Barry Young

Hands of Time

M1: Today is what September 27th, 2014? I'm here talking about Ms. Black Evanston and a music group called the Hands of Time. And if I might start with, I'll ask you to say your full name and spell your last name, please.

BARRY YOUNG: OK, my name is Barry A. Young. Last name is spelled Y-O-U-N-G.

M1: And, who was your mother?

BY: My mother was Mrs. [Lunette?] Young.

M1: OK, and your father?

BY: That was, his name was [Aaron?] Evans.

M1: OK. And were they both born in Evanston, or where did they come from?

BY: My mother came from Oklahoma. She was born in 1921. And when she was born, my grandmother moved towards this way in I guess, when she was about seven, eight years old. And been here ever since. But she's passed now. I mean she passed in '81. And my father passed in eighty, no pardon me, '98. And I've been here ever since.

M1: OK. And your father's from where?

BY: He's from, I think he's from, but I'm not sure, but I would think, I really can't say. I really forgot.

M1: No, no problem. No problem. We'll figure it out (laughs)

BY: I'll figure it out down the line.

M1: So you were born and raised in Evanston, basically?

BY: Right.

M1: And what elementary schools did you go to?

BY: I went to Nichols. I went to Foster School first but then I went to Nichols and then Evanston Township, which I graduated in '63 from there. 1963.

M1: OK. Were you involved in any of the sports or anything or activities at the high school?

BY: For the first couple of years, I was involved in track, basketball, and football, for just about two years. Throughout freshman and sophomore years. And after that, I just stopped competing because I wanted to get into grades and stuff and you know, just go from there, because I wasn't doing too well during the first two years so I had to stick with that.

M1: So after you graduated from high school, did you go off to college?

BY: No, I started working when I graduated and I worked at Northwestern University from '63 to '68 and then from there I went to General Finance Corporation from '68 to '83. And

from ’83 ’till 2011, I worked at the American Science Center, which was called Jericho at the time. American Surplus and Supplies, that’s what it’s called now.

M1: OK. Cool. And I see with some of the artifacts that you brought today, you were involved in a music group.

BY: I was. (laughs) Right.

M1: When did that music group start?

BY: We started in 60... Let me see now, I think that was ’67, ’68. So we went for a few years, and then we all had families and stuff, and we couldn’t get out there and go on the road and stuff like a lot of other artists around there did. And we all got married and got children and so we just went off to our jobs, you know, had to support the families even more, rather than start to try something brand new that didn’t make that much money. (laughs)

M1: Whose idea was it to come up with the group?

BY: Well, first of all, Bill [Giles?] and this gentleman here --

M1: Senator Stanley, OK --

BY: And Bob [Cobwell?], they were like in the service together, or not in the service together, say, but they [served?] at the same time, but they used to sing when they were in high school as kids and stuff, through junior high, whatnot. And then Mr. [Leonard?] Perkins, he came in later on and

then they pulled me in after everybody was out of service, and we all got together again, because we all knew each other from high school.

M1: OK.

BY: And so we started off as The Devotions.

M1: OK.

BY: And then from there on, we said, we took this picture back -- some years back, and that's who we said, well look [where we are?] standing in the clock shop. That's the clock shop behind there. It was on Dempster Street. And so we said, well we'll just name ourselves the Hands of Time. And that's what it became.

M1: Alright. OK, so again from left to right, if you could name all of the members here.

BY: OK. First one is Bob Cobwell. This is me very young. This is Leonard Perkins. And behind there, that's Bill Giles.

M1: OK. Thank you so much for that. How long did you guys keep going [00:05:00] with Hands of Time?

BY: For about four or five years.

M1: OK. What places did you perform in?

BY: We played down at the High Shepherd Rail. We played at the, what's that, Checkmate. Even did some stuff around

here too. Some other clubs in Chicago that I can't think of the names offhand.

M1: OK. Some of the clubs in Evanston, were, are there any of the known undergrounds clubs?

BY: Yeah, the 1623 club. And then the one that was on Emerson Street was Bobby's, I think it was Bobby Jones' club. Or somebody had the club on Emerson Street, which used to be the [O?]. What was that place called? I forgot what the name of the place was called.

M1: Was it like a [Sharpone?] right around the corner of Asbury and Emerson, or was it the two story building?

BY: No it was the one that was down next to [Jack and Moss?] where Jack Moss grocery store used to be, which is, I forgot who actually owned that, but I think at the time, I think Bobby Jones was [the owner?] of it. I think but I'm not sure.

M1: OK.

BY: And we did a couple of shows down here. We had [Risaggi?] Clay, who was cast as Clay's ex-wife at the time. We did a show with her at the, it used to be called the student lounge, Levi Student Lounge, which was on Maple Street. We did a show out there with her. We headlined her and we had a couple other groups plus ourselves. And we did little

things like that just to try to get some promotion and stuff.

M1: This is so cool. So this was featured, this was used in the *Evanston Review*?

BY: By the *Evanston Review*. OK.

M1: And this is (inaudible) I saw how they were doing. Did you guys do any recordings?

BY: No we didn't. We had some songs but we never actually recorded them, you know. We had talked to a couple people that you already know, (inaudible) Carlton Black. He kind of inspired us a little bit more to get into it too, and helped us along a little bit as much as he possibly could. Of course we all knew, cause we all was from the same group, same clique, you know, the Jewels and them too. But as far as recording, we never put out anything at all. We just, we did our own recordings at different studios and stuff, which we thought was, independent studios, you know. Some guy in his garage and stuff that would help us make tapes and stuff which I don't know where those tapes are.

M1: That was my next question.

BY: Yeah (laughs)

M1: Do you know where any of those tapes are? (laughs)

BY: Yeah, somewhere along the line we lost them, some place along the line. But we had a few original songs that we did ourselves.

M1: Did you write down any of your songs, like [at least?] the lyrics or --

BY: I think Bob Cobwell did. I'm not sure if he's still got those songs and stuff that we did sing that we all originals. I think that he had, because he wrote most of the songs and stuff during the time. So he would be the one that would have them if he's got them anywhere.

M1: OK. This is fantastic.

BY: And Fred Hunter wrote the Miss Black Evanston pageant song, which I forgot how that went. You'd have to call either one of them other guys, because he's still around here. Bill Giles is, he's in Deloitte, but most of the years he's in Africa, because that's where he's got a dual citizenship. I'm here, and so he's in Albuquerque, New Mexico right now. We haven't seen these other, these two guys. I haven't seen those two guys in probably about at least 10 years. But Bob Cobwell, Bill Giles, I just saw last year. He came through town. And Leonard and I are the only two that are still here.

M1: OK. This is fantastic. What kind of parting words can you use for future generations who aspire to, do anything?

BY: (laughs) I could say if you know, they got the right mindset, just keep going doing what you're doing, if it's something that you enjoy and you can afford to, you know, to be in that type of situation. I mean, you know, once you get a family like we did and [00:10:00] stuff, it's kind of hard to go out in clubs and stuff and work all night long and then have to get up and go to work in the morning [until you like?] the job. And we had a (inaudible) at one time, but then it got to the point where we wasn't making that much money. I mean you know, when I think about the four of us, the most we probably made at these clubs was probably, maybe 200 dollars, and that was basically we had to split that between five people. And mainly we were out there trying just to promote ourselves at the time, but then we know that promotions, we had to go out and do a lot of stuff and you wasn't getting paid.

M1: Right.

BY: And you'd be out all night and then drag yourself in and go to work the next day, you know, in the morning. So that's, if you got this mindset, you really want to do it, just keep yourself together with it and do the best you can.

M1: Look at the outfit here. Did you keep that outfit.

BY: I think I might still have mine. I'm not sure. I don't know if anybody else has got theirs but we had those

outfits. We had purple or lavender, what back in the day was called the [naval?] suits. Then we had a red and a blue Edwardian suit and a red just almost like tuxedo suit. And that was more of a brown and a white with a brown print.

M1: OK. Would you consider bringing one of these over for the archives here?

BY: Bring what?

M1: One of the outfits that you wore.

BY: If I can find one, yeah.

M1: OK.

BY: I know mine is in a mothball somewhere probably. Yeah. I think I might be able to find at least that one maybe. The Edwardian, well I can see. I mean matter of fact, I'll even ask around. I'll ask Leonard, I think he might still have one back in a mothball someplace too.

M1: OK. Are we able to have these for the archives?

BY: Sure. I mean --

M1: I think, you want this back don't you?

BY: Yeah, I'd like to --

M1: Yeah, I was going to say, I'd want this back too. So what I can do is I can scan a copy of these.

BY: Yeah. You know, I'll keep it with you as long as you need it.

M1: OK. Because I need to read up on this and see what I can, you know, put together. I see here is CCC.

BY: I'll give you a better picture than that.

M1: Oh. Thank you. Thank you. So this one, I'll add to our music collection right off the bat, right here. I can keep this, right?

BY: Yeah you can keep that.

M1: Yeah because I see you have plenty of those. But these, you want back?

BY: Mhm.

M1: OK. I might actually have a copy of this. I have to look back in our archives too. Because I think we found this in somebody else's collections, like they were getting rid of a lot of stuff, and as I was going through it, this was in there. But I had to double check. You know, I don't know if it was the whole booklet or just the cover [only?].

BY: The cover. OK that's fine.

M1: And that's what I'm trying to remember. So now that I see this and can put it all together, now I'm going to spend the rest of my life trying to --

BY: Trying to find (laughs)

M1: (laughs) Right. You know, we get a lot of things, and sometimes we don't have enough to put it in a collection.

BY: Right.

M1: So it ends up within a collection of, that we received from a family. So it's not necessarily divided up.

BY: Catalogued.

M1: Right, catalogued in a way that would make sense. We say this came from the such and such family. It'll be [great?] if you add books from this event, newspaper clippings, photo album, personal letters, this might be in there too. But no context, it's just all there, showing that that family was involved in all these things.

BY: Right.

M1: And so now that we have more of a story line behind it, we can build a collection on its own. Because I think this is really good and I think it also complements the cotillion that the North Shore Twelve did.

BY: North Shore Twelve used to do, right, yeah. Right.

M1: That's the correlation I see right off the bat, especially right off the heels of -- because I think the last year was '71 for the cotillion.

BY: Cotillion, yeah I think it was, come to think of it. Right.

M1: And because you're calling this Miss Black Evanston, it fed right into it with the last group that left the cotillion, the last group of girls that were like "we reject" what they [considered?] assimilation, and something that we can

call and show pride in. You know, I was looking at the pictures here and you can see, did the [sisters?] have afros?

BY: Yeah, I think all them did. Yeah.

M1: Yeah, I think [that shows?] a really big movement at that time to do that. So, but yeah, this is perfect. I have to start looking into trying to find exact issues of these so we can build a collection off it. So now I know where the dates are, so I can go ahead and photograph these, and scan these in. This is fantastic. Yeah this is fantastic. Well thank you so much for your time on this.

BY: You're more than welcome. I hope you can really do something [00:15:00] with it.

M1: Oh definitely. I'll stop this recording so we can --

END OF FILE 1

Note: Continues with "Ms. Black Evanston" interview