

West Side Cleaners

My Parents History is a thread in one of the patches (African American patch) of the multi cultural, multi ethnic quilt that symbolizes the future American; "The Melting Pot", one culture, one ethnicity, one shade, light to dark, the new American.

C. R. Wallace

West Side Cleaners (1943-1962)

The West Side Cleaners was the first African American, full service dry cleaning plant in South Bend, Indiana and most likely in St. Joseph County; with the exception of Elkhart County who had a substantial African American community, the Westside Cleaners could have been the first in Indiana.

B. Pasco Wallace (b. May 1902 - Sept. 6, 1960) and his wife Beatrice C. (Ross) Wallace (b. Oct. 27, 1912 – Feb. 1962) bought a two story wood frame house with an attached red brick store front at 1333 W. Washington Street on the north east corner of Studebaker Street. The house and store front faced Washington Street; there was a back yard behind the house and a detached garage facing Studebaker Street. The garage was torn down and a concrete block building was constructed creating the operational area of the cleaners. The building was constructed with the help of neighbors and local tradesman. During that time in our history most men had some type of trade's experience, if not more than one trade's capability. The dry cleaning business was very successful for the next fifteen years until the Polish, Hungarian neighbors moved out and the neighborhood turned to a completely black experience. An interesting side to this story, Pasco was presented with a new idea that he did not think would be successful; a businessman has to be careful of these new fangled ideas; they could be a huge flop or a monumental success. The West Side Cleaners could have become a chain of very successful launder mats.

The Kenmore sewing machine that goes with this provenance sat inside of the east side front window of the store front facing Washington Street. The finished product, the cleaned clothes hung in front of the west side window; an L shaped counter going toward the east side window and a stair case leading into the house directly in line with the front door.

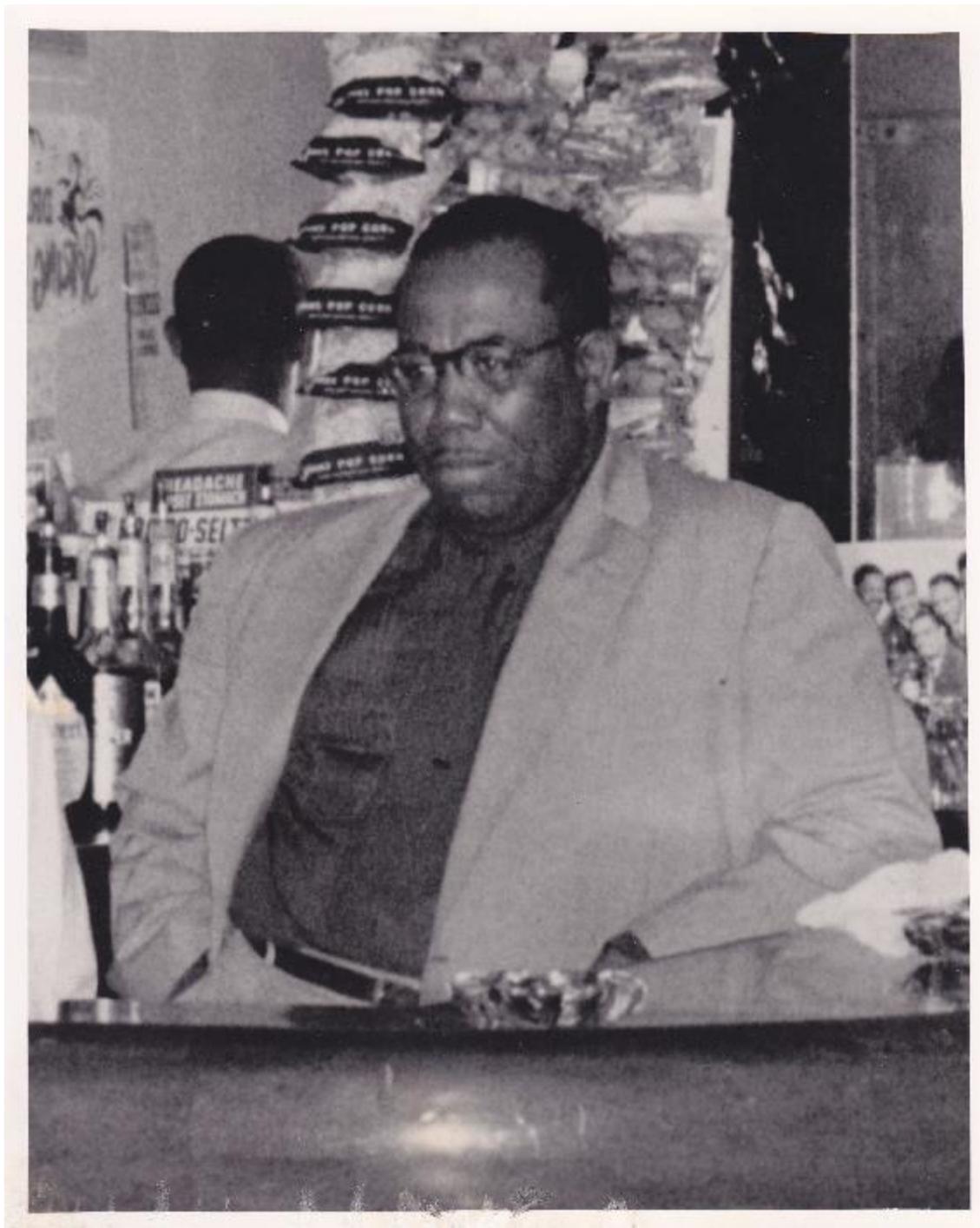
Difference between Dry Cleaning Store and Full Service Dry Cleaning Store:

- Dry Cleaning Stores was like a modern day outlet store with no cleaning capability; they received clothes in their store, however they sent the clothes to a full service dry cleaner to be cleaned; they had pressing equipment to press the cleaned product, some but not all had tailoring capability;
- Full Service Dry Cleaning Stores had the capability to clean the clothes, which included a storage tank underground to contain the cleaning solvent; in modern day parlance, "a one stop shop".

*In Loving Memory
Of
Pasco and Beatrice Wallace*



*From Your Son,
Raymond Wallace*



Pasco Wallace, ca. 1940/50. Very little is known about Pasco before coming to South Bend. He may have come from southern Missouri or Illinois and his father's name was Julius who died in the early part of the twentieth century. According to Elaine, his sister he was told to get out of the south before sunset for dressing too well and who knows what other reasons. Pasco was a member of Olivet A.M.E, Church in South Bend, Indiana.



Beatrice C. (Ross) Wallace and son, C. Raymond Wallace – 5 years old; ca. 1945. Beatrice came to South Bend with her parents in 1924; Troy and Hazeltine Ross from Lost Creek a part of Terre Haute, Indiana. She was of mixed heritage, Black, White and maybe Native American. There is a black and white print of Raymond's 5th birthday party in somebody's family history, it has a habit of reappearing every five or ten years. I went to First A.M.E. Zion Church with my mother until I was able to drive then followed my father to Olivet A.M.E. Church.



C. Raymond Wallace- age 60, ca. 2000. (b. Sept. 4, 1940) The son of Pasco and Beatrice Wallace. Professional photographer for over thirty years. Started in June 1969 through July 1976 as a on the job trainee photographer, reporter at W.S.B.T. – television news department; I was the first African American hired full time in this position in the news department. I left W.S.B.T. in 1976 for Chicago and New York City for two and a half years each then the San Francisco Bay area for seven years before returning to South Bend in 1988. During my time in San Francisco I was a camera store manager for the Kit's Camera Chain. My love is history and politics; in the 1960's I was campaign manager for Bernard White who ran and won a seat in the Indiana State Legislature.



Jerry L. Bartlett, my brother, was born to a good friend of my parents in December, 1950; her name was also Jerri. In 1953 Jerry's mother was dying and asked my mother to raise her son who became my brother. Jerry lived with us until our mother Beatrice died in 1962. Jerry's father who lived in Indianapolis, Indiana was able and happy to continue with his son's formative years. Jerry presently lives in Slidell, Louisiana.

1940' s South Bend Racial Perspective

- 1943 West Side Cleaners opened its doors twelve (12) years before Rosa Parks or Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. entered histories view.
- The West Side Cleaners opened its doors in a predominently Polish, Hungarian neighborhood with a few black professionals and businesses.

West Side Cleaners

- During this time period South Bend was not a bad city for black citizens to live however it was far from being perfect.
- Homes and property was "red lined" determining were black citizens could or could not buy property.
- Several business' would not serve black citizens:

Tea Room at Robertson's Department Store;

The Philadelphia, a ice cream soda shop

- 1936 - The Natatorium 7 committee fought hard to get the doors of the public swimming pool opened to black citizens. Black citizens were allowed one (i) day a week to swim in the public swimming pool; 1950 the doors to the Natatorium were finally opened to all citizens.
- The West Side Cleaners was located two blocks west of the Natatorium.

Below is a copy of a deed of gift of a circa 1950 professional sewing machine used by my parents to the Center of History in South Bend, Indiana along with this provenance.

DEED OF GIFT

**Center for History
808 W. Washington, South Bend, IN 46601**

Name: <u>Raymond Wallace</u>	Date: <u>07/16/2014</u>
Address: _____	
City: <u>South Bend</u>	State: <u>IN</u> Zip: _____
PhoneH/W: <u>574/210-4479</u>	Fax: _____

I/we hereby unconditionally give, donate, transfer, assign, bestow, set over and deliver to the Center for History, all rights, title and interest in and to the property described under the heading "Property Description", including copyrights whether at common law or by statute. I hereby represent that I have unencumbered title to this property, free of any conflicting claims or interests. It is my intent and understanding that the property may be exhibited, loaned, retained or disposed of by the Center for History at its unrestricted discretion. It is distinctly understood by me that it is my purpose and intention to vest all the incidents of absolute ownership of the property in the Center for History from this time forward, and hereby waive all present or future rights in, to and over said property, its use or disposition, for myself, my distributees, heirs, assigns, personal representatives, and all others who might claim by, under or through me.

Description of Gift:

c. 1950 Professional Sewing Machine

By my signature below I accept the foregoing conditions and acknowledge reading any attached information.

R Wallace
 Donor's Signature

7-15-2014
 Date

Co-Donor's Signature _____

Date _____

This gift is given in memory of: PASCO & BEATRICE WALLACE
 (Optional)

The Center for History acknowledges receipt and acceptance of the above gift.

By: *Erica E. Kirk*
 Erica E. Kirk, Registrar

15 July 2014
 Date

Accession# 2014.85