

Miss Black Evanston

By Barry Young

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