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**An Oral History of Louise K. Hines  
Conducted by Leroy Graham**

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**Abstract:** Louise Kerr Hines (1916-2007) was an active member, volunteer, and office secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and worked as a school teacher in Baltimore before becoming a reporter for *The Baltimore Afro-American*. In this oral history interview, Hines discusses her experiences as a reporter and how her involvement with the NAACP led her to that position. She also recounts her and her family's connections with civil rights leader Lillie May Carroll Jackson (1889-1975) and her family, sharing memories of growing up near them. Hines reflects on the civil rights movement in Baltimore and its impact. Finally, she explains her involvement in the suit against the Enoch Pratt Library, detailing how racial discrimination against her prompted the suit, the NAACP's involvement, her experience as a plaintiff, and the effect it had on her and her family's life.

Note on Oral History: Oral history is a methodology of gathering, preserving, and sharing the voices and memories of individuals and communities. As primary material, it documents personal reflections, commentary, and recollections, and is not intended to present a verified or "complete" history of events.

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**Graham:** [00:00:04] You became a reporter for The Afro. Can you tell us how you got that job and—

**Hines:** [00:00:07] I certainly can. I was sitting at the NAACP office typing one day and Mr. Furmen Templton, who was personnel manager at the Afro, called me up and said we—this was during World War II. He said, "we just sent our last male reporter overseas as a war correspondent. Would you like to be a reporter?" I said I'm resigning, I'll be down tomorrow.

**Graham:** [00:00:31] You resigned from your teaching position?

**Hines:** [00:00:33] No, at the NAACP, I was office secretary.

**Graham:** [00:00:35] Oh, office secretary.

**Hines:** [00:00:36] That's right, and I went down there the next day. And it's interesting Betty Murphy, she was Betty Phillips then, and I were classmates together. And in high school, I was the editor of the school paper and she was my reporter. And when I got down there, she was the city editor and I was her reporter. So she took me around and showed me the ropes in different places and gave me my meeting and gave me an assignment. And the first person I interviewed was a labor official named Sidney Katz. I said good morning Mr. Katz, I'm Louise Kerr, I'm a reporter. This is my first day and I'm scared to death. He said, okay, sit down, let's talk. So he talked and I wrote. I went back and typed it up and they threw it in the basket and went on through. And after that, I was on my way. And I've always liked writing.

**Graham:** [00:01:23] Right, and you worked there—and you worked there for six years after you came in 1944, right?

**Hines:** [00:01:27] That's right.

**Graham:** [00:01:28] And did you ever get to know Mr. Murphy? Carl Murphy?

**Hines:** [00:01:31] Mr. Murphy and I were—my father were friends. That and his store was in Myrtle Avenue and George Street, and he lived right up the street, 1040 Myrtle Avenue. So I had known the whole Murphy family practically all my life. And I was in school with Betty many years, and we came out of high school at the same time. So I was very well acquainted with the Murphy family.

**Graham:** [00:01:52] Right, and what church did Mr. Murphy attend at that time? Carl Murphy?

**Hines:** [00:01:57] Uh, St James.

**Graham:** [00:01:58] St James, oh.

**Hines:** [00:01:59] Yeah.

**Graham:** [00:02:00] So, in a way, he wasn't influenced by Mrs. Jackson as far as Sharp Street.

**Hines:** [00:02:05] Well, you know, at the time when there was a lot of racial discrimination and low employment and just horrible situations. Mr. Gent—Mr. Carl Murphy saw the leaf of an NAACP branch in Baltimore, so he called a group of citizens to gather and discuss the need of the NAACP branch and decided to organize one. And they decided Mrs. Jackson would be the president. Then Mr. Carl Murphy sent for Juanita Jackson Mitchell, and he sent her to the national convention, which was in California. And her assignment was to bring the next national NAACP convention to Baltimore. And if you knew Juanita Mitchell in her heyday, she was a beautiful, slender, dynamic, very vocal, articulate person. And she succeeded in convincing them that to reactivate the NAACP, they would have to bring the next national convention to Baltimore, which she did in the year 1937. I can remember very well.

**Graham:** [00:03:15] Well, how would they—what did they have to go on as far as choosing or deciding that Mrs. Jackson would be the president?

**Hines:** [00:03:23] Well, I'll tell you very frankly, they wanted to know who could raise the most hell in Baltimore to get this thing done. And it was undoubtedly nobody but Lillie May Jackson. And all during the time that Mr. Jack—Mrs. Jackson was the president, Mr. Carl Murphy made the bullets and Mrs. Jackson went out and fired them. On all these things housing, getting against police brutality, particularly that, and employment, and all of those things. They used to have strategy meetings in there and I could see Mrs. Jackson coming up those steps now. And Mr. Carl Murphy would map the strategy, he would finance it, he would probably size it, but Lillie May Jackson went out and fired those bullets for him. And then he would give her the editorial support that she needed. I knew that.

**Graham:** [00:04:13] Well, was she that type of person as a church leader before, say, like in 1925 or, I mean, how did she—(talking at the same time)

**Hines:** [00:04:20] Mrs. Jackson had a dynamic person. In Sharp Street Church she was known first as a singer. She was a leading soprano in the choir of Sharp Street Church. And then she and my mother were very close friends. And she decided that she was gonna marry a good looking man and have some good looking children. And when she did that, she married Mr. Keifer Jackson from Mississippi. He showed motion pictures, religious motion pictures, and they traveled all around the country. And she used—they didn't have talking movies then, and he showed her movies and she would provide the sound. Then as the girls grew up, they would provide the programs. The girls sang, they recited, they played the piano, and that's how those girls sent themselves through school. They go all through the counties and travel around to all these little churches, and for all of the \_\_\_(??), to show the movies. Mrs. Jackson would give religious lectures, and they had the Jackson four, the Jackson trio. Juanita Mitchell could play the piano beautifully. Marion used to sing and really could play and sing. And they had the Jackson four and Mr. Jackson. And but that's—there's a dynamic people. And then she was just a magnetic person. And her next activity was in Sharp Street Church, where she was the president of the women's club. And she had such remarkable leadership qualities. If you had canvassed the area there was—she was just a natural for the job, just a natural. She was vocal, she was dynamic, she was fearless, and she was interesting.

**Graham:** [00:05:58] Back in the 1920s, was she as proud of her family heritage as she was in, say, the 1960s? As far as being a descendant of Pearl(??) and a descendant of African slaves.

**Hines:** [00:06:08] No, she didn't emphasize that so much. At that time she was just busy promoting the girls. They were beautiful girls. And that article I wrote, all those girls were the prettiest girls and

most popular girls, and so they never danced. You don't read that often, but they never danced, they were so big. And long before people became interested in interracial things, these girls were going to conferences and conventions and they integr—were following this integration principle way back then.

**Graham:** [00:06:39] I know I read one article in The Afro where it said that, I guess, it would be after maybe 1950, where Mrs. Jackson said that too many parents were leaving their children with unqualified umm—

**Hines:** [00:06:54] Babysitters?

**Graham:** [00:06:54] Babysitters and she was strongly against.

**Hines:** [00:06:56] Oh, yeah.

**Graham:** [00:06:56] She she brought her children up (talking at the same time)

**Hines:** [00:06:59] She trained her children and she brooked no nonsense. You never said no to Mrs. Jackson. If she told you to do something, she would get behind you and prod you. She'd tell 'em "go, go, go, do this." And there was no saying no to ma Jackson.

**Graham:** [00:07:12] And did she show any other kinds of talents herself, say, in the fields of arts, besides the singing, I mean, because as you said, her children were talented.

**Hines:** [00:07:25] No, she was interested in real estate. She was interested in real estate, and she would go to all sales. She owns a tremendous amount of real estate, and she acquired enough properties so she didn't just have to have an eight to five desk job. She had an income from her real estate so that she was able to devote all of her energy into this and anybody who went to the office to work for Mrs. Jackson fell by the wayside. She was a dynamo. She went 24 hours a day. She just didn't stop.

**Graham:** [00:07:54] What was Sundays like at Mrs. Jackson's house? Did you ever—were you ever there on a Sunday morning? I mean, this is—is there anything you can reveal about the breakfast side (laughing)—Sunday morning side of Mrs. Jackson.

**Hines:** [00:08:08] Well, they had a unique arrangement. Mr. Jackson did all the housework, he did all the cooking. Mrs. Jackson was on the outside. It was just the arrangement they had. It wasn't like an ordinary husband-wife arrangement, they were a team. I heard Mr. Jackson express—he owned property too, but she was on the outside more than he was. But he had income from his real estate. But a lot of people didn't even know that she had a husband till he died.

**Graham:** [00:08:37] I've heard it said, and I won't mention the names, that someone said she was a slum landlord. Is that true? Do you have any opinion on that?

**Hines:** [00:08:45] No, I'd rather not comment on that. I know that she owned houses in Mcculloh(??) Street, Druid Hill(??) Avenue, she owned a number of houses. Now, as far as them being a slum landlord, I don't know. But I think she kept her property up.

**Graham:** [00:09:00] Back then, I mean, that she probably, you know, kept them up.

**Hines:** [00:09:04] Yeah, I think she did because she was interested in the welfare of people.

**Graham:** [00:09:08] I know in an article here again I read in Afro, when she moved, I think off of Druid Hill Avenue, someone must have pestered her about buying some new furniture for her own house. And she said she wasn't interested in the new furniture in the sense that—

**Hines:** [00:09:22] No, her house was never a showplace. It was comfortable, it was adequate, but the material things didn't interest her. She wasn't a person that was flaunting creature comforts. She wanted to be fed and clothed and housed adequately, but she didn't have a desire to have the best looking house or anything like that. She was more interested in movements—civic movements and common causes for the small man who couldn't fend for himself.

**Graham:** [00:09:55] Right, now, you said a moment ago that Carl Murphy sent Juanita to California to bring the national convention back to Baltimore. That's rather strange, in the sense that, if the Baltimore branch was dying out, how—what kind of influence could they wield an argument? They could—

**Hines:** [00:10:11] Well, that was—Mr. Carl Murphy was a master tactician when it came to things like that. They'd call this group of people together to reactivate the NAACP, but they wanted a big dramatic effort. So they brought the whole convention here. And that is really what was of interest, and they had national speakers here, and it was widely publicized. And it was held right here in Sharp Street Church, Mrs. Jackson's church. And they had people from all over the country here. And then, of course, Mrs. Jackson took full advantage of that situation. And when the people saw that it was going to be something worthwhile, then the interest was heightened and the membership grew. The Baltimore branch received many awards as the most dynamic branch in the whole country under her leadership.

**Graham:** [00:10:56] Right, but that's the thing I find rather interesting. How could—what did they offer? What did Mr. Jack—Mr. Murphy offer, which would induce the national convention to meet in Baltimore if the branch was dying out itself.

**Hines:** [00:11:12] Well, that's not the point. They—it used to be called the Niagara movement many years ago, and then it died out. And then they wanted to reactivate it on a new scale under the new name of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. So to renew interest in it, they had the national convention here and then they firmed \_\_\_(??) up from there. Mrs. Jackson became the president and they started recruiting members and then taking on the role of the NAACP, you know, for civil rights. But they didn't get around to the court suits until probably the 40s, that's when they started using the courts as a weapon. But they would send letters and petitions and make appearances at appropriate times to process people who were wronged in the civil rights.

**Graham:** [00:12:04] Did you ever attend any of these national conventions?

**Hines:** [00:12:10] No, I never went to any of the national conventions, but I used to attend the membership meetings. The monthly membership meetings were very inspiring because she brought speakers of note from all over the country, like Benjamin Mays from the south. What was that, one of the colleges down there, they would bring—

**Graham:** [00:12:31] Morehouse?

**Hines:** [00:12:32] Yeah, Morehouse College. And she brought Adam Powell, uh, Shep—what's that man's name? The man who was the recorder of deeds, can't think of his name right here. They had educators: Dubois, Walter White, Roy Wilkins, all those national figures were coming. In fact, during the war, when Virginia Kiah was briefly executive director, they had Mrs. Roosevelt here.

**Graham:** [00:13:03] Wasn't she kept out of the Lyric Theater, though, Mrs. Roosevelt? Didn't they intend to have that meeting, I think, at the Lyric, but the lyric said that she—

**Hines:** [00:13:12] I don't recall that it was the intention. I was in the office at that time, but they—I thought it was all planned to be held at Sharp Street Church.

**Graham:** [00:13:20] This was a—this was in 1944?

**Hines:** [00:13:23] Oh 40—yeah, 1944.

**Graham:** [00:13:25] Well, I—

**Hines:** [00:13:26] Well, you could be right, but I never heard they declared it \_\_((??)) have it at the Lyric.

**Graham:** [00:13:30] Right, and she was banned from that place. Well, how did it—how did a—how was radio used in the activities, I mean, in civil rights activities? Now, it's television and I suppose—

**Hines:** [00:13:42] No, no, mostly it was the media used was the newspaper.

**Graham:** [00:13:45] Newspaper, radio didn't figure in it all that much.

**Hines:** [00:13:47] Not that much, not that much. It was mostly the newspaper.

**Graham:** [00:13:51] Was it because the radio personnel was on—was by and large prejudiced or what? Was just—it just didn't figure into your plans?

**Hines:** [00:14:02] At that time, radio was mostly entertaining.

**Graham:** [00:14:05] Oh, mostly entertaining.

**Hines:** [00:14:06] It didn't have as much of a public relations facet and—like they have now in the—. It was mostly in the media of the newspapers that it was publicized the NAACP office and the NAACP activities.

**Graham:** [00:14:22] And I guess church bulletin boards.

**Hines:** [00:14:24] Yeah, and she—they made use of the churches and then they had these big membership mass meetings in different sections of the city, you know, not just Northwest Baltimore. They'd have them in East Baltimore and South Baltimore. So they would show that they were interested in all facets of Baltimore City, all geographical locations really.

**Graham:** [00:14:47] In the area politics, how did Mr. Murphy and Mrs. Jackson cooperate as far as maybe endorsing candidates, encouraging candidates or discouraging candidates?

**Hines:** [00:15:00] Well, they—on Mr. Tyers(?), they began the bold consciousness. Mr. Tyres had a slogan, "a voteless people is a hopeless people." They organized a voter registration drive, and I can remember Dr. J. E.T. Camper and the late Dr. Hyrum Smith would use their cars and take people down to the People's Court building to register. They had a long standing voter registration campaign that started in 1944, and that was their slogan, "a voteless people is a hopeless people." They used to say, "get your green card," that was a registration card. And then, at the NAACP mass meetings, Mrs. Jackson said, "everybody hold up their green card," you know, "so and so and so, we're gonna vote them off the boat—bench," you know, and that sort of thing. They became ballot conscious in the 1940s.

**Graham:** [00:15:56] Well, I came across an item which said that, I guess, the local political bosses even tried bribery to stop these kinds of campaigns. Did you have any knowledge of any such bribery attempts or threatening attempts to stop Blacks from registering or discouraging them?

**Hines:** [00:16:11] No, it's the same thing that goes on Election Day. They give people money to try to buy the votes, but that has been going on and still going around. But they tried to make people vote conscious and endorse candidates who would speak for Black people. The Negro at that time, it wasn't Black then, the Negro.

**Graham:** [00:16:32] Right, what did Mrs. Jackson think of Mayor McKeldin in his first campaign trial? Did she help him at all?

**Hines:** [00:16:40] Well they—Mr.—Mayor McKeldin was always a favorite of the Jacksons from back at the time when Juanita had the city-wide young people's forum. I can remember back at that time McKeldin was the secretary to Mayor Broening. And he was a force, an outstanding speaker, and he was liberal, Christian, dynamic, and always interested in the colored race. And they were always endorsers of McKeldin.

**Graham:** [00:17:08] They always endorsed him?

**Hines:** [00:17:09] As far as I know.

**Graham:** [00:17:17] Well, what about Mr. Murphy? Did he think a lot of him?

**Graham:** [00:17:21] I think so, I've seen Mayor McKeldin in the Afro office. The closest colored politician to McKeldin was the late Moss Calloway.

**Graham:** [00:17:36] Right, what did Mrs. Jackson think of him? I think he criticized her in one article about showing favoritism to Democrats at one point in her career. I think she switched registration at one point and or—

**Hines:** [00:17:47] I really couldn't comment on that.

**Graham:** [00:17:49] There was an article where he—

**Hines:** [00:17:51] Oh, sure, people have funny attitudes toward the NAACP. When people get mad they used to say, "you know what NAACP stands for, National Association for the Advancement of Certain People."



**Graham:** [00:18:01] Oh, certain people (laughing), certain people like the Jacksons.

**Hines:** [00:18:04] Right.

**Graham:** [00:18:05] But it did seem for a time that Mrs. Jackson, her daughters, and her sons in laws were getting all the—maybe all the publicity as far as NAACP activities. Do you think it was deserved?

**Hines:** [00:18:21] Yes, I did, yes, I did. Nobody did as much as Miss Jackson and Juanita and all of them. They were on the firing line almost twenty-four hours a day. They just gave and gave and gave. And I know a lot of people thought they shouldn't get something out of it. But Mrs. Jackson gave more than she got, I mean, in the line of service. And people would come and with a long tale of all and she'd ask them sometimes, "are you a member?"

**Hines:** [00:18:43] "No, Mrs. Jackson, but they told me that if anybody in this city could help me it would be you." And the membership was a \_\_(?). And she said, "well don't you think you could at least take out a membership before we help you? Because if we had to go to court, we have to pay our lawyer fifty dollars a day." But people just looked to her, the only \_\_(?) person they knew. They would listen to the tales of woe twenty-four hours a day, night and day, they would be on her phone.

**Hines:** [00:19:11] What can you recall relative to the picketing of Ford? I think that was a seven year affair, I think, seven or five or seven years.

**Hines:** [00:19:18] I remember very well that they were picketing a Ford's Theatre. I don't know what the show was, but Juanita Mitchell was down there and she saw McKeldin crossing the picket line. And she said, "not you Mr. Mayor," and he said something and got it on, I remember that.

**Hines:** [00:19:36] Right, as a reporter, you--did you cover McKeldin?

**Hines:** [00:19:40] I wasn't a political reporter. I had general assignments. And there were occasions where I would cover some event where—at the city hall or where McKeldin was, but I wasn't a political reporter. I was a general assignment reporter.

**Hines:** [00:20:00] Is there any other incident that you can recall that relates to Mrs. Jackson that maybe explains her life or—?

**Hines:** [00:20:06] I certainly can, there was a man named Charles Reed, oh, they were upset about the number of liquor outlets on Pennsylvania Avenue. So this young man named Charles Reed, I don't know what his background was. But he went down to the liquor board and he said he thought that they ought to call in every liquor license sold on Pennsylvania Avenue to show cause why his license should not be denied for the next year. That was a funny donnybrook fan, and I had to sit there, and they have all of them from down to George Street, all to the end of Pennsylvania Avenue before the liquor board. And I can remember very well this lawyer named Paul Mules, M-U-L-E-S, he's now dead. And they had one session of the liquor board and Mrs. Jackson came in. She was always well-dressed, and she came rushing in, followed by Juanita and Virginia, and he threw up his hands said, "my God, here comes that Jackson woman. What is this alphabetical association that she has?". And she said, "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People." I remember that so well. But there were people who respected her because they found out that she was not a person to be trifled with. You just didn't tell Mrs. Jackson, " no, Mrs. Jackson." You didn't tell her that because

she was tenacious. She—what is the expression, she really hung in there, you know. I mean, when she got through talking, she made sense, and gradually, the people became—came to respect her.

**Hines:** [00:21:46] Would—what was her tactic to sell—penetrate, I guess, people who might seem hardened racists? I mean, did she—

**Hines:** [00:21:54] She'd tell 'em, "God made Black and white is just like the keys on the piano. You play all white keys or you play all Black keys. It doesn't say, all right, you put the Black and white together and you get harmony, and that's the way God is, God doesn't want discrimination." That's what she'd say. That was her war cry and her other war cry was, "never give up, never give up." And she believed in that, and some of the things that she worked for it took years to bring to fruition. But she they—her war cry was never give up.

**Hines:** [00:22:29] Was there anyone in the other NAACP branches across the country that could be comparable to Mrs. Jackson, considered comparable to her, she seems to have been a quite remarkable lady.

**Hines:** [00:22:39] She was a remarkable lady. She was a member of the national board and she was respected. And I can't compare her with the other branch members, but I know that they—time after time they would bring back the trophy from the national convention as the most dynamic branch in the company—country from the standpoint of membership growth and court cases and the victories and they have won on the civil rights front.

**Hines:** [00:23:08] Do you know how many times they won that award?

**Hines:** [00:23:11] No, I can't tell you the exact, but I know it was more than twice. They probably had those trophies up in the NAACP office. She was quite a lady.

**Graham:** [00:23:20] Thank you. (break in the tape)

**Graham:** [00:23:55] Training classes for all citizens of the United States. Mrs. Hines We'd like to discuss some of your family background. Could you tell us something about your family? I mean, were they native Baltimoreans?

**Hines:** [00:24:08] I am the daughter of Dr. T Henderson Kerr, a retired pharmacist, a native of Cambridge, Maryland, and my mother was the former Geneva Louise Lyles of Frederick, Maryland. So we are native Marylanders on both sides.

**Graham:** [00:24:26] Well, how far back does your family go into Maryland history? I mean, how far back can you count?

**Hines:** [00:24:35] My grandfather was born in Cambridge, Maryland, and I heard my father say that his maternal grandparents came from Africa, I never knew them. My maternal grandmother was Mary Jane Lloyd Kerr, who was also from Maryland. So I guess you can say we appear Maryland's \_\_\_\_(?).

**Graham:** [00:24:57] All right, thank you. What church did you attend?

**Hines:** [00:25:01] Sharp Street Memorial United Methodist Church.

**Graham:** [00:25:06] Right, well, that was the church that Mrs. Jackson attended too, right?

**Hines:** [00:25:09] Yes, indeed. She was the heart and soul of Sharp Street Church.

**Graham:** [00:25:12] Right, well, how long had you attended that church? I mean, did you—

**Hines:** [00:25:16] From birth.

**Graham:** [00:25:16] From birth?

**Hines:** [00:25:16] That was the family church, and I attended there from birth up until 1965. And at that time, I became a member of Heritage United Church of Christ, where I presently attend.

**Graham:** [00:25:33] Right, The Afro was such an important instrument in the NAACP activities in general. But even in the Pratt case, about a year before your suit, there was an article which spoke that in your press intentions was not to found a segregated institution. And later on, I found an article that your father said also that he had spoken to people who thought Pratt had never intended to found a segregated library system. Could—do you know to whom your father was referring when he said he knew people who had known Pratt, and that his intentions were quite contrary to what the trustees were in 19—what—were—was in 1940?

**Hines:** [00:26:14] No, I don't know to whom my father made reference, but I thought you might be interested in knowing how I became involved in the case. During the Easter vacation of 1943, there was an ad on the back page of The Sun paper saying that the Enoch Pratt Library was offering a training course to women. And I had taught school for six years, and I was no longer interested in it, and I decided that would be something interesting to do. So I went down and, to the amazement of a Mr. Joseph Hamlin, I told him I came to apply for the training class. And he looked at me and said, "what did you say?" And I said I came to apply, here's the ad in the paper and I want to apply for this training class. So he asked me what my educational background was, and I told him. He took a long, deep breath and he said, "Enoch Pratt had decided that it was unnecessary and impractical to train colored women for service with the Enoch Pratt Library." And I questioned him further, and he said, "well, there's just no use wasting time about this." So I said, well, you'll hear from me later. So I went to the NAACP, at that time, Mr. Randal Tyers was executive director of the NAACP. And I made a complaint that I had been denied an application to this class solely on the basis of race. And he made a record of my complaint. And then later on, they contacted me and asked me if I would be a plaintiff in the case.

**Graham:** [00:28:01] All right, well, how did your father get into the act, so to speak? Because his name is mentioned, as, I think, the person who instituted the suit on your behalf.

**Hines:** [00:28:11] On my behalf. We both were plaintiffs in the case, but I was the main one. And his stand was that he was a taxpayer and his daughter was being denied the civil rights because—solely on the basis of race.

**Graham:** [00:28:27] Right, but how old were you at that time?

**Hines:** [00:28:28] Twenty-seven.

**Graham:** [00:28:29] You were still living with your parents?

**Hines:** [00:28:31] Yes, I was with them.

**Graham:** [00:28:33] Right, and they lived on Division Street, right, at that time?

**Hines:** [00:28:35] And they still live there, they've been there since 1914.

**Graham:** [00:28:37] 1914 hmm.

**Hines:** [00:28:39] Right.

**Graham:** [00:28:40] Wow, now, Mr. Joseph Hamlin was in what position? What—

**Hines:** [00:28:45] He was one of the officials. They—I don't know what his exact capacity was. It seems like I went through channels. I went to the lady who was sitting downstairs who floated away to him and said "this person wants to apply for the library training class." And he said, "you want to do what?" And I repeated what I had to say, and then he went on from there. And so when the NAACP contacted me and asked me if I would be a plaintiff in the case I consented to do so.

**Graham:** [00:29:16] All right, well, did you ever meet Mr. Joseph Wheeler, at the time, who I think was the director of the—

**Hines:** [00:29:21] I never had any confrontation with him, but I did see him in court, in the federal court when we had the trial.

**Graham:** [00:29:29] Well, do you know what the position of the Black librarians who had already been hired at branch one were?

**Hines:** [00:29:34] There were no Black librarians.

**Graham:** [00:29:35] Not in—not in 1943?

**Hines:** [00:29:38] No.

**Graham:** [00:29:39] Well, I—

**Hines:** [00:29:41] Wait a minute, yes, there was. Alma Bell, Alma Bell and Iona Woods Collins, but they were graduates of library schools. And I just want to go through the training course, because my background was not in library work at all, my background was in education.

**Graham:** [00:29:57] Right, I mean, and they were employed at that time, I think, at branch one.

**Hines:** [00:30:01] Yes, at Pitcher Street.

**Graham:** [00:30:02] Right, and did they—do you know what their attitude was in you instituting this suit? Did they fear for their jobs or—

**Hines:** [00:30:10] I don't think so, they considered it—regarded it with considerable interest.

**Graham:** [00:30:16] Oh, did they?

**Hines:** [00:30:16] Considerable interest, I don't think they considered that a threat at all. They just wanted to see what the outcome would be. They didn't discourage me or encourage me. They just thought it was sort of spunky of me to want to do it.

**Graham:** [00:30:30] Well, when did Mrs. Jackson take a personal hand in this case here?

**Hines:** [00:30:34] Well, they decided that they would fight this in court. I researched this in the files of the Afro, and it's very interesting to note that before I applied for this training course, Juanita Jackson Mitchell had.

**Graham:** [00:30:48] Oh, she did. In what year, do you know what yeah she did?

**Hines:** [00:30:49] No, it was probably in the 30s. Mrs. Mitchell was the head of the Citywide Young People's Forum, which was a Friday night discussion group that they had for young people, which crowded either Sharp Street or Methodist church. She ran for about ten years, and they were civic minded enough to try to break down racial barriers back in those days. You want some water?

**Graham:** [00:31:11] Mmhmm

**Hines:** [00:31:19] Mrs. Mitchell had applied for the training class and also had been denied, and that was just the first inklings of civic interest being taken in breaking down barriers at that time. But I decided to go on through with it, with the court case, and my father joined me as a taxpayer. I was employed as a schoolteacher at that time, and my father, who, of course, was in business for himself. So the stand was that solely on the basis of race I was being denied my civil rights by being refused admission to the training class.

**Graham:** [00:31:51] Right, I came across an interesting figure, I think, and in the suit itself, it was said that from two-hundred to three-hundred persons had applied for that position from the starting of the training class, I think in 1929, up to the present, up to the time of the suit. And I was just wondering if had you ever known anyone to apply for that before you yourself?

**Hines:** [00:32:10] Only Mrs. Mitchell.

**Graham:** [00:32:11] Only Mrs. Mitchell.

**Hines:** [00:32:12] I only knew her and if there were others that I wasn't aware of them.

**Graham:** [00:32:16] Right, I think that—is that the instance brought up usually in the biographies of Mrs.—of Dr. Jackson, where it's said that this is one of the reasons why she got so heavily involved into civil rights activities. When one of her daughters was denied admission to, I think it was Maryland.

**Hines:** [00:32:34] Institute of Art, her very talented daughter, Virginia Jackson Kiah, who's a portrait painter of note now, was denied admission and she had to go to the Philadelphia Museum School of Art.

**Hines:** [00:32:46] And later on there was a suit instituted against the Maryland Institute of Art. And I think Mr. Leon Norris was the plaintiff in that suit. Do you recall anything about him?

**Hines:** [00:32:55] No, I don't recall that.

**Graham:** [00:32:57] Mmhmm. Well, what did you think of your lawyers at the time that you had, I think it was Charles Houston, W.A.C Hughes doing it.

**Hines:** [00:33:05] I consider myself very fortunate to have had Mr. Houston, who was a \_\_\_(??) constitutional lawyer, to condescend to take my case, and he was assisted locally by W.A.C. Hughes.

**Graham:** [00:33:20] When you say condescend, do you mean that you conduct to him?

**Hines:** [00:33:24] No, no.

**Graham:** [00:33:24] How was he brought in on the case?

**Hines:** [00:33:26] Mr. Houston was the greatest constitutional lawyer that we had at this time. Here's a picture that was taken the day of the trial. That's my father and my mother, Mr. Houston, and W.A.C Hughes Jr., both of whom are now dead.

**Graham:** [00:33:39] Right.

**Hines:** [00:33:40] That was taken outside of the courthouse.

**Graham:** [00:33:42] Right, but did you ever sit in on any of the strategy meetings before the case was ever actually put on the docket or—

**Hines:** [00:33:50] Not too much. I worked briefly in the NAACP office and Mr. Houston walked in one day, and I was working as the secretary and he said, "well, what's Louise Kerr doing there?" And I said, well, right now she's typing because I did some volunteer work down in the NAACP during the summer.

**Graham:** [00:34:04] And that was after the suit had started or before?

**Hines:** [00:34:06] No, the suit—this was in April when I made the application, and then went on about September this happened. And the trial didn't come up until the following November in the federal court here in Baltimore.

**Graham:** [00:34:18] Right, so you were involved in NAACP activities even before you yourself was, I mean, were a—an object of discrimination?

**Hines:** [00:34:27] Well, I used to collect memberships and attend meetings and things like that. But after they started fighting this case for me, then I used to go down there and do volunteer office work, and then I ended up for nine months being an office secretary.

**Graham:** [00:34:41] Oh, the office secre—and you worked under Mr. Tyres?

**Hines:** [00:34:44] Randall, the late Randall Tyres

**Graham:** [00:34:46] Oh, late. Uh, well, what—do you have any opinions on Mr. Tyres' accomplishments? Was he actually running the office or was Mrs. Jackson—

**Graham:** [00:34:55] Mrs. Jackson is always Mrs. Jackson and whatever she's in, she's ahead of and don't forget it. But he was the executive secretary. And the strategy was mapped by Mr. Houston and W.A.C Hughes. And Mrs. Jackson was kept abreast of what they were doing, and they were very glad to have someone. The problem was nobody would ever consent to be a plaintiff. They could never get the first bait because no one would consent to be a plaintiff. And I told them that I would, and people would say, you know, you have to go to court and all that and well, what did I have to lose?

**Graham:** [00:35:32] You mean in just the instance of the Pratt case or in other cases, too?

**Hines:** [00:35:35] Well, in this particular case, they had wanted to fight before this, but no one would consent to be a plaintiff.

**Graham:** [00:35:41] What do you think was the fear or (talking at the same time)

**Hines:** [00:35:46] Reprisals.

**Graham:** [00:35:47] You mean jobs wi—

**Hines:** [00:35:48] Yeah. I mean, things would happen to people who did. And, you know, if I had continued to teach school, I know I would have been called on the carpet, "who do you think you are?" Because I had confrontations with the assistant superintendent, Mr. Flowers, about some of the things that I did. He just couldn't conceive of anybody defying him, you know, and I would just go ahead and do some things, tell the principal, I'm going to do this because I just don't bow down to people like that. I don't mean I was a radical, but people that day were very timid. It was Black and white schools, and the people just followed with blinkers on them. And they went in a straight path and followed tradition, going straight down the line. And that wasn't me.

**Graham:** [00:36:30] But who was Mr. Flowers, I mean what—

**Graham:** [00:36:33] He was one of the assistant superintendents in the Baltimore City Department of Education. And he liked to keep colored people in their place. He thought that the white people could tell colored people exactly what they should do and what they should have, what courses, what types of schools they should have. And he didn't see why any colored people should have any opinion about anything. And some of the principals I had felt the same way. And I'd bug the principals so I—

**Graham:** [00:37:01] You mean Black principals or white?

**Graham:** [00:37:02] Yes, indeed, Black principals, yes, indeed. And I ended up in his office one day for something I did and ended up, I think, gaining his respect.

**Graham:** [00:37:14] Hmm, what was the attitude of the personnel at Pratt? Once your suit—once it was known that your suit was in court, did you go down to see the main branch?

**Graham:** [00:37:22] No, I was a still a patron of the library, but most of those people were—when they saw my car, I was just another patron. They didn't know that I was the person who filed the case. So I hit around some interest because it made national headlines. It made the headlines in the local paper. And it was a precedent case because the court decided that Pratt Library, as they said it was a private corporation, but they performed the public service and they were getting city funding.

**Graham:** [00:37:55] But it was rather complex and twisted.

**Graham:** [00:37:57] It was, and not only that in one of the hearings, the late Judge Chestnut said, quote, "I was not aware then young Negroes could not be trained in the course of the Pratt Library." So the Afro made a big issue over it, and he uttered a public apology because I said that the Negro sounds very animalistic, like tigress and lioness and The Afro actually made a big to do over it. So he uttered a public apology. He referred to le as the young Negro woman.

**Graham:** [00:38:34] You mean he referred to you that day?

**Graham:** [00:38:36] Yes, in court.

**Graham:** [00:38:36] And you confronted him with that right there?

**Graham:** [00:38:38] No, I didn't take it up, but the Afro did and the NAACP, they said that was an insult. Yeah, a Negro. He didn't know that a young Negro couldn't go to the training course at the Pratt Library.

**Graham:** [00:38:49] It seems that you said Judge Chestnut?

**Graham:** [00:38:53] Judge, no, what was it? Chesnutt, C-H-E-S-N-U-T-T, Judge Chesnutt, that was your name, right?

**Graham:** [00:39:02] Right, he seemed to have been overruled quite a few cases, I mean, quite a few times. And it was a strange situation where a Judge Sofer(??), who was at that time, I think chairman of the board of Morgan State College. And I guess who would have some kind of association of sympathies for Blacks, would occasionally—would overrule Ches—Chestnut. And did the knowledge of Judge Sofer being on the Circuit Court of Appeals for the fourth, I think it was the fourth U.S. district of the Circuit Court of Appeals have anything to do with strategy and how the NAACP would file these cases?

**Graham:** [00:39:39] Oh, they filed through on Mr. Houston. His argument was a masterpiece, and I remember so well that the court was filled that day with Baltimore lawyers. They said Charlie Houston is arguing the case and everybody close to him and everything just to come see him. He was an absolute authority on constitutional law.

**Graham:** [00:40:00] I've often heard it said that if he had lived, he probably would've been the first year Supreme Court Justice.

**Graham:** [00:40:05] Undoubtedly, he trained Thurgood Marshall.

**Graham:** [00:40:07] Oh, he trained Thurgood Marshall?

**Graham:** [00:40:09] He trained Thurgood Marshall, that's right. So it was very, very interesting that that phase of it and then they lost on this level. And then when I went to the appeal hearing down Richmond and they won in Richmond and then the Pratt Library abolished the case.

**Graham:** [00:40:25] You mean, the court?



[00:40:25] The courts. (talking at the same time).

[00:40:25] Right, right, and I read that the court said—they said they had to postpone indefinitely, I think, because of lack of funds.

**Graham:** [00:40:33] Yes, indeed, and then they decided that if they hired librarians, they would have to be qualified graduates of the libraries, schools. Well, the interesting thing is, after I left the NAACP in April of 1970, in 1944, I became a reporter for the Afro. So I ended up writing a lot of stories about myself. And I used to have the inner crowd library as part of my beat, and I used to go down for information. In one particular day, I had an assignment to go down there and pick up a release. And when I went to the public relations officer, the young lady said, "oh, did you come for the job? He has an application." I really appreciated that. The turn of the tables—the tables had turned completely around. But I wasn't particularly interested in working in the library, but I just thought it would be interesting if they could pursue this to the point where somebody else would benefit from what I did.

[00:41:37] But why was there a monetary damage sought in the suit? I mean they—

**Graham:** [00:41:43] Oh, you know how they do those kinds of suits. What are they saying? I don't know how to express that very well, but—

**Graham:** [00:41:55] I mean—

**Graham:** [00:41:56] I wasn't interested in damage. It was just to make a point.

[00:41:59] Oh, to make a point.

[00:41:59] To just sort of secure a simple victory—

[00:42:04] Right.

[00:42:04] And to start the ball riding. Because the NAACP's weapon is the courts and everything that they did, they wanted to have a case, you know, start these precedent cases. And I don't think it was any particularly dramatic thing I did. I was just curious. I got tired of teaching school and I thought this would be something interesting to do. So I went on and I never had a desire really to make a career in library work, I've done other stuff since then.

[00:42:34] Did this type of case rile the anger of, say, people who would have been supporters of the Ku Klux Klan? Say, as opposed to maybe integrating parks or schools because this was a library. I guess we had this image of Klansmen as not to being too bright.

**Graham:** [00:42:51] No, I never heard anything along those lines. Some of my—my father had been in business and some of his business associates that were of the other race would say they thought it was interesting, you know. They hoped that I won because most people didn't see any reason why a brown man couldn't hand the book over a counter as well as a white man, yeah.

**Graham:** [00:43:11] And your father was quite an—I think he was accomplished—he was a musician.

**Graham:** [00:43:16] My father's quite a guy. He's still living.

**Graham:** [00:43:18] Oh, yeah, I keep—

**Graham:** [00:43:18] Yeah, he is. Yeah, my father is a graduate of Howard University. He formed the orchestra when he was in high school, commuted back and forth from Washington and used to play dances at night to send himself through pharmacy school. And then in 1919, he established his own drugstore, which he kept at the same location until 1960, when the city purchased that area, Myrtle Ave to George Street, and put George Murphy homes there.

**Graham:** [00:43:48] Was he one to be involved in cleanup campaigns of—relative to Pennsylvania Avenue as far as vice and crime?

**Graham:** [00:43:56] Nope, nope, my father is a missionary in his own right. He was an institution down there. He was a banker, he was a lawyer, he was the advisor, and used to write people's letters, they used to do their taxes. And they just thought there was nobody like him. Then he was interesting in another way, in real estate. He saw these people living in these little substandard homes, and he was interested in real estate. And he purchased a number of homes in which people had been living twenty-five, thirty and forty years, just a quiet sort of thing. He's a life member of the NAACP and he's a nice man.

**Graham:** [00:44:33] All right, thank you.

*End of transcript*