

African American History Oral History Project

COPH OHP_27



Center for Oral and Public History California State University, Fullerton

Administrative Information

Acquisition

All items in this collection were donated to the Center for Oral and Public History by the interviewer and interviewees.

Access

The collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation

Citations must identify the oral history number, interviewee, interviewer, date, project, and the Center for Oral and Public History.

Literary Rights and Quotations

The oral histories are made available for research purposes only. No part of the audio tape or the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the Center for Oral and Public History, California State University, Fullerton.

Requests for permission to quote from these materials should be addressed to:

Center for Oral and Public History
California State University, Fullerton
P.O. Box 6846
Fullerton, CA 92834

or

coph@fullerton.edu

The request should include identification of the specific passages and identification of the user.

Restrictions

Please see individual oral history for information regarding restrictions.

Descriptive Summary

Title

African American History [OHP 27]

Dates

1966-1980

Creator

Extent

46 oral histories. 37 narrators.

Collateral

Repository

Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History
California State University, Fullerton

Project Abstract

African American History Project

Narrators:

Alexander, Elizabeth Pat
Bailey, A. Peter
Beavers, George Jr.
Bradley, Thomas A.
Brazier, Wesley R.
Breitman, George
Brown, James
Covington, Floyd
Glberman, Martin
Goldwater, Walter
Gorman, William
Grant, M. Earl
Houston, Norman O.
Hudson, H. Claude
Hudson, H. Claude
James, Cyril Lionel Robert (C.L.R.)
Johnson, Clarence
Jones, LeRoi (Baraka, Amiri)
Karenga, Ron Everett "Maulana"
Lindsey, Gilbert
Davis, Almena
McCarthy, Mary Margaret
Matthews, Charles
Matthews, Miriam
Mays, Darthulia
Miller, Loren
Smith, Jimmie
Somerville, J. Alexander
Somerville, Vada
Still, William Grant
Webb, Constance Pearlstein
Williams, Mabel
Williams, Robert F.

OH 179

Narrator: ALEXANDER, ELIZABETH PAT
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: April 8, 1967
Location: Los Angeles, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format(s): Digital
Length: 00:43:11
Transcript: Final, 15 pages

Abstract:

Editor since 1953 of the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, discusses Black journalism in the Los Angeles area, condition of Blacks in Los Angeles, and events from 1953 to 1966.

OH 1685

Narrator: BAILEY, A. PETER (1938–)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: July 27, 1976
Location: New York City, New York
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format(s): Digital
Length: 01:19:11
Transcript: Not transcribed

Abstract:

Head of Black Theater Alliance, and associate editor of *Ebony* in 1976. As editor of *The Black Lash* for Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity, Mr. Bailey discusses how and why he became linked up with this organization, the death by assassination of its leader, the on-going Black movement's dedication to Malcolm X's goals.

OH 133.1

Narrator: GEORGE BEAVERS JR. (1891-1989)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: October 15, 1966
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format(s): Digital
Length: 01:00:59
Transcript: Final; 14 pages
Ephemera: None

Abstract:

An oral history of George Beavers Jr., cofounder of Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company in Los Angeles California. This interview was conducted for the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview was to gather information regarding the history of Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company. Specifically, this interview details the meeting between cofounders William Nickerson Jr., Norman O. Houston, and George A. Beavers Jr.; mentions American Mutual Benefit Association; reflects on early efforts to prevent an all African American business from forming; discusses possible racial overtones involved; speaks about African Americans receiving inferior insurance policies; reflects on fight against barriers in the trade associations; mentions American Life Convention, the Life Insurance Agency Management Association, Life Office Management Association, American Management Association, Life Advertiser's Association; discusses financial growth of the business; talks about segregated markets; shares a story about a Caucasian woman becoming a member; speaks about expanding business to other states; reflects on the market crash of 1929; discusses unemployment in the African American community; talks about restrictive housing covenants; talks about giving support to civil rights movements; mentions the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Urban League; mentions Ebony magazine; speaks on African Americans learning African American history; speaks about African American art; reflects on the importance of positive role models for African American youths; discusses mortgage loans for African Americans; President Roosevelt mentioned; 1941 FEPC executive order mentioned; reflects on the political climate of 1925 compared to 1966; discusses the importance of accessing the total market; talks about California legislation passed requiring companies to give employment without regard to race or color; speaks about support for civil rights legislation; talks about providing leadership for the civil rights movement; ends the interview discussing the importance of trade associations, education, and its impact on the quality of salesman his company employs.

OH 0133.2

Narrator: GEORGE BEAVERS JR. (1891-1989)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: November 12, 1966
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format(s): Digital
Length: 00:42:49
Transcript: Final; 12 pages
Ephemera: None

Abstract:

An oral history with George Beavers Jr. president of the Housing Authority in Los Angeles. This interview was conducted for the Black Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview was gather information regarding his appointment to the Los Angeles Housing Authority; what the purpose of the Housing Authority was; demolishing of slums in Los Angeles; building of temporary and permanent housing units; construction of new civic buildings and highways; demographic of people living in the housing units in 1966; how much money the housing units made for Los Angeles; establishment and history of the Housing Authority; Federal Housing Acts; how Los Angeles recognized the need for housing; non-discriminatory policies of the Los Angeles Housing Authority; public dissatisfaction with Housing Authority in the 1950s; Los Angeles City Council reneging on the deal to build additional housing units; the defeat of Mayor Bowron; going to Washington DC to negotiate for the need of housing; demolishing of temporary housing; being the only Black person on the commission; how the mayor appointed members of the commission; how segregation played a part in giving housing to people; the Supreme Court's decision on the city council attempting to renege on a deal to build housing units; becoming chairman of the Housing Authority; the Housing Authority having nothing to do with Urban Renewal; the housing authority having nothing to do with the real estate lobby.

OH 0178

Narrator: BRADLEY, THOMAS A. (1917-1998)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: April 18, 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:40:48
Transcript: Final, 11 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with Los Angeles City Councilman, Thomas A. Bradley. This interview was conducted for the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. Bradley discusses the problem of gerrymandering in Los Angeles; Black leadership and the goal of attaining equal opportunity in all walks of life; the Black business community's tendency toward small business versus corporate enterprise; the population explosion in Los Angeles after World War II and how that affected leadership in the community; the passage of the FEPC in the 1950s; the fight for public housing. Bradley talks about his former career as a police officer; earning his law degree, passing the bar, and starting his own practice before being elected to the Los Angeles City Council. He discusses the issue of police brutality complaints against the LAPD and shares his solutions to these problems. Bradley would go on to be elected mayor of Los Angeles in 1973.

OH 0136

Narrator: BRAZIER, WESLEY R. (1917-1991)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: November 29, 1966
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 1:04:47
Transcript: Final; 16 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with Wesley R. Brazier, executive director for the Los Angeles Urban League. This interview was conducted as part of the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview is to gain perspective regarding Mr. Brazier's experience with the Los Angeles Urban League. Specifically, this interview details earning a Bachelor's Degree from the University School of Social Work in Atlanta, Georgia (1938); working as a physical education director and insurance salesman in New Orleans, Louisiana; obtaining a Master's Degree in Social Science and then enlisting in the United States Army in 1942; his discharge from the Army and moving back home to New Orleans in 1945; inability to obtain work in the social work field in New Orleans; experience working as a field representative for the Southern Regional Council; earning a position with Veterans Administration through the nationwide psychiatric social workers exam; relocation to Los Angeles in 1947; Veterans Administration discriminatory practices; experience working for the Bureau of Public Assistance in South Los Angeles and Bellflower, California as a social worker; obtaining a position with the L.A. Urban League as the director of industrial relations department in July 1948; leading projects that promoted the acceptance of Negro salesclerks at major departments stores in Los Angeles; his promotion as executive director of the L.A. Urban League in 1951; the Urban League's functions, structure, constitution, and bylaws; L.A. Urban League social contributions to different neighborhoods; collaboration between the L.A. Urban League and the Urban League National Office; the rise of the African American population in Los Angeles during the 1960s; the L.A. Urban League's accomplishments under his leadership; the lack of Urban League representation in rural areas such as Southern states; the rise of public employment services during the 1950s and its effect on the Urban League's relevance to communities; Urban League's contribution to the enactment of the Federal Manpower Training Act (1965); Urban League's collaboration with the Labor Department; the Civil Rights Movement's positive affect on the Urban League; the Urban League's relationship with the white business community post-Civil Rights Movement; Urban League's involvement with the Los Angeles City Human Relations Commission; and a description of the Urban League's different program areas: job development and employment, education and youth incentives, housing, health and welfare and public information and research.

OH 1686

Narrator: BREITMAN, GEORGE (1916–1986)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: July 27, 1976
Location: New York City, New York
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 01:16:33
Transcript: Not transcribed

Officer in the Socialist Workers Party, and for many years editor of its party organ, the *Socialist Appeal/Militant*, Mr. Breitman reminisces about C. L. R. James, Marxism, Black nationalism, and how he came to possess and edit for publication the tapes and writings of Malcolm X.

OH 0180

Narrator: BROWN, JAMES
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: April 8, 1967
Location: Watts, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:53:57
Transcript: Final; 20 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with James Brown, head of Willowbrook Job Corporation. This interview was conducted for the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview was to gather information regarding Brown's early years and his later experience with the Willowbrook Job Corporation. Brown describes his move to California, working as a welder with Kaiser Richmond Shipyards, and later starting a business transporting busses and workers from California to Alaska. He talks about living in Watts, California; meeting with religious leaders to discuss what caused the Watts Riots; and his views on a non-violent approach to Civil Rights. Brown discusses his job training solutions for unemployment in the Black community and details the vision and founding of the Willowbrook Job Corporation. He talks about the expense of running the Willowbrook Job Corporation and how its initial vision from a job training facility transformed into a community center; shares why he is committed to the Willowbrook Job Corporation; how he has been getting funding from churches in Southern California; discusses the board of directors and advisory board and the importance of having local community members on the board; describes the services offered at the Willowbrook Job Corporation, including help for children and mothers, unemployment services, and offering classes in English, voter education, and consumer education. Lastly, he shares his thoughts on why Los Angeles will not let Watts become its own city; how different police agencies go into Willowbrook and ticket the people; and the Community Alert Patrol and their relationship with the community and the police.

OH 0181.1

Narrator: COVINGTON, FLOYD (1901-1989)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: November 3, 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:54:05
Transcript: Final; 21 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with former executive director of the Los Angeles Urban League, from 1931-1950, Floyd Covington. This interview was conducted for the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. Covington discusses his early life, including the death of his mother at a young age, attending high school in Seattle and college in Topeka, Kansas; and moving to Los Angeles after being awarded a fellowship with the Los Angeles Urban League. Covington talks about the formation of the Los Angeles Urban League out of the Tuskegee Industrial Welfare League; the emergence of other social welfare agencies in the 1920s and 1930s; efforts to break down job discrimination; promoting job training in different fields. Covington also discusses the “Don’t shop where you can’t work” campaign, and its support from Black newspapers, *Sentinel* and *California Eagle*; types of work available to Blacks at that time; stereotypes in the motion picture industry and advertising, and efforts to work against them.

OH 0181.2

Narrator: COVINGTON, FLOYD (1901-1989)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: December 15, 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:38:41
Transcript: Final; 15 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with former executive director of the Los Angeles Urban League, from 1931-1950, Floyd Covington. This interview was conducted for the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. Covington discusses the migration of Black workers to Southern California during World War II, efforts to address discrimination against Black workers in Los Angeles, and the contributions of the Los Angeles Urban in wartime housing projects; describes training programs available to Black workers, especially in the defense industry, during World War II; talks about on the relationship between labor unions and Black workers; reflects on the Zoot Suit Riots and their effect on LA County's establishment of the Commission on Human Relations; and finally, explains the training received by maintenance workers for LA County.

OH 1687

Narrator: GLABERMAN, MARTIN (1918–2001)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: August 20, 1978
Location: Michigan
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 00:49:37
Transcript: Not transcribed

Abstract:

Marxist pamphleteer, editor, polemicist, and supporter of C. L. R. James. Mr. Glaberman recalls his time spent as an early follower of James in the Johnson/Forest Tendency, a political faction within the Socialist Workers Party and Workers' Party in the 1940s and 1950s; also as official in the Committees of Correspondence, 1954 and early 1960s; leader of "Facing Reality," C. L. R. James's final organization in 1960s.

OH 1688

Narrator: GOLDWATER, WALTER (1907–1985)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: July 29, 1976
Location: New York City, New York
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 00:39:07
Transcript: Not transcribed

Abstract:

A bookman, dealer in rare African and Afro-American materials, owner of The University Place Bookshop in New York, compiler of *Radical Periodicals*, member of Socialist Workers Party and an early friend of C. L. R. James, Mr. Goldwater narrates anecdotes concerned with James, George Padmore in London, Constance Webb, Richard and Ellen Wright, Selma James, James's deportation proceedings and stay on Ellis Island, and political career with Eric Williams's government in Trinidad.

OH 1689

Narrator: GORMAN, WILLIAM
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: August 23, 1978
Location: Michigan
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 01:10:35
Transcript: Not transcribed

Abstract:

A Polish-American follower of C.L.R. James, William Gorman, is considered the “historian” of the group. Gorman recounts details of his first meeting with James as “J.R. Johnson”; describes his peculiarities of platform presence; Constance Webb’s marriage to C.L.R. James, and the couple’s close friendship with the Richard Wrights. Gorman also discusses other members in their associations and the divisions which occurred.

OH 0135

Narrator: GRANT, M. EARL (1891-1981)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: November 12, 1966
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History project
Length: 01:02:48
Audio Format: Digital
Transcript: Final, 20 pages

Abstract:

An African American executive in the savings and loan business in Los Angeles in the 1940s reminisces about his business career in Pasadena and Los Angeles, California especially in savings and loans. Comments on Watts riot.

OH 0134

Narrator: HOUSTON, NORMAN O. (1893-1981)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: October 27, 1966
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 00:46:33
Transcript: Verbatim, 19 pages

Abstract:

Founder and former president of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company since 1924 discusses the history of the company.

OH 0006.1

Narrator: HUDSON, H. CLAUDE (1896-1989)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: November 29, 1966
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:52:32
Transcript: Final; 14 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with H. Claude Hudson, dentist and president of Broadway Savings and Loan. This interview was conducted as part of the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. Hudson talks about his family and growing up in Louisiana, and his move to Los Angeles from Shreveport at the end of 1923. He talks about the development of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1910, and his involvement in the organization, first as a member, and then as president of the Shreveport chapter. He describes the organization's early goals, raising money to fight for social justice and working to abolish lynching. Hudson discusses the founding of Liberty Savings & Loan in Los Angeles, and its eventual sale; talks about the then common practice of financial institutions not making loans to Black people; and details the formation of Broadway Federal Savings & Loan, which was organized by Hudson and others to help the Black community secure loans.

OH 0006.2

Narrator: HUDSON, H. CLAUDE (1896-1989)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: January 10, 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:58:58
Transcript: Final; 17 pages

Abstract:

The second interview session of an oral history with H. Claude Hudson, dentist and president of Broadway Savings and Loan. This interview was conducted as part of the African American Oral History Project, for California State University, Fullerton. Hudson talks about supporting Black aviator, Ace Foreman; discusses the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and his involvement in the organization since 1913. He discussed his role as president of the Shreveport Louisiana branch of the NAACP, the organization's efforts to raise money in the fight for an anti-lynching law, and the need to be discrete because of the dangers in the South. Hudson describes coming to Los Angeles in 1923, becoming president of the Los Angeles NAACP branch the following year, and building the Los Angeles branch. Hudson discusses his 1924 arrest for swimming in the ocean at Manhattan Beach, and the NAACP's subsequent fight to open the beaches to everybody; lists past presidents and members of the Los Angeles branch of the NAACP; talks about the NAACP's activities, including its involvement in the Ossian Sweet trial, and efforts to combat movements for separate schools and separate swimming pools. Hudson also briefly discusses the Marcus Garvey movement, Muslim Movement, and effects of left-wing movements on the NAACP.

OH 0006.3

Narrator: HUDSON, H. CLAUDE (1896-1989)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: April 18, 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:49:54
Transcript: Final; 13 pages

Abstract:

The third interview session of an oral history with H. Claude Hudson, dentist and president of Broadway Savings and Loan. This interview was conducted as part of the African American Oral History Project, for California State University, Fullerton. Hudson discusses African American civic leaders in Los Angeles; compares Los Angeles to other large cities, in terms of race relations; discusses W.E.B. Du Bois' move to the left and falling out of favor with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Hudson describes the effects of the Depression on Negro leadership in the 1930s; talks about Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1941 executive order to ban discriminatory employment practices and the NAACP's role in forming watchdog committees; discusses the NAACP's fight for fair housing; shares his views on the effectiveness of protests and demonstrations; talks about the Watts Riot of 1965 and details problems in Watts, including a lack of hospital facilities, which contributed to the murder of Leonard Deadwyler by the LAPD. Discusses the disadvantages of incorporating Watts as a separate city; and talks about breaking down segregation through negotiation.

OH 0006.4

Narrator: HUDSON, H. CLAUDE (1896-1989)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: October 12, 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:36:04
Transcript: Final; 11 pages

Abstract:

The fourth interview session of an oral history with H. Claude Hudson, dentist and president of Broadway Savings and Loan. This interview was conducted as part of the African American Oral History Project, for California State University, Fullerton. Hudson discusses his involvement as president of the Los Angeles branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1924 to 1934. He talks about the effects of the Depression on the NAACP; combating segregation of Los Angeles city swimming pools; and campaigning to have signs removed from small businesses stating, "we do not serve colored people." He describes the gradual integration of restaurants and businesses in Los Angeles; shares his views on other organizations, such as the Los Angeles Forum, and their methods of operation; and discusses the fight to end restrictive covenants in Los Angeles.

OH 1690

Narrator: JAMES, CYRIL LIONEL ROBERT “CLR” (1901-1989)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: August 4, 1976
Location: Washington D.C.
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Format: Digital
Length: 01:01:19
Status: Not transcribed

Abstract:

An oral history with C.L.R. James, a Pan-African statesman, Black nationalist leader, cricket reporter for *The Manchester Guardian*, socialist reformer, revolutionary, and educator from the West Indies. James reflects upon his exploits, and elaborates upon some of the principal people, who, at one time or another, were his devoted followers in the United States.

OH 0139

Narrator: JOHNSON, CLARENCE
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: Fall 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Length: 01:03:18
Audio Format: Digital
Transcript: Verbatim, 32 pages

Abstract:

A West Coast African American leader in the Dining Car Porter's Union from the 1930s to the 1950s reminisces about Los Angeles, San Francisco, history of the union, Black workers in the labor movement, and labor-management relations.

OH 1691

Narrator: JONES, LEROI [BARAKA, AMIRI] (1934–2014)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: July 28, 1976
Location: Newark, New Jersey
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 01:06:05
Transcript: Final; 24 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with poet, playwright, father of the Black Arts Movement [BART], and activist for black nationalism in America, LeRoi Jones [AKA Amiri Baraka]. Jones identifies himself as a supporter of Robert F. Williams and “Direct Action,” as advocated by Malcolm X. He describes how a trip to Cuba and the Cuban Revolution set off his political career; discusses his time in Harlem, working with HARYOU, and bringing art and theater to the streets of Harlem. He talks about his move to Newark, New Jersey, and the creation of Spirit House; working with the Black Arts Alliance; briefly mentions being involved with Ron Karenga’s Kawaïda movement before disassociating with it; discusses various Black Power Conferences, including one in 1967 that coincided with the Newark Rebellion; talks about the formation of the Congress of African People (CAP) in 1970 and efforts to draw international support for African liberation and struggles, and the destruction of colonialism. Jones discusses his involvement in the Pan-African Movement and his relationship with CLR James, who was also active in the movement. He talks about the proposed plan for the Kawaïda Housing Project in Newark, New Jersey, and how it was eventually blocked in 1972; he describes his distrust of politicians and the electoral process and discusses the need for the formation of a revolutionary party, such as a Marxist-Leninist party, to bring socialism and make change. Jones closes by talking about his return to playwriting and his current production, *SI*.

OH 1692

Narrator: KARENGA, RON [MAULANA] EVERETT (1941–)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: May 30, 1976
Location: San Diego, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 00:47:05
Transcript: Final, 12 pages

Abstract:

Black militant West Coast leader of a group called *US*. Karenga recounts his experiences and association with Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones, OH 1691], in the spreading of Black cultural and political nationalism through a philosophy and ideology called Kawaïda. Karenga reveals his role in the Black Power politics of the mid-1960s, and his subsequent frame-up by the FBI and the Los Angeles police.

OH 0177

Narrator: LINDSAY, GILBERT (1900-1990)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: November 13, 1967
Location: Los Angeles, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 0:30:12
Transcript: Final; 9 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with Gilbert Lindsay, the first African American elected to the Los Angeles City Council in 1963, from the Ninth District, and the third Black elected official in California. This interview was conducted as part of the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton, to gather information about various political issues in Los Angeles. Lindsay discusses his participation in the 1934 campaign of Frederick Roberts and Augustus Hawkins; his philosophy and ideology toward California politics; and problems of gerrymandering in council districts in Los Angeles. Lindsay also talks about his efforts to register Black voters and educate them on the value of political participation; details issues facing minority communities, such as public housing and fair employment, and discusses the importance of education on these issues. Lastly, Lindsay shares his prediction that Americans will one day learn to stand together, regardless of race.

OH 0137

Narrator: LOMAX, ALMENA DAVIS (1915–2011)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Dates: December 27, 1966; December 28, 1966; January 12, 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 03:14:15
Transcript: Final, 48 pp.

Abstract:

The former editor of the *Los Angeles Tribune*, a Black weekly newspaper published from 1940 to 1960, Lomax describes her background of the African American newspaper *California Eagle*; education and experience writing news articles; refusals of many major experiences and policies during twenty years on the *Tribune* especially those opposed by the *Sentinel*; prejudice and discrimination toward African American newspapers; personal philosophy and theology on racial issues, general African American psyche, political views, civil rights, activism and publishing activity in Tuskegee, Alabama during the 1950s.

OH 0175

Narrator: MATTHEWS, CHARLES H. (1906 –1985)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: January 5, 1967
Location: Los Angeles, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 00:41:57
Transcript: Verbatim; 70 pages

Abstract:

An oral history Charles H. Mathews, an attorney and resident of central Los Angeles This interview was conducted for the African American Oral History Project for California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview was to gather information regarding his personal experience practicing law as one of the few Black attorneys in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office in Los Angeles, California. Specifically, this interview details his education in Los Angeles; education at UCLA and UC Berkley; passing the bar examination; when he started to practice law; where his law office was; hardships of Black people going to college; working the District Attorney's Office; Civil Service jobs; compares life in California versus life on the East Coast; thoughts on the Fair Employment Practices Commission; why crime happens; why he left the District Attorney's Office; the different race of clients he had for his private practice; time dealing with Black people not getting insurance and losing their license; how he fought against Black people losing their licenses; how legal action changed the conditions in Los Angeles; thoughts on CORE and the NAACP advocating for Black people; how World War II led to civil service jobs being available for Black people; Black people doing a job just as well as a white person; the importance of the Tuskegee Institute; time on the police commission; advocating for more Black police officers; how the police commission appoints a Chief of Police and how the Civil Service Commission oversee the chief; how some police officers avoided trouble; Captain Heinz and the Red Squad; Anti-communist rhetoric.

OH 0007

Narrator: MATTHEWS, MIRIAM (1905–2003)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: November 29, 1966
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 01:19:25
Transcript: Edited, 35 pages

Abstract:

The first African American librarian hired by the Los Angeles Public Library, Matthews describes her education; the organization of the Los Angeles Public Library in the 1930s and 1940s; and discusses African American writers, musicians, and businesses in the Los Angeles area.

OH 1649

Narrator: MAYS, DATHULIA (1909–)
Interviewer: Edison Mays
Date: April 18, 1974
Location: Santa Ana, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Length: 2 hours, 15 minutes
Audio Format: Digital
Transcript: Final, 20 pages

Abstract:

Dathulia Mays shares personal recollections of life as a sharecropper in the Southern states of Mississippi and Arkansas; comments on various family members; problems of growing up in a large family; difficulties of owning property; racially mixed marriage; and treatment of Black soldiers during World War I.

OH 0174

Narrator: MILLER, LOREN (1903–1967)
Interviewer: Lawrence B. de Graaf
Dates: March 3, 1967; April 29, 1967
Location: Los Angeles, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Length: 00:42:59; 02:20:57
Audio Format: Digital
Transcript: Final, 52 pages

Abstract:

Los Angeles Judge, Loren Miller reminisces about his early life, newspaper career, Black journalists in Los Angeles, Blacks in the communist party, and Los Angeles Black organizations. Second interview session covers topics such as, Blacks in Los Angeles in 1930s and World War II, including school segregation, Black politics, civil rights activities, Fair Employment Practices Committee cases, wartime riots, and protest movements.

OH 1747

Narrator: SMITH, JIMMIE (1892-1981)
Interviewer: Lawrence B. de Graaf
Date: July 18, 1974
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Length: 01:54:08
Audio Format: Digital
Transcript: Final, 68 pages

Abstract:

Los Angeles journalist and Hollywood film worker, Jimmie Smith discusses early Black community in Los Angeles, prominent residents, Blacks in film, film casting in 1920s to 1940s, and Black sports reporting. Includes comments on social life and various clubs in the Black community.

OH 0001

Narrator: SOMERVILLE, J. ALEXANDER (1881-1973)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Date: Unknown (ca. 1966)
Location: Los Angeles, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Audio Format: Digital
Length: 00:48:34
Transcript: Edited; 19 pages

Abstract:

An oral history with Dr. J. Alexander Somerville, a dentist who spent much of his life in Los Angeles California. This interview was conducted for the African American Oral History Project for the California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview was to gather information regarding the details of his book and other parts of his life. Specifically, this interview goes over his time in Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party; participation in political parties; bid to become governor of the U.S Virgin Islands; work for the state of California Emergency Relief State Administration; his dental practices in the Los Angeles area; his wife being a dentist; Hotel Somerville, his apartment complex; Mr. Blazit; friendship with Robert Owens; foundation of the NAACP in Los Angeles; African American and Caucasian participation in the NAACP; positions with the NAACP; Shackleford; protests of the time; and time in the Los Angeles Police Commission.

OH 0138

Narrators: SOMERVILLE, J. ALEXANDER (1881-1973)
SOMERVILLE, VADA (1885-1972)

Interviewer: Lawrence B. de Graaf

Date: June 10, 1967

Location: Los Angeles, California

Language: English

Project: African American History Project

Length: 01:04:50

Audio Format: Digital

Transcript: Edited, 37 pages

Abstract:

African American dentists in Los Angeles since 1904 and founders of the Los Angeles Branch of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), J. Alexander and Vada Somerville talk about the Black community in Los Angeles in the period from 1900 to 1950; discuss West Indians in Los Angeles; and race restrictive covenants.

OH 0176

Narrator: STILL, WILLIAM GRANT (1895-1980)
Interviewer: R. Donald Brown
Dates: November 13, 1967, and December 4, 1967
Location: Unknown
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Length: 1 hour, 45 minutes
Audio Format: Digital
Transcript: Final, 70 pages (with index, photos, appendix)

Abstract:

An oral history with Black musician and composer, William Grant Still. Born in Woodville, Mississippi, Still wrote nearly one hundred fifty compositions and was the first African American to conduct a major symphony orchestra in the United States. In 1936 he directed the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in the Hollywood Bowl using his own compositions. Still's oral history includes a discussion of African American classical music and contains biographical notes, and a dedication written by Miriam Matthews [OH 0007].

OH 1693

Narrator: WEBB, CONSTANCE PEARLSTIEN (1918-2005)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: June 14, 1980
Location: San Francisco, California
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Length: 00:33:15
Audio Format: Digital
Transcript: Not transcribed

Abstract:

An oral history with model, actor, and author, Constance Webb. Webb was the second wife of C.L.R. James [OH 1690], and mother of C.L.R. James, Jr. She describes her early Marxist associations; her introduction to C.L.R. on a West Coast speaking tour; his correspondence with her; and her modeling career. She talks about the police harassment encountered in their partnership, their decision to separate; C.L.R. being jailed in Los Angeles prior to his deportation to England; and her new career as a journalist for *Correspondence*.

OH 1694

Narrator: WILLIAMS, MABEL (1931-2014)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: August 19, 1978
Location: Baldwin, Michigan
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Length: 00:35:35
Audio Format: Digital
Transcript: Not transcribed

Abstract:

An oral history with Mabel Williams, wife of Robert F. Williams [OH 1695]. Williams talks about living in the Black community of Baldwin, Michigan; expresses her feelings toward continuing segregation for Black Americans in the South; and day-to-day frustrations and hardships, along with fears for the well-being of her children under these circumstances. Williams discusses her new career as a radio announcer in Cuba for "Radio Free Dixie," and her experiences in China, North Korea, and Africa.

OH 1695

Narrator: WILLIAMS, ROBERT F. (1925-1996)
Interviewer: Joan V. Feeney
Date: August 19, 1978
Location: Baldwin, Michigan
Language: English
Project: African American History Project
Length: 02:06:16
Format: Digital
Transcript: Not transcribed

Abstract:

An oral history with civil rights leader, Robert F. Williams. Williams was a poet, journalist, and editor of a local news sheet called *The Crusader*, which supported “Direct Action” against violence. In his interview, Williams talks about forming a rifle club with his neighbors in the town of Monroe, North Carolina to combat a reactivated Ku Klux Klan. He also comments on his flight from persecutors in North Carolina, and discusses experiences he had while a refugee in Cuba, China, North Korea, and Africa.