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Hoffmann & Hayman Coffee Co.: Rising and shining in tough times

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G.W. Mitchell has always valued its relationships with the community and fellow San Antonio business partners. This community support has helped in countless ways through its history, but none quite like the [Hoffman-Hayman Coffee Co.](http://www.handhcoffee.com/history/) <http://www.handhcoffee.com/history/> factory project in 1932, which jumpstarted G. W. Mitchell's transition from residential housing to commercial buildings during the rough years of the Great Depression.

The Hoffman-Hayman Coffee Co. began with William R. Hoffman, who started a small coffee company under his name in San Antonio in 1899. Hoffman ran his company successfully for just over a decade until his death in 1912. His wife, Wilhelmina "Minnie" Menger continued her late husband's legacy and brought in brothers Gustav and Rudolph Menger to help keep the company running. Later

that same year, William R Hoffmann Coffee merged with Merchant Coffee, owned by W. E. Hayman, and Hoffman-Hayman Coffee Co. was born.

The company thrived over the next twenty years, and in 1914 filled the largest ever order for San Antonio coffee – a bulk purchase carried by eight wagons and sixteen horses to Ft. Sam Houston. Then, in 1917, the company doubled their production capacity when they bought out the Morrison Coffee Company and its assets. By 1922, just a year after G. W. Mitchell began operations, H & H Coffee was selling successfully across Southwest Texas and as far as Oklahoma and Kansas City.

Even as the economy crumbled and employment plummeted in the early 1930s, Hoffman-Hayman Coffee Co. continued to grow. Now selling teas, spices, cocoas and extracts in addition to a range of private label coffee, the company wanted to expand out of their original downtown San Antonio

location. In 1932, G. W. Mitchell started construction on the new H&H Coffee Factory on Delaware street, where they would have easy railroad access for shipments.

Designed by architects Morris, Wilson and Noonan and providing over 16,000 square feet



of fireproofed production space, the factory was hailed as “one of the most modern plants in the state.” The massive building also boasted a giant Crystalvac jar replica on the roof, an advertisement for their highly prized Three Rivers Glass Co. reusable containers.



More than just an expansion, this ambitious project aimed to encourage others to continue building despite the grim realities of the Great Depression. The Mengers specifically favored local vendors and suppliers, finding kindred spirits in G. W. Mitchell and ensuring the construction company's survival despite a weakening housing market. Like Mitchell, the Mengers valued the local community that had brought them so much success and promised new jobs once construction was completed. On

December 21st of 1932, H&H Coffee welcomed the community to an open house event at their new factory, with refreshments, live music, and a variety of product displays.

The original building has undergone several renovations since its original construction, with significant additions to the second story in 1949 and 1955. In the mid-1960s, H&H Coffee Co was purchased as a division of Continental Coffee. The Delaware Street factory was listed for sale in 1972 and is currently being prepared as a historical site. The H&H Coffee Co. building, like the G.W. Mitchell, has withstood the test of time.



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