

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ilyasah Shabazz

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Shabazz, Ilyasah
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ilyasah Shabazz,
Dates:	September 21, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:17:45).
Abstract:	Author Ilyasah Shabazz (1962 -) is the third eldest daughter of Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz and author of, "Growing Up X." Shabazz was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 21, 2005, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_221
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Author of *Growing Up X*, Ilyasah Shabazz, the third eldest daughter of Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz was born in July 1962. She was nearly three years old when her father, Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965 at the Audubon Ballroom. After her father's death, the family moved to Mount Vernon, New York where she attended private schools, went to summer camp and belonged to Jack and Jill. In 1979, Shabazz graduated from The Masters School, a prestigious boarding school, in Dobbs Ferry, New York. She received her B.S. degree in biology from the State University of New York in New Paltz in 1983 and her M.S. degree in education and human resource development from Fordham University in New York.

Shabazz began her professional career in the entertainment industry. She served as Vice President for SME Entertainment; Director of Operations for KEDAR Entertainment; Coordinator of Promotions & Marketing for Pendulum, and as a production assistant for 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks (Spike Lee's production company). Shabazz then moved her efforts from the entertainment business towards education. As the coordinator for the Office of Academic Affairs of the City University of New York, she organized training workshops to encourage higher education for inner-city high school dropouts. Her mission was to create an atmosphere and a curriculum that enabled students to feel proud and have a strong sense of commitment to humanity and to improving their socioeconomic conditions.

Shabazz wrote an autobiography in 2002, *Growing Up X*. It is a coming of age story as well as a tribute to her parents' lives. In 2005, Shabazz worked with a team from Columbia University to open the Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz Memorial and Education Center at the Audubon. She also accompanied President Bill Clinton on his historic tour to South Africa.

Shabazz lives in Mt. Vernon, New York where she serves on the youth board for the City of Mt. Vernon and is a member of the Women's Leadership Forum.

Ilyasah Shabazz was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 21, 2005.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ilyasah Shabazz was conducted by Shawn Wilson on September 21, 2005, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Author Ilyasah Shabazz (1962 -) is the third eldest daughter of Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz and author of, "Growing Up X."

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:

Shabazz, Ilyasah

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Shabazz, Ilyasah--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civil Rights 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 Ilyasah Shabazz, September 21, 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 Ilyasah Shabazz, Section A2005_221_001_001, TRT: 0:30:03 ?

Ilyasah Shabazz was born on July 22, 192 in Brooklyn, New York to Betty Shabazz and Malcolm X. Her mother was born on May 28, 1934 in Pinehurst, Georgia to Ollie Sanders and Shelman Sandlin, an unmarried couple. Sandlin was of Native American ancestry and owned a cotton and pecan plantation. Sanders moved to Detroit, leaving Betty Shabazz to be raised by her aunt and grandmother. In her early teens, Betty Shabazz joined her mother in Detroit, but

the reunion was not happy. Helen and Lorenzo Malloy then became foster parents to Shabazz's mother. The Malloys owned a shoe repair shop and were active members at Bethel AME Church. Betty Shabazz attended Tuskegee Institute, but left after a year. Shabazz's father, Malcolm X, was born on May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska to Louise Norton Little, who was from Grenada, and Earl Little, a Garveyite. Little was killed by the Ku Klux Klan after advocating for the rights of African Americans. As a result, Shabazz's paternal grandmother suffered a nervous breakdown.

Video Oral History Interview with Ilyasah Shabazz, Section A2005_221_001_002, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Ilyasah Shabazz's paternal grandmother was admitted to Kalamazoo State Hospital. Shabazz's father, Malcolm X, and his siblings were then raised by their older brother and sister, Hilda and Wilfred Little, until the family land was taken and Shabazz's father was placed in a group home. He was well-liked in school, but dropped out to live with his half-sister, Ella Little-Collins, in Boston. In 1946, he was arrested for stealing a watch and received a longer sentence because he had a white girlfriend. While X was in prison, his brothers, Reginald and Wilfred, wrote to him about their conversion to the Nation of Islam, and he joined the religion as well. After his release in 1952, he moved to New York City and became the head of Mosque No. 7. Shabazz's mother was in Brooklyn for nursing school and met X at a mosque. They married and had six children together. Shabazz describes how her paternal grandmother instilled a love of learning in her children and shares her few early memories of her father.

Video Oral History Interview with Ilyasah Shabazz, Section A2005_221_001_003, TRT: 0:29:17 ?

Ilyasah Shabazz remembers influential teachers at St. Joseph Montessori School in Mount Vernon, New York and the Hackley School in Tarrytown, New York. Shabazz's mother sheltered Shabazz and her sisters and managed to educate all six children in private schools despite being a single mother. The family attended mosque every Sunday and saw plays, movies and concerts together. Shabazz remembers HistoryMaker Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Curtis Mayfield, and other prominent African Americans visiting her childhood home. Shabazz spent summers at a camp in Vermont with Nina Simone's daughter, Lisa Stroud, who lived with the Shabazzes. Although Shabazz wanted to attend a historically black college, her mother enrolled her in the State University of New York in New Paltz. Shabazz recalls becoming aware of her racial identity while attending summer camp, learning about her father's life by reading his autobiography and being expected to fulfill her father's legacy as a revolutionary by other students at her college.

Video Oral History Interview with Ilyasah Shabazz, Section A2005_221_001_004, TRT: 0:30:54 ?

Ilyasah Shabazz attended SUNY New Paltz. Her notoriety as Malcolm X's daughter was overwhelming, so she moved off campus. After graduation, Shabazz wanted to attend Howard University College of Medicine, but a car accident curtailed her plans. She briefly worked as an English instructor at Mount Vernon High School, but decided she did not like teaching. She then served as the coordinator for the CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School Program, where she tutored high school dropouts, and edited the publication 'The Way We Feel.' Upon seeing Spike Lee's film, 'She's Gotta Have It,' Shabazz decided to contact Lee. She recalls their friendship and Lee jokingly ridiculing her for not being more like her father. Shabazz worked at the William Morris Agency and as a production assistant for Spike Lee. She describes how Lee's film, 'Malcolm X,' brought her father's autobiography to life. After receiving encouragement from her mother, Shabazz wrote her book, 'Growing Up X.' She recalls her mother's death in 1997.

Video Oral History Interview with Ilyasah Shabazz, Section A2005_221_001_005, TRT: 0:18:11 ?

Ilyasah Shabazz published her autobiography, 'Growing Up X,' in 2002, which she co-wrote with Kim McLarin. In 2005, she was able to fulfill her mother's plans to establish the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center in New York City. She interviewed Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s son, Dexter King, to gain advice on opening the center. Upon finding out that her father's papers were about to be auctioned, Shabazz worked with the New York Public Library and HistoryMaker Howard Dodson to house the papers at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. At the time of the interview, Shabazz was planning a speaking tour about empowerment for young people. Shabazz reflects upon the image of African American musical artists and their songs' messages. Shabazz describes her hopes for the African American community and recalls the smell of her mother's perfume from her childhood. She reflects upon her life, her father's legacy and the importance of history.