them. Ray Moore hunted with him but wouldn't ride with him anymore.

BAUMGARTNER: Oh, Ray Moore, Jack's cousin...

GILMORE: Ray and Milton Rabinowitz and Hilmar were going to Kansas to a pheasant hunt. There was a railroad track beside this highway they were on, with construction going on at a bridge with a little gully. All the traffic was stopped on the bridge.

Like I said, Hilmar was always wide open or full stop, so he remembered that there was a little crossover on that railroad track just behind them so he makes a U-turn and goes back there and gets on the railroad track and drives across to the other side and then they get on the highway and take off. From then on, Ray wouldn't ride with him [both laughing]. Hilmar told me about how they used to play baseball down there in the Thompson oilfield. They had a baseball team and they would play semi-pro ball there. Every time I was around him I would learn something new and it was just great being around him and listening to his stories.

BAUMGARTNER: It is the end of an era.

GILMORE: People just don't realize; they just don't know what we lost when we lost him. Of course he was 95 when he passed away, so he lived a full life. He was quite the man.

BAUMGARTNER: A wonderful life. I look on it now; I really didn't talk to Hilmar until he was seventy-plus, he must have been quite a character in his youth. You've been having a wonderful life too, a fun life and you've made a difference. Mary's suggesting that it's time to move along. Thank you for having me over and it's been great visiting with you.

Interview ends.

INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: This interview took place on March 18, 2016. Glen was in the final stages of a terminal disease and told me we had to set a time for our appointment because his days were numbered. As reflected in the interview, this did not change his positive attitude, his sense of humor, or the way he looked at life. Robert Glendell Gilmore passed away fourteen days later on April 1, 2016.