

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ernest McBride

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McBride, Ernest, 1909-2007
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ernest McBride,
Dates:	November 20, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:12:27).
Abstract:	Civil rights activist and community leader Ernest McBride (1909 - 2007) worked as a field secretary for the NAACP, leading desegregation movements in Long Beach, California. McBride was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 20, 2002, in Long Beach, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_208
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Organizer, union activist and local NAACP field secretary Ernest McBride was born on November 12, 1909, in Carrollton, Mississippi. McBride was one of seven children of a farm couple. After completing his studies in segregated schools in Arkansas, McBride left the South for California, seeking a better life.

In 1940, McBride co-founded and became the first field secretary of the Long Beach NAACP. He and his activist wife, Lillian McBride, attacked discrimination through organized direct action. As an NAACP activist, McBride successfully integrated the Long Beach Police Department, the Naval Shipyard, Coles Market and the General Telephone Company. He also successfully challenged the Long Beach Unified School District to prevent their annual black-faced minstrel show. McBride also fought police brutality and housing discrimination. The FBI compiled a thick file on McBride and planted agents at his meetings. FBI records show that surveillance officially ended in 1964.

In 1965, McBride received a Long Beach city commendation for risking his life to save three children from a burning apartment. As a pastime, McBride played catcher for the Colored Giants, competing against the great Jackie Robinson, star of the Pasadena Dukes. Through it all, his house was a meeting place. Paul Robeson was his guest in 1948. McBride, his wife and six children often walked picket lines together. Now retired, McBride has eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren and his home on Lemon Avenue has been designated an historic site by the city of Long Beach. McBride passed away on May 5, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ernest McBride was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 20, 2002, in Long Beach, California, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civil rights activist and community

leader Ernest McBride (1909 - 2007) worked as a field secretary for the NAACP, leading desegregation movements in Long Beach, California.

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:

McBride, Ernest, 1909-2007

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

McBride, Ernest, 1909-2007--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civil Rights Activist

Community Leader

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Ernest McBride, November 20, 2002. 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 Ernest McBride, Section A2002_208_001_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ? Ernest McBride was born on November 12, 1909 in Carrollton, Mississippi. His father, Grandville McBride, was born in 1877 and worked as a farmer and a blacksmith. His mother, Julia Porter McBride, was born in 1886 and was a cook with the skills of a caterer. Her mother had been a house slave. In 1917, McBride's family moved from Carrollton, Mississippi to the Kate Allen farm in Osceola, Mississippi along with the Reed family, where they grew corn and peanuts. The winter of 1918 was cold and eight members of McBride's family caught the flu. In the 1930s, McBride and his sister, Eddie, moved to Long Beach, California, where she passed for white to find work but she also protested the segregation and unfair hiring practices of the places where she

worked.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest McBride, Section A2002_208_001_002, TRT: 0:31:09 ?

Ernest McBride grew up in Osceola, Mississippi and had six siblings: Eddie, Clifton, Helen, Grant Webb, Sally, and George. McBride and his siblings would routinely steal their mother's chickens while she was away getting corn ground on Saturdays, eat the chickens, and bury the feathers under their house. McBride also recalls the chores he had on the farm. After a good harvest in 1919, McBride's family moved to North Little Rock, Arkansas. McBride, his sister Sally, and his younger brother George attended school for the first time at Hickory Street School, which became Scipio A. Jones High School in 1928 in a new building which McBride helped to construct. In high school, McBride won a certificate for correcting a math problem in his textbook and graduated in 1930. McBride's older sister, Helen McBride, attended Shorter College in North Little Rock, Arkansas, where she sewed silk linings for women's coats. McBride remembers his father's reluctance to talk about his family, and recalls hunting with his father.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest McBride, Section A2002_208_001_003, TRT: 0:30:05 ?

Ernest McBride made money for his family through selling squirrel and raccoon hides in 1917 and 1918 and remembers one hunting trip where he and his father got lost in the woods. In 1927, while in high school, McBride witnessed two gruesome lynchings in North Little Rock, Arkansas and decided he needed to leave Arkansas. He also experienced employment discrimination when looking for a job as a shoe shiner. After graduating from Scipio A. Jones High School in 1930, McBride played for the Memphis Red Sox for a summer before moving to Wilmington, California to work in a cotton compress factory. When the factory kept reducing both the number of workers and their wages, McBride quit and moved to Long Beach, California, where there were no African Americans in common labor jobs and the only job he could get was shining shoes. During World War II, McBride led a successful sit-in at a segregated café in Long Beach, California.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest McBride, Section A2002_208_001_004, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Ernest McBride moved to Long Beach, California from Wilmington, California in the 1932 and began focusing on finding jobs and improving labor conditions for African Americans, who could not hold common labor jobs in the city. McBride recruited African Americans from the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union to join the CIO and assuaged worker's fears that the white union leaders would not look after their interests. In 1940, McBride founded the Long Beach chapter of the NAACP and he remained secretary until 1948. With the NAACP, McBride and lawyer George Shibley fought rape charges that were routinely brought upon black men. McBride also founded the Long Beach Anti-Discrimination Committee, where he focused on finding jobs for black workers. He remembers picketing Cole's Market Grocery for nine months before they would hire a black clerk and negotiating with a pork market to hire black clerks. In 1948, McBride put an end to the practice of using minstrel shows to raise funds for Long Beach schools.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest McBride, Section A2002_208_001_005, TRT: 0:30:40 ?

Ernest McBride founded the Long Beach, California chapter of the NAACP in 1940 and it was chartered in 1943. He recalls working with lawyer George Shibley on a case of police brutality against two black soldiers in the U.S. Navy, as well as the shooting of an elderly black woman by two police officers. McBride recalls fighting the segregation of the Cabrillo housing projects in the 1940s, which led to its closing and relocation of the black families living there.

One tenant, George Thomas, appeared before the City Council to protest his relocation to Compton and was given a subpoena to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee. With the assistance of “Hollywood Ten” lawyers Charles Katz and Ben Margolis, McBride convinced Thomas to cancel the subpoena. McBride remembers inviting Paul Robeson to sing for the Anti-Discrimination Committee. He also remembers the wrongful death of a Long Island teenager and the fear that the community had that working with McBride would put them in jail.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest McBride, Section A2002_208_001_006, TRT: 0:31:28 ?

Ernest McBride reflects on his experiences fighting cases of racial profiling, police brutality, and employment discrimination in Long Beach, California. In 1989, former police officer Don Jackson came to Long Beach to demonstrate how quickly the police arrested black men and charged them with rape. When he was stopped for a traffic violation, Jackson was pushed head first into a large window by the arresting officer and the event was caught on film. The event helped to reduce the racial profiling in Long Beach. McBride expresses his concern that future generations of African Americans will take for granted that they need to continue fighting for their freedom. He also shares a story of his daughter’s sacrifice to break the color barrier at General Telephone Company in Long Beach, even though the position offered her less pay than the job she had. McBride ends the interview by reflecting on how he’d like to be remembered and narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest McBride, Section A2002_208_001_007, TRT: 0:09:15 ?

Ernest McBride continues to narrate his photographs.