

# Untold Stories

## OF BLACK MONTEVALLO

*Everybody's stories matter. It's not just a matter of nostalgia, it powers us into the present and the future.* -- Barack Obama  
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### SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN JACKSONVILLE

Only a few people today remember the once vibrant Black community of Jacksonville located on and just off Main Street where Jack's and the former Eclipse are now located. A few houses from the Jacksonville era survive on Island Street. Starting in 1952, many families were displaced by eminent domain to make way for FHA apartments and later Montevallo Elementary School.

The joy of growing up among kinfolk in Jacksonville is highlighted by a descendent of preacher Jesse Brazier. (He helped establish A.M.E Ward Chapel Church in 1872.) "All of Grandpa Jesse's children grew up in Jacksonville. Their children married and built their homes and reared their children there. You don't know the fun and joy of growing up with all your cousins, with your aunts having a hand in loving you and punishing you too. Aunt Mary sitting on her back porch seeing everything we kids did and reporting to our mothers if we did wrong. We had birthday parties with lemonade and ginger snaps. The children would always be in our yard." James Salter recalls playing hide-and-seek with the Jones children, Herman Jay, Marla and LuAnn. "We would run from one yard to the other trying to tag each other. Those were the days!!!"

As a way of honoring this almost forgotten black enclave, we present Jacksonville in pictures highlighting the people, homes, and a Sunday afternoon gathering in the back yards of the Cunningham and McGinnis families. The tables, according to Mrs. Patricia Walker, would have been loaded with soul food: Fried chicken and dressing, collard greens, black eye peas, macaroni and cheese, potato salad, cornbread, cake, Kool Aid and Lemonade.



Franklin Fluker beside the Cunningham house on Main Street



O.C. Cunningham and his dog Danny



Sunday afternoon in Jacksonville



Jacksonville is one of countless communities of color impacted by eminent domain. "Cities often target these communities for condemnations, as government officials know the residents there rarely have the

political clout or the financial means to fight back." See the Institute for Justice: <https://ij.org/issues/private-property/eminant-domain/alabama-eminant-domain-laws/>.



*Photos courtesy of James Salter. Submitted by Kathy King & Anitka Stewart Sims. Contact us at [Movaltrail@gmail.com](mailto:Movaltrail@gmail.com). We want to hear your stories and welcome correction of any errors of fact or interpretation.*