

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Fannie Lee Brown

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Brown, Fannie L., 1954-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Fannie Lee Brown,
Dates:	March 17, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:51:45).
Abstract:	Nonprofit executive Fannie Lee Brown (1954 -) is the executive director of The Coming Together Project USA. Brown was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 17, 2005, in Akron, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_069
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civic leader and non-profit executive Fannie L. Brown, Ph.D., was born on June 29, 1954, in Montezuma, Georgia, and raised in Akron, Ohio. After graduating from Akron Public Schools, Brown earned her B.A. degree in business management from Malone College in 1990; her M.S. degree in technical education from the University of Akron in 1991; and her Ph.D. in secondary education from the University of Akron in 1995.

Brown assumed the role of executive director of The Coming Together Project USA in 1997. The Coming Together Project was created following a 1993 year-long series in the Akron Beacon Journal entitled *A Question of Color*, which analyzed the difficult state of race relations and the disparity of opportunity between blacks and whites in Akron. At the end of the series, the newspaper called on the community to work together to address the challenges addressed in the articles. After operating for its first year under the auspices of the newspaper, the Coming Together Project attained its own autonomous standing as a nonprofit organization.

In addition to her work with the Coming Together Project, Brown is a member of Books for Africa and University of Akron College of Business Diversity boards. Brown received numerous awards and honors, including the 2000 Gimbel Child and Family Award, and an appointment to the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission by Governor Bob Taft.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Fannie Lee Brown was conducted by Regennia Williams on March 17, 2005, in Akron, Ohio, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit executive Fannie Lee Brown (1954 -) is the executive director of The Coming Together Project USA.

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:

Brown, Fannie L., 1954-

Williams, Regennia (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brown, Fannie L., 1954---Interviews

African American women civic leaders--Interviews

Community activists--Interviews

African American women civil rights workers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Nonprofit Executive

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 Fannie Lee Brown, March 17, 2005. 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 Fannie Lee Brown, Section A2005_069_001_001, TRT: 0:29:33 ?

Fannie Lee Brown describes her family background and childhood in Macon County, Georgia. Her mother, domestic worker Bertha Grant, was born in 1933 in Montezuma, Georgia to farm caretaker Willie B. Causey and homemaker Birdia Causey. Brown was born in Montezuma on June 29, 1954. A few years prior, her father, Marvin Grant of Peach County, Georgia, who she describes as a “rolling stone” had moved to Akron, Ohio to seek employment, and formed a second family there. Brown lived with her mother and three siblings at her maternal grandparents' house. She recalls family holidays and church life; she

was Methodist, but her maternal grandmother was Baptist, and the family was involved in both churches. She attended D.F. Douglas Elementary School in Montezuma, and Macon County Training School for middle school. During summers, and for one day out of the school week, Brown and her siblings were required to work on local farms to supplement family income. In 1968, she moved with her family to join her father in Akron.

African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

Community activists--Interviews.

African American women civil rights workers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Fannie Lee Brown, Section A2005_069_001_002, TRT: 0:29:32
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Fannie Lee Brown talks about growing up in Akron, Ohio, her education, and her technical drawing career. In 1968, she, her mother, and her siblings moved to Akron, where her father worked at a foundry. Asbestos dust at the foundry ultimately killed him. Brown's mother worked at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. In Akron, Brown attended Central-Howell High School, a technical school where she trained as a draftsman. Upon graduating in 1972, she wanted to attend Kent State, but lacked the financial means. She then got a drafting job at the Babcock and Wilcox Company in Barberton, Ohio. While working, she attended the University of Akron, then Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio, before receiving her B.A. degree from Malone College in Canton, Ohio in 1990. She went on to receive her M.S. degree at the University of Akron, and then her Ph.D. degree in 1995, leaving her drafting job to become a teaching assistant. In 1995, Brown began working for Akron Public Schools. By this time, she was married with children.

Video Oral History Interview with Fannie Lee Brown, Section A2005_069_001_003, TRT: 0:28:55
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Fannie Lee Brown describes her work with the Coming Together Project of Akron, Ohio. After receiving her Ph.D. degree in 1995, she worked for the Akron public school system, managing a program to provide education to homeless youth. She also taught part-time at Stark State College of Technology in Stark County, Ohio; the University of Akron; and Southern Ohio College, later Brown Mackie College in Akron. She began serving on the advisory board for Coming Together, a nonprofit dedicated to diversity and community development, and was made Executive Director after her predecessor's death in 1997. With the Bridgestone-Firestone Company, the Akron Chamber of Commerce, and other groups, Coming Together focuses on bringing new opportunities to Akron, Ohio. Brown reflects upon her legacy and the role of religion in her life. She is married to William H. Brown and has two children, William and Shannon. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the NAACP, and several other organizations.

Video Oral History Interview with Fannie Lee Brown, Section A2005_069_001_004, TRT: 0:23:45
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Fannie Lee Brown reflects upon her professional legacy. She comments on the success of Akron, Ohio's Coming Together Project (now known nationally as Coming Together USA and locally as Coming Together Akron) and talks about how in 1997, due in part to her efforts, President Bill Clinton held the first of a series of four town-hall meetings on race in Akron. HistoryMaker John Hope Franklin and U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders were also part of that effort. While Brown expresses concern that race relations have regressed since the 1990s, she also hopes that African Americans will continue to make strides in public life. She concludes by narrating her photographs.

