

**Barry Young**

**Hands of Time**

M1: Today is what September 27<sup>th</sup>, 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

FILE 2 BEGINS

**Ms. Black Evanston**

M1: OK we're starting the recording again. This is Barry Young on the same date, same bat channel, (laughs) with a second part discussing Miss Black Evanston pageant and how it tied

in with the group Hands of Time. So with that note, how did that come about?

BY: Well, as we're, you know, it's a singing group, we [ran into?] people in Chicago. There was a Black woman's organization of, I want to say, society women, if you want to call them that, that had an organization that they introduced us to the Miss Black Illinois Pageant. And we used to go out and do things for them like you know, singing at their tea parties and their dates and their clubs and stuff like that. And they asked us would we be interested, because evidently they liked how we present ourselves. And we said, well yeah, we'll take a shot at it. And that was part of the Miss Black Chicago pageant which runs into the Miss Black Illinois pageant. They were affiliated with both of the organizations. So we said yeah we'll take a shot at it. And he said well it's going to be like in a few months. And this was like, this had to be I think in February. And they said well do you think you can pull it off in the next three, four months? We said well yeah, we'll [deal with?] that. Took a little convincing that we could do it. We had to talk to each other about what we had to do and how we had to go about getting the girls stuff. They gave us a small guideline of what the criteria was supposed to be for the young ladies and stuff.

They'd be in high school or college, had to be from this area only. Even if they went to Northwestern or Teachers College around here, they still could be participants as long as they were under 21. And but only in this area. So we said, we'll put up flyers. So we went to the high school, we went to Northwestern, we went to what's that, national Teachers College, or whatever it is now, and just put out some paperwork for ladies that were interested to call the certain number. And we got quite a few responses from it which was kind of nice, because we didn't think we'd have that many. But during that time, we had I think like three girls from Northwestern, one from the National Teachers Education or whatever that school is called. And another, whatever school was around this area, it might have been a nursing school or whatever. So we got pretty, we had about 15, 20, 25, we had to narrow them down. Then we got a teacher out here, an instructor, to show them how to walk and how to model, how to talk and how to present themselves, as far as walk on the stage and how to execute as far as talking and stuff. So it became a pretty big deal. We got, of course we had our wives at the same time helping out. And we had other people that were friends of ours that helped us out as far as getting around to places that we had to go to practice at, like the 1623 Club or

Foster Center or [Davies?] Center that was student union owned on Maple Avenue. We'd get them back and forth from there to do practices and stuff. That's how that all tied into it. Then afterwards, we were going to do it the next year, but something happened with the pageant, locally I think, and that didn't become a priority, or they were trying to separate, I'm not sure what the [action?] was, but then we didn't get into it after that.

M1: OK.

BY: Who was it, so when she competed, when Miss Evanston finished competing, they went from Evanston and Peoria and someplace else. All three of them, I think it was like five contestants, competed at the Playboy Club for the Miss Chicago pageant. From there you're going through the Miss Illinois pageant. And so our contestant came in second. I think the girl that won, I think she was from Peoria, I'm not so sure, but ours was the runner up. And it was close, they said it was really close, to pick one person who was going to be the queen of Chicago. And then after that, [00:05:00] we just you know, let it go.

M1: OK. I see you had it at the Orrington Hotel.

BY: At the Orrington Hotel, yeah.

M1: They were very helpful with it?

BY: Oh yeah. Yeah. We had our own guy come in and do the lighting and stuff. We had, what was it, I'm sure we had a guy that took pictures.

M1: I'm sure you did too. It's just a matter of who did it.

BY: Yeah. And I can't think of who did it. I don't know if he's mentioned in a book or not. Probably not.

M1: Was it Simmon?

BY: No.

M1: Hmm. Because I know he took pictures for a while.

BY: No, this was a white guy.

M1: Oh.

BY: Somebody that one of us knew from high school that was in photography.

M1: Did he have a photography business?

BY: No, I don't think he did. I'll have to ask. I might have to call and ask around and see if one of the guys remember who that guy was.

M1: And those photographs, do any of them appear in the papers? Were those photographs used in the newspaper articles I saw in here?

BY: Yeah. I think they were.

M1: OK, so I wonder if his name was in here. Because sometimes, unless he was a staff photographer, you know, so [no?] staff photographer.

BY: Those might have been all staff photographers.

M1: Yeah, these are all staff, yeah. Alright. So the staff, you know, it does narrow it down. There's a way to find them. That's the *Daily Defender*. Sometimes there's a staff, Thomas? Thomas English, staff photographer for the *Evanston Review*. For this one. But yeah, it could have been anybody.

BY: Yeah. Right.

M1: This is good though. I need to (inaudible) these.

BY: The staff photographer, that name sounded familiar.

M1: Unfortunately, the Review doesn't keep very good records of their staff photographers. So after they shoot them, and they publish everything, a lot of the prints end up in a box and then the box ends up in the trash, or sometimes they'll donate them to a historical organization. And I've come across that twice, like they gave it to some Northern historical societies and I happened to be there one day and they knew what I was doing. So [he said?] "Come on back back with all these photographs, take what you need." Cause they were going through it too. I said no. Of course, what I would do is look for anybody who looked like us, and then pull them out, and take it back over here. (laughs) So, but I think they kind of go in spurts, where I think the last group I saw was mostly 1980s. So you know,

I saw some people I knew when I was a kid. I'm looking at them like oh my gosh, that's him. (laughs) But every so often, I do want to cross those and see and you know, take on that opportunity. But as far as, I've talked to the Review before, and I said oh yeah, good luck. You know a lot of the staff photographers are actually, you know, they're contract.

BY: Oh yeah.

M1: They're independent. They have their own photos to do. So whatever, you have to find them.

BY: Yeah.

M1: See if they have it and if they do have it, they're like oh I probably do have a box of negatives somewhere, but it's not catalogued. You know, it's just thrown in there and hope for the best.

BY: Yeah I understand that. Well I'll try to contact these three guys and see if they remember who the guy was that did the lighting and the cameraman. I'm not sure if they even can remember now too, but I'll see if I can contact them and find out. And also find out about the uniform. Oh that's the other thing I'm going to do too. (inaudible)

M1: So what we have to do is, because we're recording the voice, and we're going to use it for, you know, future

archiving, research, transcribe, so we need to get your permission to do so.

BY: OK.

M1: And make sure it's done that way so that we don't have [00:10:00] to assume that we have OK to do things so we like to get official word --

END OF AUDIO FILE