

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Amelia Ashley-Ward

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Ashley-Ward, Amelia, 1957-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Amelia Ashley-Ward,
Dates:	November 4, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:16:22).
Abstract:	Newspaper publishing chief executive Amelia Ashley-Ward (1957 -) has worked at the Sun-Reporter for over thirty years. She now owns the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company. Ashley-Ward was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 4, 2013, in Brisbane , California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_251
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Newspaper publisher, editor and journalist Amelia Ashley-Ward was born on September 17, 1957 in Magnolia, Mississippi to Amile Ashley and Louise James Ashley. While still a child, Ashley-Ward's family moved to San Francisco, where she attended junior high and high school. Ashley-Ward went on to receive her B.A. degree in journalism and photojournalism in 1979 from San Jose State University.

During her final year at San Jose State University, Ashley-Ward interned at the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company in San Francisco, where she was hired as a reporter and photojournalist for the *Sun-Reporter* newspaper in 1979. Then, in 1984, Ashley-Ward was promoted to managing editor of the *Sun-Reporter*. When the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company's publisher Carlton Goodlett resigned in 1994, Ashley-Ward was promoted to publisher. While working at the *Sun-Reporter*, she also published photographs in *People* magazine and *Jet* magazine, and wrote a feature story for the African American magazine *Sepia*. Following Goodlett's death in 1997, she bought the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company from Goodlett's son, acquiring all three of the company's newspapers: the *California Voice*, the *Metro* and the *Sun-Reporter*. Ashley-Ward also created the nonprofit Sun-Reporter Foundation in 2004, and was the founding president of the Young Adult Christian Movement.

Ashley-Ward has received many honors and awards while working at the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company. In 1980, she won the Photojournalism Award from the National Newspaper Publishers Association, and, in 1981, she received the Feature Writing Award from the same organization. The National Newspaper Publishers Association granted Ashley-Ward one more honor when, in 1998, she was elected Publisher of the Year. In 1997, she received the Woman of the Year award from the San Francisco Black Chamber of Commerce. In 2004, Ashley-Ward received the Alumnus of the Year award from San Jose State University, and was the commencement speaker for the university's Journalism department that same year. She was also honored in 2005, when she was selected as Woman of the Year by California State Senator Carole Migden. In 2008, Ashley-Ward was named one of the forty nine Most Influential People in San Francisco by *7x7 Magazine*. She also served on the boards of the National

Newspaper Publishers Association and the San Francisco branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Ashley-Ward has one son, Evan Carlton Ward, an electronic media major at Middle Tennessee State University.

Amelia Ashley-Ward was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 4, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Amelia Ashley-Ward was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 4, 2013, in Brisbane, California, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Newspaper publishing chief executive Amelia Ashley-Ward (1957 -) has worked at the Sun-Reporter for over thirty years. She now owns the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company.

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:

Ashley-Ward, Amelia, 1957-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Ashley-Ward, Amelia, 1957---Interviews

Women newspaper editors--California--San Francisco--Interviews.

African American chief executive officers--California--San Francisco--Interviews.

African American journalists--California--San Francisco--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Newspaper Publishing Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Amelia Ashley-Ward, November 4, 2013. 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 Amelia Ashley-Ward, Section A2013_251_001_001, TRT: 1:29:22 ?

Amelia Ashley-Ward discusses her family background. Her father, Amile Ashley, was born in McComb, Mississippi in February 1937. Her mother, Louise James Ashley, was born in 1940 in Magnolia, Mississippi. They met in high school and got married the late 1950s. Amile Ashley came to California 1962 in search of work to escape the stringent racism that his family experienced in the South. He sent for his family six months later and eventually became a longshoreman in San Francisco, where Ashley-Ward and her two younger sisters were raised. Ashley-Ward was born in September 1957 in Magnolia, Mississippi. She describes the role of church in her upbringing, especially the New Providence Baptist Church, the impact of Martin Luther King Jr.'s death on the San Francisco black community in 1968, and personal experiences with racism.

African American fathers.

African American families.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination.

African Americans--Racism.

African American churches--California--San Francisco.

Rural-urban migration--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Amelia Ashley-Ward, Section A2013_251_001_002, TRT: 2:30:44 ?

Amelia Ashley-Ward discusses her experiences in Abraham Lincoln High School in San Francisco, California and at San Jose State University, California, which she attended from 1975-1979. She first began writing as a hobby with friends, and was influenced by several teachers to develop her writing skills in high school. Ashley-Ward worked summer jobs to help her mother Louise James Ashley financially. She also bore responsibility for caring for her younger sisters after her parents separated, and as a result, she went through a rebellious period in college. She discusses the party culture among students at San Jose State, and experiencing racism and sexism as a student. Ashley-Ward describes her own awareness of black consciousness and sub-culture, black entertainment venues, and public figures who were well known in the black community in San Francisco. She ends the tape by describing a personal experience she had with Jim Jones in the early 1970s, when she almost attended one of his weekend retreats.

African American--Education, Secondary--California.

San Jose State University.

African American parents--Divorce.

Jones, Jim, 1931-1978.

Racism.

Sexism.

Video Oral History Interview with Amelia Ashley-Ward, Section A2013_251_001_003, TRT: 3:30:31 ?

Amelia Ashley-Ward began working for the Sun-Reporter in 1979 after graduating from San Jose State University. Ashley-Ward describes how Dr. Carlton Goodlett, the owner of the Sun-Reporter and an influential figure in the black community in the Bay Area of northern California, became a father figure to Ashley-Ward. In 1997, Dr. Goodlett passed away and Ashley-Ward acquired the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company. Ashley-Ward talks about the many conflicts she faced from fellow staff members at the Sun-Reporter and the changes she made to the newspaper's sensationalist headlines. She also discusses the impact of Jim Jones on the black community in San Francisco in the 1970s, and the connection between Jones and Dr. Goodlett. Ashley-Ward concludes by reminiscing about her favorite stories from her career.

Goodlett, Carlton B. (Carlton Benjamin), 1914-1997.

African Americans--Mentoring.

Jones, Jim, 1931-1978.

African American press.

Video Oral History Interview with Amelia Ashley-Ward, Section A2013_251_001_004, TRT: 4:30:30 ?

Amelia Ashley-Ward acquired the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company in 1997, after having first been promoted to editor and publisher. She discusses two photo essays from her career, including a piece on Reverend Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. She also reflects on the death of former Sun-Reporter employee Chauncey Bailey, who was killed in 2007 while investigating Your Black Muslim Bakery in Oakland, California for The Oakland Post. Ashley-Ward discusses the implications of digital media for black newspapers, and compares the freedoms she has as a black newspaper publisher over black journalists in the mainstream media. She talks about the status and role of black newspapers in the black community in the San Francisco Bay Area, her journalistic philosophy, and her hopes and fears for the black community. Ashley-Ward concludes the tape by reflecting on her career and tells the story of supporting San Francisco native London Breed in Breed's successful 2013 run for District Supervisor.

Williams, Cecil, 1929-

African American press.

Digital media.

Political campaigns--California--San Francisco.

Journalism.

Video Oral History Interview with Amelia Ashley-Ward, Section A2013_251_001_005, TRT: 5:15:15 ?

Amelia Ashley-Ward talks about her family, her professional legacy, and choosing to remain with a black newspaper rather than working with the mainstream media. She reflects at length about the role that fighting against injustice has played throughout her career, noting that her mother Louise James Ashley encouraged her to fight injustice. She describes her legacy of keeping the Sun-Reporter Publishing Company operating, helping to elect San Francisco District Supervisor London Breed in 2013, and raising her son Evan Ward. Ashley-Ward raised Evan alone, paying for his tuition at Archbishop Riordan High School in San Francisco, California and then sending him to Hargrave Military Academy in Virginia and Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee to play football. She speaks about the politics that come with college sports, and expresses concern for Evan being injured. Ashley-Ward would like to be remembered for always working to uplift her community

and raising her son to do the same.

African American press.

African Americans--Education.

African American children.

Political campaigns--California--San Francisco.

Single-parent families.

Social justice.