

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Augusta Clark

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Clark, Augusta, 1932-2013
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Augusta Clark,
Dates:	July 27, 2000
Bulk Dates:	2000
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:19:52).
Abstract:	City council member The Honorable Augusta Clark (1932 - 2013) was the second black woman in the history of Philadelphia to have served on the city council. After over twenty years of service, she joined Mayor John Street's cabinet as Secretary of Agencies, Authorities, Boards and Commissions. Clark was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 27, 2000, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2000_014
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Augusta Alexander Clark was born on March 5, 1932, in Union Town, Alabama, the daughter of Harrison and Lula B. Alexander. Clark grew up in Fairmont, West Virginia, although she spent her entire adult life in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Clark arrived fresh from West Virginia State College working as a "Girl Friday" for *Color Magazine*. She then earned her Masters of Library Science degree from Drexel University and a law degree from Temple University School of Law.

Clark served as councilwoman at large and majority whip on the City Council of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Clark was the second black woman in the history of Philadelphia to have served on the city council. In over twenty years of service, Clark compiled a distinctive record of accomplishments. As majority whip, she managed legislation and served as an integral part of the Council leadership team. Clark focused her energy on improving the city's public schools and revitalizing the poor and under developed communities in Philadelphia.

She retired from the city council in February 2000, but was still very much involved in local affairs. In March 2000, Clark became Secretary of Agencies, Authorities, Boards and Commissions in Mayor John Street's cabinet. In this capacity she communicated between the mayor and nearly 150 citywide organizations. She was the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including being named "Woman of the Year" by Pennsylvania Business and Professional Women.

Clark passed away on October 13, 2013 at the age of 81.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Augusta Clark was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on July 27, 2000, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. City council member The Honorable Augusta Clark (1932 - 2013) was the second black woman in the history of Philadelphia to have served on the city council. After over twenty years of service, she joined Mayor John Street's cabinet as Secretary of Agencies, Authorities, Boards and Commissions.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Clark, Augusta, 1932-2013

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Clark, Augusta, 1932-2013--Interviews

City council members--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--Interviews.

African American librarians--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Philadelphia (Pa.)

Occupations:

City Council Member

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Augusta Clark, July 27, 2000. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Augusta Clark, Section A2000_014_001_001, TRT: 0:29:11 ?

Augusta Clark describes her family's background, telling stories of her parents' experience growing up and meeting in rural Alabama. She explains her parents' decision to migrate north to West Virginia, taking time to praise her mother for having the courage and perseverance to make the move by herself with three small children. Clark credits both her parents with instilling intelligence, confidence, and the drive to succeed in all their children. Clark shares many stories of her childhood that reflect her parents' love and commitment. She then describes her own childhood personality, saying she was ambitious, argumentative, and eager to succeed. Clark describes the race relations in her town of Fairmont, West Virginia, saying that while blacks and whites were segregated in both neighborhoods and schools, there were no instances of violence or conflict.

African American families--Alabama.

African American mothers.

Childhood and youth.

Race relations--West Virginia--Fairmont.

Segregation--West Virginia--Fairmont.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Augusta Clark, Section A2000_014_001_002,
TRT: 0:29:34 ?

Augusta Clark describes the conditions of her segregated school in Fairmont, West Virginia, praising the high level of skill and dedication of African American teachers. She talks about expectations of her to attend college, much like the other women in her family. Clark also tells of her aspirations to become a lawyer. Clark describes her first job after graduating from college, an assistantship at Color Magazine, which took her to a big city for the first time, Philadelphia. Clark describes her first experience in an urban environment, saying her confidence led to her hiring at the Free Library of Philadelphia. She says her desire to advance in the field led to her master's degree in Library Science from Drexel University. Clark then details her thirteen-year career as a librarian for the City of Philadelphia and for the General Electric Company. Clark explains her decision to attend law school at Temple University and the special circumstances of her admittance. She then details her first year at law school, in which she faced a great deal of strain academically, professionally, and personally.

Segregation in Education--West Virginia--Fairmont.

Philadelphia (Pa.)--Social life and customs.

Free Library of Philadelphia.

Drexel University.

Librarianship and information studies.

Temple University. School of Law.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Augusta Clark, Section A2000_014_001_003,
TRT: 0:29:04 ?

Augusta Clark describes her challenging experience in law school, saying she juggled commitments to school, her career, and her family. Clark says that she felt self-doubt for the first time when she failed academically, but credits her family with helping her to succeed eventually. Clark then discusses her first involvement with Philadelphia politics, when she assisted U.S. Rep. Bill Gray in his election campaign. She explains what she learned from Gray, and how it gave her the confidence to run for office in the Philadelphia City Council. Clark describes her first campaign, in which she made connections with the electorate

despite her house burning down. She describes her feelings on Election Day, going from dejected to elated when she learned of her election. Clark then talks about her first days on the council, detailing her conflicts and differences with Council President George X. Schwartz.

Temple University. School of Law.

Philadelphia (Pa.)--Politics and government.

Elections--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia.

Philadelphia (Pa.). City Council.

Schwartz, George X.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Augusta Clark, Section A2000_014_001_004, TRT: 0:30:44 ?

Augusta Clark discusses her time on the Philadelphia City Council in depth, starting with a discussion about the impact made by her and other independent black politicians on Philadelphia government. Clark explains how the emphasis on accountability led to a new public perception of the city council. She recalls some of her major successes, including her improvement of public education. Clark recounts the disagreements she had with Philadelphia mayors, including a discussion about a police brutality incident in 1985. Clark then discusses her current position as a member of the mayor's cabinet, explaining her duties and the impact she is having on local organizations. Clark then moves into a personal discussion, talking about her future plans, living with an oxygen tank, her legacy, and her thoughts on the future of the black community.

Philadelphia (Pa.). City Council.

Philadelphia (Pa.)--Politics and government.

Education--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia.

Police brutality.

Community development.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Augusta Clark, Section A2000_014_001_005, TRT: 0:21:19 ?

Augusta Clark describes photographs depicting her family and her career as a Philadelphia politician.

Photographs.