

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Joseph Daniel Clipper

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Clipper, Joseph Daniel, 1937-2017
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Daniel Clipper,
Dates:	May 17, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:49:41).
Abstract:	Photographer Joseph Daniel Clipper (1937 - 2017) was renowned for his portraits, which have been commissioned by U.S. congressmen, the U.S. military, Howard University, and others. In 1976, he took the first group photo of the Congressional Black Caucus. Clipper was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 17, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_050
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Renowned photographic portrait artist Joseph Daniel Clipper was born on December 3, 1937, in Bethesda, Maryland. Clipper was educated through Washington, D.C., public schools and graduated from Armstrong High School in 1956. While in high school, he was the president of his class, a member of the baseball and golf teams, and enjoyed bike riding. He attended the University of the District of Columbia in the 1980s.

In 1960, Clipper purchased his first camera for thirteen dollars, a 35-millimeter Atlas, and began taking photos for pleasure. While working at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, he was responsible for taking patients to the photography department. It was then that he began to develop a genuine interest in portrait artistry and in 1961, started taking photography classes at the Department of Agriculture.

From 1961 to 1963, Clipper served in the army and continued to take correspondence courses in photography. During 1966, he studied at the Dorchester Country School of Photography in Vermont, where he earned a diploma in black and white and color photography. He also studied at the Winona School of Professional Photographers of America in Indiana. In 1968, Clipper studied under his mentor, world renowned Yousuf Karsh of Ottawa, Canada.

In the early 1970s, Clipper began holding invitational sittings for diplomats and African American members of Congress. In 1976, he took the first group photo of the Congressional Black Caucus. Also during that year, Clipper was in negotiations to do President Jimmy Carter's portrait. Clipper recently completed restoration work on portraits of all the past presidents of Howard University and previously restored original portraits of former HU presidents James Cheek and Franklyn Jenifer. He completed portraits of more than twenty African ambassadors and numerous members of Congress.

Clipper's portraits of prominent African Americans hang in galleries, the halls of Congress and many other notable Washington, DC., establishments. Private collections of his works are in the Philippine islands, Israel, the

Caribbean islands and number of countries in Africa.

Clipper passed away on October 4, 2017 at the age of 79.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Joseph Daniel Clipper was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on May 17, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Photographer Joseph Daniel Clipper (1937 - 2017) was renowned for his portraits, which have been commissioned by U.S. congressmen, the U.S. military, Howard University, and others. In 1976, he took the first group photo of the Congressional Black Caucus.

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:

Clipper, Joseph Daniel, 1937-2017

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Clipper, Joseph Daniel, 1937-2017--Interviews

African American photographers--Interviews

African American families--Maryland--Montgomery County

Grandparents as parents

Montgomery County (Md.)--Social life and customs

Education, Secondary--Washington (D.C.)

Fatherless families--Washington (D.C.)

Portrait photography--United States

Karsh, Yousuf, 1908-2002

Congressional Black Caucus

Photography--Vocational guidance

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Photographer

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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 Joseph Daniel Clipper, May 17, 2004. 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 Joseph Daniel Clipper, Section A2004_050_001_001, TRT: 0:27:43 ?

Joseph D. Clipper talks about family background and details pleasant childhood memories despite being raised by his grandparents. Clipper then recalls the sights and sounds of his neighborhood while growing up in rural, Montgomery County, Maryland. Lastly he discusses his personality in elementary school and the negative impressions church left on him as a child.

African American photographers--Interviews.

African American families--Maryland--Montgomery County.

Grandparents as parents.

Montgomery County (Md.)--Social life and customs.

Education, Secondary--Washington (D.C.).

Fatherless families--Washington (D.C.).

Portrait photography--United States.

Karsh, Yousuf, 1908-2002.

Congressional Black Caucus.

Photography--Vocational guidance.

Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Daniel Clipper, Section A2004_050_001_002, TRT: 0:29:31 ?

Joseph D. Clipper talks about his junior high school and high school years in Washington, D.C. and his athletic ability in a variety of sports. He then recalls his early interest in photography to which he credits his traveling daily past the photographic studios on the way to school. Clipper then discusses meeting his estranged father at age twenty-one, after having been primarily reared by his grandparents. Clipper discusses his early jobs out of high school and the cultivation of his photographic talent while in the Army. Lastly, he discusses his experiences at the John W. Doscher School of Photography in South Woodstock, Vermont, that helped him decide to choose portrait photography as a career path.

Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Daniel Clipper, Section A2004_050_001_003, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

Joseph D. Clipper talks briefly about his apprenticeship with photographer Joseph D. Zeltzman and shares a story about his first encounter with his mentor, the world-famous portrait photographer, Yousuf Karsh. Clipper then discusses his early photographic commissions of members of the Congressional Black Caucus, African dignitaries and of civil rights leaders in the 1960s and 1970s.

Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Daniel Clipper, Section A2004_050_001_004, TRT: 0:24:27 ?

Joseph D. Clipper reflects on how he would like to be remembered and offers his advice to aspiring photographers. Clipper then reflects on his life's work and his hopes for the African American community. Lastly, he provides commentary to the photographs he provided.