

**Interviewer: Unknown**

**Interviewee: Hamp Hollins “Chitlin Switch”**

**Date of interview: Unknown**

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Interviewer: Just go over a few question briefly before we get started.

(Clips changes)

Hamp Hollins: The word “chitlin switch”...I'm not sure how it originated or how that got started. Uh, being a musician, a somewhere way into my career...they started calling it the “chitlin switch” and I think it was because the fact that...it was going from town to town. It was going from an-and mostly small towns in the south, it was small town and I think that's where that came. From the soul food, things like that. So, I think that's where that comes from and most of the umm bands- at that particular time, had come down from New York. That was the headquarters for these groups as they start New York on down to Washington, DC. Somehow Maryland was back in there-Baltimore, Washington, DC, on down to North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida. Sometimes it would divert over to Florida, back up to Florida line and go out to Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas on over to...in that zone. So, and as also along with that “chitlin switch”, which I were, I think that they played the, the bookers or the managers, they booked wherever they could. See, you didn't have established places as you have now. They were established, but not in the norm as they are now. Say for instance, in Atlanta, you perhaps had a better draw because you had a couple- you had several nights appears. Then after you left Atlanta, that's really were to switch- the “chitlin switch”, which they- course everything was one nighters also. Everybody did this for one night and uh, coming outta Atlanta, then we probably stop in Macon. They pick up the larger cities...first Macon, Savannah and Albany....colors, like that.

Interviewer: You said something interesting, and excuse me for interrupting, but when you said you would hit Atlanta and that sorta were you start to pick up the “chitlin switch”, is that because you were coming in into-

Hollins: I think because we were playing smaller, smaller places. See if you came into place like... first place Macon (please check this) and Macon, I'll say that, that was the next largest town from Atlanta. Well then, if it was a large group somewhere like Count Basie, Duke Ellington and the (don't catch this) for Lionel Hampton, Louis Jordan, uh, well they will play perhaps at the city auditorium, like that. They would do that. So, that was a beau-that would be a very, very... well, it's just like it is now, but then after they left and they would be able to play in small places like the schoolhouses. Uh, it was some places had a big enough large home. Some places, not all and umm so, this is the way where, that, that's "chitlin switch", which came about. Also, the restaurants for people... that you...what are your restaurants now...in Tallahassee. What are your better restaurants?

(Began naming grocery stores and restaurants)

Hollins: (continue) Well, you don't have that. The only place that these musicians had to eat was at places like...the chicken shack...Eldorado (laughing),

Interviewer: Deluxe.

Hollins: Deluxe, yeah. Those places like that and um, for lodging, yes lodging would be done at places like (don't catch that) for guys who stayed overnight...would be done. Of course, the better-known musicians...I can recall Duke Ellington coming in and the hospital at FAMU...the new one, I think it was just completed, I believe it was and I believe those guys stay over on that top floor that summer. I think that what they did and umm that's where I saw them coming out the next morning (laughing) and I quite sure that you know. Groups like that they would try to, you know, the people would try to...accommodate them, you know, best to their probability. I know some places that were done in homes, you know. If it was a really special guest...I recall several known national people...umm that national statue, that was placed in someone house and umm so...it was by invitation. So, that how that would operate. For the museum of smaller statue like...BB King...I'm put Ray Charles in that category too, cause its early years. What's the blues guy? There was a blues guy...he always had a pretty good band. Umm-

Interviewer: Bobby blue's band?

Hollins: Bobby Blues band. Bobby Blues band. The bad guys. Now, these guys, they were original the "chitlin switch". These guys were that because they don't play in these big places

like that. They played actually at the Red Bird. They...I think it was Top Hat. It was a place right up there on, you know right where that water tank up in Springfield. That was-what was the name of that place? It was an old joint.

Interviewer: It will come to me. We used to hear music coming from that night, talking about looking back over my life.

Hollins: Yeah, yeah umm-

Interviewer: I know exactly what-

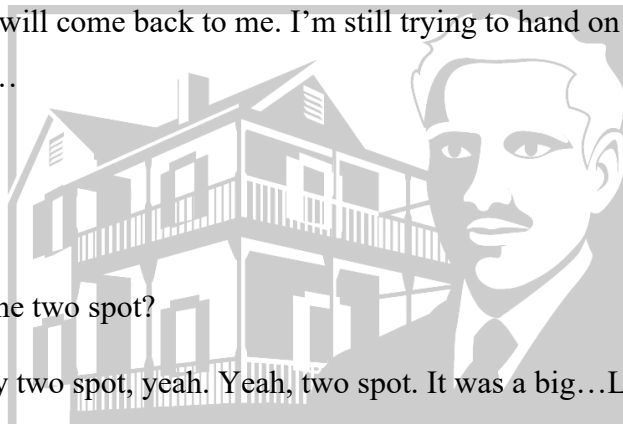
Hollins: Yeah, yeah. It will come back to me. I'm still trying to hand on to that and I know- now these guys, they really...

Interviewer: Spot.

Hollins: Two spot.

Interviewer: Was that the two spot?

Hollins: Yeah, probably two spot, yeah. Yeah, two spot. It was a big...Leopard Bay place (check this), they were my inspiration. Even back in the day, I was somebody (I can't hear what he is saying after this)...And umm these guys, they the ones who ate those chitlin dinners... collard greens, smoke sausage sandwiches and whatever they, whatever they had because you see, those kinds of restaurants and cafés, cafes they call them. They had a steady clientele of people, whereas people had means to deal with them, but these guys did and they were- I can sure you they had some of the best food. I eat a lot and I know it was good because those were the kinda places you could go and get a steak and all that kind of stuff, one o'clock at night or two o'clock in the morning. Of course, you had the restaurants that don't close down until six or seven o'clock in the afternoon. Even today, the large restaurants don't close until ten thirty or ten, somewhere like that. These guys kept right on going, you know. So, I think that was one of the things where that's "chitlin switch" came and these guys playing smaller clubs and like and one thing, I, I know and they played, they really, they really enjoyed what they were doing and they really did. It didn't bother where they played. It really don't. Tell them play right outside there and they hook it up. They would. It never was a problem for them. It could've been here today



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and gone tomorrow and if people understood if they had to and that's how they got their pay, you know.

Interviewer: Just a couple questions on that line or was there any type of schedule where they book in advance? Oh yes. Yeah, it was. They're not temporary. They have that or wherever. And they had a booking agent they can see, uh, that was, I would just pull that when I know Joe Gladstone, who Joe Gladstone was booking, it could've been the growth of the large groups or it could've been a smaller group. I said Gil the SMCR I know earlier in people were screaming for information about other publications that would be essential. I'm not sure where the that the people that you just mentioned, we would know how they would be in because of fact through radio announcements and plaque card at that time was a big fear. Overtown a telephone pole on buildings, things of that nature, you know, and generally came around about the same time each year. Generally. Did you have entertainment warfare, you know, year around

\*starting at 14:00\*

Hollins: In my estimation, Elena Hamilton was...a little bit down, a little bit down and there was this man, Budd Johnson who was a little less than all of them. He- the group was, pretty much basically as good as the others...but he fought this a little lower on then the other guys. He was more like the "chitlin switchboard". Large band, big band had about...16 pieces more like. Five, yes I can remember five saxophones...four trumpets, three trombones, just like that. Bass, piano...drums, practice guitar, something like that. Real swinging music. Umm this group, I remember came every year, throughout the United States. Just to start the year around and come back and wide up in Chicago somewhere like that and another thing, a good thing I remember when I talk to Althemese about who played in the Red Bird and the Royal Palace and all of that. I, I couldn't, I know it had to be Budd Johnson because the fact that they had a stage down there perhaps, not much bigger than this room, not much bigger, Now, you think of putting...14, 15 people up there, but they did. They were there and I'm looking at them and umm I don't know where they put...some of their music on the floor right now and during that time. I don't know you might not be old enough. The big bands with their music in hand and those guys were doing that right there and wasn't missing a beat and it was... fantastic to see that happen and I said, well, you know, as me being a young person say, well why don't they (don't catch what was said), you know. These guys were doing it to them and professionally, too. They don't... fool

around. They really did what they came to do and umm so, he was one that I know and then you had guys like...later years like BB and Ray Wiley. He was here then after he went to California, then got real good after he left and I was told that umm...I was told that he might have gone to New York also, after leaving Florida, after leaving Florida. Also, I know I don't have to tell you that a lot of things, you know, could come from just calling people who, who knew who...was a part of the clientele, because I knew, at the time when I was playing myself, that umm if we played at the Deluxe café, Monday, I remember I played there for a number of years, Monday and Friday night. Well, basically I seen people there every night. Basically, the same ones and umm the older people now, there are a few of them still living, that I see now, that they remembered me from there, you know what I'm saying... and umm I can remember one night I was talking to a guy and umm we were doing something- we were playing this particular tone. It was (don't catch the first name) Hamilton. So, this guy, he was an older guy. He was old-a lot of people would say, "I don't know about that", and he came up and started telling couple of other guys about it and he, he gave us a beautiful story because he was, the same thing you was asking me, he was knew it better than we did because he was there. He knew that he could tell you how well the guys played, how poorly they played, he could do all of that and so a lot of times, these people there- and another thing, I like to do, I don't know where this will come in later...umm, but this been about the second or third I've done. Umm it was a caption in one of our major magazines..., *What happen to Jazz? What happen to Blues?* and I said, "one was that people just didn't go." Christian people just done go to places like that. They just didn't go and so they had no idea of-well they did because I'm quite sure they heard other folk tell them about that and just like the scenarios that we mentioned about the Redbird, the Royal Place, the Two Spot, the Deluxe Café, all things like that. Uh...just the-those people just did not go. They just don't- they could not be catch in there. So, that means that, that clientele, who was listening to music, they were just- that was their entertainment for that particular night. They never thought no more of it and it was like that. Also, I like to mention one thing. I will admit anything being about. I heard the statement, well, the white boys playing the blues, they took that from us. I said, "no, they don't". We gave them to them. We taught it to them. We taught it to them and I said, "here's why." I say, we used to play, we would play blues as the youngsters say cutting up. We would play at these clubs around here and that's how we was making most of our money. Uh, I was just thinking, you take that American Legion back over there, right back over there. See, I was in

college here in 19, in the 50s. Okay, I okay...I played there, the Elks Club... that Shriners club right, its on Monroe St. if you look, it's a Masonic...any place in town, I played at, anyone and um, so I, I said, "we would play the blues right there." So they, they knew, they knew it too, (laughing) it was the same thing we played on this side of town, we did the same thing. So, it to matter with the people, you know because they were here. So, it was just a matter of fact that the only thing, blues for the average person, the Christian people, upper class across people, they liked but they...they don't wanna- they thought more of the symphonies, the concerts, and that kind of stuff like that, which you know not many people go to stuff like that no way, but that's what they were doing.

Interviewer: On the umm payment?

Hollins: Okay, right. That was and I may have to retract back. You asking was there, yes they had booking agencies, who booked as they go from one place to one place, one place to another and they will do it in a manner. I remember this one guy would come down two or three months before the actual tour and put it together. They would actually do a background. Also, the method of payment most times like that was on percentage. They took everything on the door. Guarantees had the key. They had to come on board like that, at that time. Most of like umm...back then it was like umm, it was 60/40. The musicians got 60/40, whoever that was, and the first place got 40 percentage. That's basically what went on for a number of years and also...the booking agency, the, the, the management prior to going wherever they were, they also had to take, in their expanses had to come out...the plank card, any advertisement.

Another Interviewer: That would come out of the booking agency or would that come from the musicians?

Hollins: No, what come from musicians they got a certain percentage. What would happen-the booking agency, the way they are sat up, it would be, if say we going to Tallahassee, he said, "well, Ill cover you and I'll play and I want 60 percent, you got 40 percent." Sometimes it would be 30 percent, but in that range, but the musician themselves, they also, whatever that 60 percent that the manager got or the... whoever, while then after the manager, the manager cut was in there, too. You understand. So, whoever it was, he got his cut and then everybody else down the line. Oh and then, they did that to- within that managers cut, we had that transportation, blah

blah, blah blah. They had all of that within there, too, but that 60 percent, that's what the musicians, the booking agency and all that got.

Another Interviewer: 40 percent to what? Sell out the 60 percent the manger paid out the expenses and-

Hollins: Right, right and umm that's how the money came up until later years and that's where...I say our pride was in the late 50s and all of that. Then, theses guys say, "well, we paying to much money", and then the guy say, "okay, you just give me a guarantee for such and such a thing. What you make, you make." Then, that started.

Another Interviewer: I want to umm...well sense we are talking about money, let me ask apart of a question...natural questions comes up, particular with the bigger names.

Hollins: Right.

Another Interviewer: You know Count Basie, Duke Ellington, of course. What were some of their motivations for doing the smaller towns and all? I mean obviously more world famous bands like them don't necessarily have to. What are they doing it for the money or sense of community or for other reasons?

Hollins: It was...well that's how they made the money. Economical it was. Then, I have to go back to the when the largest stars came in. See they had a national even when it was...even when it was years. From my belief, it was nationals, they had a much broader...public advertisement. That's when-that the differences and I want to bring it up...

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Hollins: But that's when you, let's say the Indiana paper. You got the Pittsburgh Courier; Chicago Defender and I know you heard of the Baltimore, ummm the Baltimore Circuit. Well, these papers was shipped in weekly, you know, they were black papers. They were shipped in- they had everybody you want to see there and then you had other smaller publications. The, the, the natural, the larger group had a national scope up there and they would actually load up. So, I wouldn't say it was for the love of money-economical that was their job. That's how they make money. Uh, they would do, what you call...they would the humanitarian thing. They would do things like that. A big guy like...like big player, matinee, young children in school or something

like that. They would be there, occasionally. They knew how to keep their name out there, you know. They, they (laughing) knew how to do that. Yeah, yeah.

Another Interviewer: Were there areas here in Tallahassee, would they ever play or –

Hollins: Okay. Very, very good question. All, all around Tallahassee, there were places... that these musicians would go. Okay, say like Quincy. There is a place called rivers- no, no. Let me see...Rivers Inn. That was out on highway 90. They would play over there. They would play either at the school or because of who they were, the school or, well, this, this, these particular night clubs, I know. (Don't catch this) where everybody would be. Just about every Friday, or Saturday night or whatever. They have something over there now called Riverfish Inn (verify name)... and umm...don't, don't forget Thomasville. No (laughing), don't forget that.

Thomasville, The Elk Lodge and the American Legion Lodge over there...Cairo...Cairo, the same thing. It was a big club. Cairo had kind of a big place there. I don't know where they was umm-it could've been an old school at one time or something like that. Somebody would've remembered, but uh, Bainbridge, Georgia had a real nice place for upscale people and it was by, umm it was owned by blacked doctor. They were one of the best I've seen. You know, for it to be fixed up nice. The floor was designed, just like this. Nice things just everywhere and things like that. Over there, we-and they play- their band would play all over and things like that.

Another Interviewer: Where did some of the bands like Duke Ellington play here in Tallahassee?

Hollins: Most of the- they would play at FAMU. Basically, like that. It was the old people there. They never played anywhere else, but over there. Now, Lionel Hampton played at Lincoln High school. You know, they give them the gym. You know, room to dance. Remember I was saying that group was the upscale of. You know they play good and I've seen them a couple times at Lincoln High school. Uh, (don't catch this) played in there, too.

Another Interviewer: First of all, you are familiar with facilities at Florida A&M. Did they have a concert hall there?

Hollins: Oh yes for Florida A&M, there was a gym up there. They had Lee Hall. Everything was done in Lee Hall at that particular time and umm...well quite then- back then they all lived on Campus Hill (???). they had many-a lot of stuff going around there. So, that was just from over there, you know. They had ooo- they've had many...they've had- in fact, they had the white



bands over that way back in the, in the...I know it was...might have been in the late '50s. I say it was...you know, to play the dances like that. To the bigger fans, it wouldn't be a pow wow or homecoming, something like that, too. They, they would- you got facilities over there, like the gym and the building and stuff like that.

Another Interviewer: When Duke Ellington and the big names came to town, I assume they would get clientele from everywhere.

Hollins: Oh, they would. It would most definitely be mixed.

Another Interviewer: It would be in the local paper?

Hollins: Right. See here, that would be when the Navy (???) come in, you know. He was- I mean this was during segregated times. They came here. Well, they would be there and white people sit in the intersection or whatever. Yeah, they, they, they-that's their enterprise (laughing).

Another Interviewer: What other famous musicians do you remember coming to Tallahassee? We saw, I think, umm the name Louis Armstrong. Did he ever come?

Hollins: Yeah, yeah, but that was at FAMU. People like that- I don't think all the famous musicians had been to Tallahassee. Most of them, most of them. Uh, you name it, they have been here, but that was all- all of that was at FAMU now because to those professionals, it was a name to that proprietor. Yeah, but the umm lesser known people, these were the guys who played all around like that.

Another Interviewer: Right and that sort of- that's the lesson when someone refers to the 'chitlin' switch'?

Hollins: Right, right. They get...(laughing) even though, there were guys, you might could also add them in there too because certainly, uh, I would say and I'm going to say, we were nothing into that 'chitlin' switch' thing come in. It's because the fact that...this is my, my explanation of that...its because the fact that umm...of the living arrangement, eating and living arrangement. I, I think that was- I kind of think that was because of the fact, that you would play in these small southern towns. That's basically what it is and because you see, these things- we would leave out here and go on out to Mississippi. Mississippi don't carry many good venues back in the years

back. I don't think it carry none now. Even though, I meet a lot of people from out there. We were quite successful, you know. I umm I just don't see (laughing)...but anyway, they were all out there too and Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile, especially those places like that. Yeah, they were all out there and umm they did not have...the best of facilities, you know what I'm talking about.

Another Interviewer: That leads into my last question I wanted to ask you. I wanted to see what you could tell us about the Tooke Hotel (verify name), specially anything you could tell us about it and-

Hollins: The Tookes Hotel...a hotel (laughing). It was a far cry from a hotel.

Another Interviewer: Right.

Hollins: But, umm event though, they had a sign out there that said hotel, I always felt that it was rooming house.

Another Interviewer: Right.

Hollins: That, that, that was exactly what it was. A rooming house. Uh, my freshman year here, I only lived about-I might not have lived a block from that. Exactly, I use to live on Bruno St. over there and umm it was on umm...

Another Interviewer: Virginia.

Hollins: Virginia, yeah. Right down here. I don't live but a block. Went by it a whole lot, you know. I wouldn't say every day, but pretty close to it and I don't take much, even though, they got a sign that says hotel (laughing). A hotel...I don't think it was no more than a rooming house. That's what I looked at. It carried and I don't think it carried to my house. (verify this line) It probably did, but I didn't think, um, for business to operate, it has to everything. You have to have something holding it to the town and so I look at it as being a very good...rooming house. For that time that was good. Even for the best people in Tallahassee, you use to have such. We had the old Florida- frighten Florida Hotel (verify this) and...there was Tooke, I know that. Even Florida Motel, they had even built the Duval- Cherokee, I think that was it. That one was too large and I think we had some hotels out there on Lake Ella. Right there, on the rump-one of them is still out there. The buildings, the old buildings there. Yeah, little old buildings still

out there and it could've been something out that way on Jacksonville Highway, out there. Umm, somewhere near the cemetery out there. (verify statement)

Another Interviewer: You were saying earlier about the-that a lot of the eating establishments, and the rooming motels like the Tookes Motel, they would sort of build their clientele with the musicians that went on the 'chitlin' circuit'. So, I suppose that-

Hollins: Right, right, right. What would happen, any of those people who come through quite a bit, anything with that one time and it was nice evening, that's when they would come back the next time and then word would spread around to the others who either "that's a good place over there", "go over there", "lady name is Mrs./Ms. Tookes", "they do a good job". That kind of stuff like that. That's how business spread around. Word of mouth and I can't- there were nothing was written down on nothing, you know. It was just word of mouth and a yeah.

Another Interviewer: You mentioned a sign. I heard it was one of the early sign in Tallahassee.

Hollins: Yeah, they had a sign there. It was a sign there, yes it was. It had Tookes Hotel or whatever on it. It did have that.

Another Interviewer: Neon lights?

Hollins: I tell you what it was big enough to be noticed (laughing) and it might- with my daily knowledge, I had to give them, I have to give them credit...pretty good. It looked like to me...pole looked like it was bolted and had this thing around. I kind of think it was bold and grateful for all that. You know, I think so. It, it was noticeable. If you pass through and went to New York, you would say, "yeah, they've got one over there. Yeah. Yeah."

Another Interviewer: Did you know James Tookes?

Hollins: I know James Tooke. Yeah, I know him.

Another Interviewer: Could you tell me something about him?

Hollins: Well, umm I know that...he was a student of Florida A&M. I know he went there. I know he graduated from there. Uh...and I know him well (laughing). Umm...that he come up, I'm just not sure I know him real well. I'm ummm...I know him. I'm not sure what he did.

Maybe it was something like a- he may have. Umm, but I do know...he's started off teaching

school here. I know that. He was a school teacher. I know that. He went on and umm...he became a principal...and that's what I know. I kind of lost him a little bit. I know he was, what you call it, he was on the board of directors on TCC. Um, he was on the board of directors...trustee or something like that. It's a board out there. They had a couple people out there.

Another Interviewer: That was Jimmy Tookes? His name was Jimmy Tookes?

Hollins: James Tookes, but they-some people call him Jimmy.

Another Interviewer: Is that now-

Hollins: He's a young fella, now. His mother the one who started the business. He's a young guy. He, he-I- He is young.

Another Interviewer: He is a junior by any chance?

Hollins: Oh, I don't even know that.

Another Interviewer: That okay. I think his father was a James also. He actually bought the house in 1913 and he was a cook and that stuff. I think they serve meals and they added the rooms on in '49 and then, started taking on borders.

Hollins: Oh, okay.

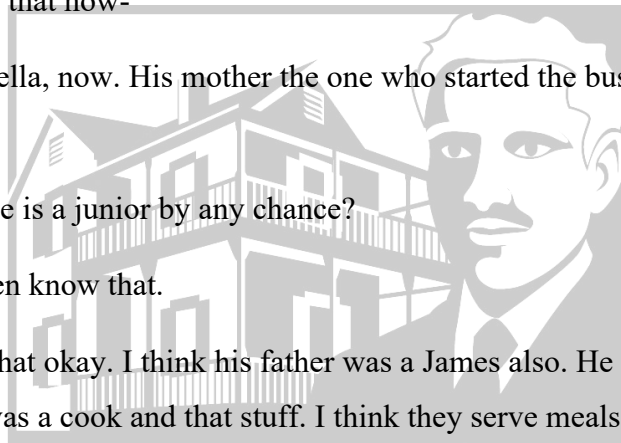
Another Interviewer: And then sometime, I'm not sure when he died, sometime after that and then, that's when the mother started taking-

Hollins: Yeah. If they did that in '49. Yeah, cause I came here in 1950. Yeah, I came in 1950.

Another Interviewer: Do you remember Jimmy's mother, Mrs Tookes, running, running the boarding home?

Hollins: I knew she was a proprietor. I know that. I don't know her personal. I would see her. I knew she did that. I know that and umm I knew she do-yeah, I knew that.

Another Interviewer: Well, I think I'm out of questions. Anything else you want to add? Unless you have some great stories-umm anything else you want to add? Anything about musicians or-



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wait, I did have something else. I'm sorry. Umm, just wanted your impact onto people over there that came from this area. Ray Charles and-

Hollins: Oh, okay. Okay, let me- kind of- my, my...Ray Charles, as I knew him, born in Albany, Georgia and he evidential- the family moved him down to Greenville, Florida and from there, he went to the, uh, Single Arts School For The Deaf (verify name). I think it's still over there and umm for some- and he migrated back up towards Tallahassee. So, I assuming at that time he was umm getting started. You know how guys start out at 13, 14, or whatever and he did make a stop here in Tallahassee and stayed for some time. I don't know if it was over a year, but I'm assume it was a short time. Umm when I came to Tallahassee, I heard a quite deal about him. I knew where he lived. I knew- I met the lady that was there (waves hand back and forth) over that boarding house and whatever. I knew her and they use to call him RC. I knew that. Umm and he played around in these same spots that I just mentioned and whatever these spots, he was there and he did do that for a short time and then, he left and everybody would talk about how terrific he was and what a great musician he was and the evidence is there. That he was and umm I met him personally...well, met him one time- I talked with let me say because when you met him, you know you (don't catch the term used) from there, but I had an opportunity. I did talk with him for about a couple of hours. I did do that, two, three hours. Just the two of us. About like how we are right now and it- at that time he had already gotten famous and they would give- some of his people have not died out. I think somebody was still rooming there and I'm just not sure- I'm just trying to get the years together. It was perhaps in the middle '50 and at that time, he had already made a name for himself and he came down in a big Cadillac. Cadillac at that time was a fine car. He had the last word with all this special stuff on it, but it broke down in Tallahassee and the guy I was playing with was, uh, was a cook. Up here, when all that's going down, but called the Seven Seas. He was a cook by day and a musician by night. So, he called me up. He said, "hey man". He said, "I've got Ray Charles." I said, "where are you?" He said, "I'm at work." I said, "wait, wait." Here is the golden question, I said, "why do you have him?". He said, "he sitting out on the back porch." (laughing) I thought, I really thought that was actually, I thought of (don't catch this), too, but they were segregated town and uh, that's just what it was and so, somehow while I was waiting on this car, he, he, this where he was. Sitting out there on the back porch and you know, this guy was calling in guys to come in and met him and you know, I got a chance to, you know, go in and meet him and I thought of one time, I said,

“hey, well I’ll take you on down to Greenville.” It was on a spur of the moment and I had things, you know, I could do, but I talked to him briefly and things like that and umm when I- lets me time you other scenario. When-as he got greater and greater or better and better and more famous and more famous, he, he brought a plane and umm I thought that was rather unique. Now, I can’t think of –it had to be later years, after the Korean War, had to be, uh...the plane was a, not like a regular commercial plane...TC7 or something, like the 37 or something like that. Those, something like that, the planes had a real body work and it was uh- everybody hollaing Ray Charles coming to town. Ray Charles will be in town and umm at that time, Ebony magazine was a big magazine. Like it was covered in ads...uh, pictures of him and his plane and his entourage and all kind of thing and I said “hey, I think I’d go out there and see him” and I go to the airport to you know, to meet him and to my amazement, airport was packed. People came out there and that was a pretty good sight. At that time to see Ray Charles. He had done great and he had two black pilots (laughing). That was something (laughing). At that time, you had a lot of white ones...you come to see these guys, but I can tell you another thing I thought was unique. These guys almost- these two pilots almost was his body guards cause they came in- they taxied in...and this huge plane come in and they swing it around and at that time, you know, those planes had propellers. Ray Charles spoke and he was supposed to...land the plane and they-but, he was sitting up in there. You know when he got out and umm these two fine young black fellows got off and of course, I had just gotten down there, too and umm seen the guys that were helped pushing him in, but I thought that was great, too. Them coming in. I can’t think of the year. It was happening in the late 60’s, end of the 60’s, later that year. I could’ve been- it could’ve been late 50’s or 60’s, somewhere in there, but I thought that was quite unique. To see umm to see something like that and also umm...well, I told you about the guy that I met at the hospital up there. It was brand new and they had umm...course, Lionel Hamilton, he did play in Lincolns old gym, but its not like it is was- they got a new gym somewhere in the facility, but at that time it was old and dilapidated and umm maybe I could tell you about their old gym. It was an old wooden building. Do you remember that old wooden building?

Interviewer: At Lincoln?

Hollins: Yeah.

Interviewer: When I came on it was...

Hollins: You got the new building?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Hollins: Yeah, but it was an old wooden, dilapidated building. To me that was the plan, but the floor was basketball, uh. That was okay.

Interviewer: Yeah because I went there in '58 and they kinda had a more...probably had more than that.

Hollins: Well, at that time- yeah right because when you got there, they had the umm...they had a music building, when you got there? (laughing) Okay, okay. Well, that was before- yeah, yeah, yeah. That was before. Yeah, yeah.

Another Interviewer: Did you know cannoning ball (don't catch the name)?

Hollins: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I knew him. I knew him. When I say knew him, I mean I knew him, and he knew me. Yeah, yeah. He knew me, yeah. I uh- he had a uh-graduated at that particular time when I uh got here. I don't come until 1950 (check timeframe). I think he graduated until about 1948 (check timeframe). Uh he made quite a, quite a name for himself. He had, uh, he had been out and taught for a year or two out in Fort Lauderdale. Somewhere down the way, he got drafted in the army and, uh, I noticed that he went up there and did real good, real good and he was over a band up in Fort Knox

(switches towards another clip)

Hollins: He was from Kentucky. I do know that, and he was instrumental in getting a bunch of guys from FAMU, at that time, to- you know, he got them to come in and do whatever, you know. It wasn't like director, but you know, they went straight to the band. They took up instrumental and went straight to the band. I know that well because of the fact that I was pretty much in that same predicament and I said, "No, I ain't no volunteer." (laughing) "I won't volunteer." I had to wait till I got drafted, but anyway, I got a chance to meet him and after he got out of the army, he went back down to Fort Lauderdale...again and umm he would come up and umm with a large group, they called them stage bears (verify term), now. It wasn't large then...more like what umm- built like...the (don't hear what was said) and all that at FAMU and we go around the state playing, too. Dances and things like that and he- I got a chance to play

with him, several times like that and here in Tallahassee, he would stop by...the club were we would play in, I got a chance to know him from there and of course, his brother was right along with him. Yeah, he was right with Nap (check name).

Interviewer: Nap (check name)?

Hollins: Yeah, Nap was right with us. We got a chance to know him very well and umm.

Another Interviewer: Anything else you would like to add?

Hollins: Naw, cause its cold in here (laughing). You was- you was outside. You got warm. Of course, I was warm when I came in and it looks like I cooled off now. Ok, now-

Interviewer: He told yall the clubs and stuff and you know what, this family that just left here, that's the old Swilly family and it's interesting that they mentioned their mother, you know, the first medical department-nursing director that worked at FAMU hospital and out of the blue they said, "Well yeah, you know, people like Cab Calloway", mama say, "they'd be out there right right I've got about Cal you know well I did said everybody would innovative in here I'll pass and as I said it was just like I stated if they were means what family would take care you know by my dad they were just you just know so get that contact check it out a little bit yes and it's true and she's telling you right yeah they weren't quite easy you...they just knew someone. Their contact would take care of that over there. Yes, so umm that is true and what she telling you right. Yeah, that's true.

(switches towards another clip)

Hollins: They weren't quite, you know, Barnum Bailey...circus stuff like that. They may have had... so many box cars and they would put our trucks. Somebody who played on like that-the mean guys would come in like that- basically the same way. They would find an open spot to put up that team and they come early that morning and unique operation. They set their tent up and they had generators to run their own electricity. They would have...pretty a first class show. Just like you see on tv. They had their curtains and everything was a go, but it would be on the tent and out in the field and it would be a packed house.

Interviewer: And you went to some of those in Tallahassee?

Hollins: Oh, yeah. Plenty of them.



Interviewer: Where were they?

Hollins: Most of them was right there...on Adam Street... on Adam Street... you were Fred Tucker fuller station use to be right there? It's a white building there-

Interviewer: Now its black?

Hollins: Yeah. Use to sell ceramics something, that use to be an open field right in there. That most time, they were right there right.

Interviewer: Private screen?

Hollins: Right in then and they come right there and set that tent up. Oh, you know what they would do? Ummm around one or two o'clock that day, the band would kind of march around the street or play outside, drumming up, you know, drumming up customers for the night. Also, I've seen other places- there were other groups like them, too. They would have parade or something during the day or something like that.

Interviewer: So, people would come down?

Hollins: Right, right.

Interviewer: So, that was advisement?

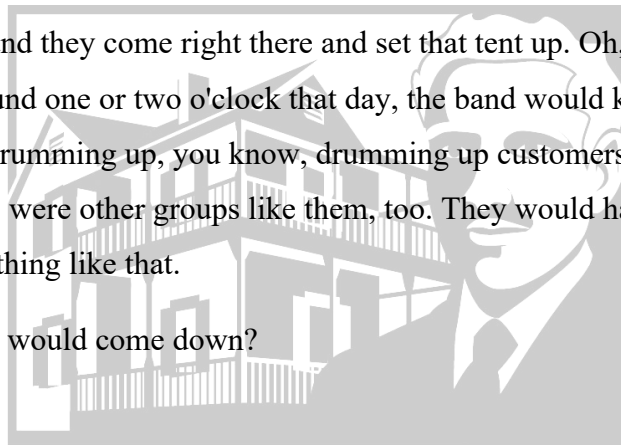
Hollins: For them, yeah that was advisement and they were very, very good too, now.

Another Interviewer: What was doing the forties?

Hollins: That was in- that was in the fall, but it went out in the fifties. It went out in the fifties. I can't recall-

Another Interviewer: (don't hear what was being asked)

Hollins: I can't recall it going any... any later then fifties. It could have. It could have, but I do know that in the fifties it was- it was still existing...because I knew guys who played with them and umm that came through Tallahassee...and umm they would every year around October or November. Umm, now I've seen our groups like that in other cities, you know. Yeah, but they, they- the sounds, they were amazing for Tallahassee. They put on a good show. They had



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comedians, stand-up comedians...heck of a chorus line, pretty girls, good band, good singers and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Did mostly blacks go or black and white?

Hollins: All black shows.

Another Interviewer: I know your ready to go. Could I ask you one more thing?

Hollins: Yes.

Another Interviewer: Perhaps you could help me on some contacts on maybe where to go to find out some more of- do you have any idea, maybe who or where umm I could go into town and found out some more information about umm, you know, fun dates or where the bands played at? That sort of thing.

Hollins: Specific dates...ummm that's going to be very difficult to know. Specific dates umm...the only place I know and I'm not even sure,... it just maybe, it just maybe. Elton (check name) may have some newspapers saying that this sort of group was in town or... just maybe you- let me tell you something, a little scenario I had with Bernal Stephens. She's about the only person that I know that kept categorized newspapers and newspaper articles. She's gone on now and maybe somebody just like her who give us some information that you asking about...and it maybe just like Mrs./Ms. Swilly, that lady you talked about. Somebody in that category who come from a long line family may have some clippings to say what times, what days... just like all the information I had given you, I could not say for sure, all I could say that I know that all these bands come around- they would be once a year. Sometimes, anywhere doing that time. They would be out...you know they coming once a year, but when I just couldn't tell you now, but there was a pattern like, like- now I don't think- like I say about that Silas Green thing (clarify), I know it would always be cold (laughing). I know that. So maybe Elton with the Black Archive could have something or a date or ticket stub or...

Another Interviewer: Black card?

Hollins: Black card or magazines articles and just think how we use to throw Jet- we use to just throw them away (laughing) and I...I know I saw one. I've seen one in '60, whatever that guy started. I've seen it, but people just throw it out. Well, I had-

(clip ends)



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