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WILLIAM HINES

At Benton and St. Antoine, to make this expressway, they dug up the sewers, and they were wooden sewers. The wood had fermented, and it was hard as rock. When they lifted them up, the water was as pure as you've even seen in your life. They were about 6-8 feet long, and they were too heavy for anybody to move. This was truly a part of Hastings. 5015

Walking from here to Belle Isle was nothing. If you had six cents you didn't ride the street car with it, you saved it for a hot dog.

Mr. Barthwell was telling you about the signs that they put on the door during the riot. A Chinese laundry put on his door, "Me colored too." At a cleaning place up there one guy said, "Oh my God, all my clothes was in there. I forgot them." 43

In reference to the era that I was here in the Hastings area the Detroit Paper Station was across the street. That station carried the News, the Times, the Free Press and the Daily Mirror. This was the extent of our little world.

Every house along here was a one or two-story flat. In the middle of the block that's where the Buckner boys were raised. One played the piano with Lionel Hampton. Over them, upstairs was the singing cowboy family. We were all kids together in those days.

The only two family house was were the Quelle Music Store and the Buckner boys all lived. The music shop was in the front, and their residence was in back. On the corner was a barber shop. In the next block was Coles Funeral Home off the corner of St. Antoine and High Street.

When we came here in 1919 Shiloh church as in the basement of the corner, and it was covered over by one of those tents and then they moved into what is still Shiloh Baptist Church. ✓

We came here from the south in 1919, from Albany, Georgia. You started to Bible School at 15 cents a week when you were three years old were were already exposed to some things at that early age. I'll never forget the first address--It was 998 High Street. I was born in 1915. ✓

The first facilities we had for recreation was when we took over the old Jewish Center. Robinson Furniture Store was there, and the first Black hospital was to the right side of the Jewish Center. ✓

I can remember Mr. Barthwell was very close to us. I went to his store and bought ice cream from him as a young boy. Then I went back to him as one of the first Black liquor salesmen in the state of Michigan. Mr. Barthwell had five liquor licenses, so they hired me to crash the market. Mr. Barthwell did accept me, but he let me know hat I had to make my own way. It wasn't easy because my competition was Jewish, and that was heavy in the wine business.

I'm very grateful for the fact that I can remember all of the good things.

The Black businesses....the largest laundry service was Allen Supreme Laundry. He at the time supplied all Black businesses with their coats and their pants. Mr. Porter had the largest Black-owned cleaners. Mr. Howell had the first beauty supply business.

One of the areas that is not talked about, and why our dollars turned over in the community, was the Black number business. Mr. N.....brought that business from Chicago. Our local people here developed it, and we controlled it. Of course it was considered illegal, but that money was put to good use in the Black community with the dollar turning over in the community five or six times. The pick-up man, the lady that wrote the number, pick-up man, the other pick-up man, to the owner. The owner had all Blacks working for his area. The majority of all businesses in our area had the Black input of the number man.

The Brewster Center's original name was Central Community Center. The building was originally the Ginsberg Library. For the first two years we slid up and down that floor. This is a unique neighborhood, and it was occupied by Jewish people at that time. ✓

On this corner was a baker's shop. At the end of evenings, if there were any bagels left over, we got them. ✓

I remember the Swift Packing Company trucks coming down Hastings, and we'd see the boys jump on the back of that truck and throw hams, sides of beef off it. You cooked hot dogs in the alley there called Apes Alley. That was where the tough guys hung around. They were tough, but they never came on the playground, only to watch us. We've seen some famous fights in that area but never on Brewster playground. ✓

Brewster Center here motivated a lot of young men who were headed to stay in the street. I remember when Dave Clark, the famous fighter and stable mate of Joe Louis, had a gang called Blackstone. They were kind of rough fellows in the neighborhood. They then decided to come into the center. We can say that this particular building helped a lot of boys turn around. We challenged a fighting team to come up and play basketball. You know how it was trying to play basketball with boxing shoes. They were sliding all over the floor, and we were really making clowns out of them. After the game was over, it was time for us to go down to their gym and put the gloves on. We all got very sick, and we had to go home.

When Will Robinson came into the city of Detroit, his team was waiting for him. They were already playing. All he had to do was discipline, he and Mr. Leroy Dues down at Miller School.

For our championship games, Mr. John White kept our team up at the Gotham Hotel. We stayed in the penthouse. Mr. White would come

down and sit on the gym floor and watch the games.

Another thing you should know about is the old Erskine Bathhouse. We used to go to there for a nickel. We'd swim there. You know how they would tell when you stayed over two, three hours. Your hands would wrinkle. Then they'd put you out. ✓

John Dancy was a great athlete. He was good at everything. He was one of those people who could call Henry Ford on the phone and say I need to see you and not have to wait a long time for him or anybody else like you. He would say, "I need, not a party, for these kids some shoes to put on their feet." ✓

He had the personality. He could talk to anybody. Never any pretense. We would all get into the back of Mr. Jones' car. Did you ever see nine kids in the back of a rumble seat? We would all get in on a Saturday to play ball in the Urban League. There would be nine of us hanging all over that convertible Dodge. ✓

Then the Urban League was over by Eastern Market. That used to be a cemetery. Then it was the House of Corrections. We used to go over there and watch the guards patrolling the high wall. That was after they took up the graveyard. There's a restaurant that's always been there at Erskine and Riopelle--Roma Cafe. ✓

I remember the destroying of the Gotham Hotel which surpassed all Black-owned businesses at the time at the number one hotel in America, even superceding New York's. This was entirely Class A. Harper Hospital fought us over getting a liquor license so we could have a beautiful lounge. They did everything to stop us. Sure, every Black was aware that that was the resting place for the numbers. That's when the officials discovered how much money was in the Black community, and they proceeded to destroy it when they discovered it.

My experience here was very, very good in terms of my young life because I knew my limitations. There was no bell to ring or no mother to holler, but when the sun went down, you knew where you were supposed to be.