

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ernie Banks

---

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Banks, Ernie, 1931-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ernie Banks,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 18, 2000
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2000
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:26:04).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Baseball player Ernie Banks (1931 - 2015 ) nicknamed “Mr. Cub,” played his entire nineteen year baseball career with the Chicago Cubs. Elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1977, Banks was the first Chicago Cub to have his number retired. Banks was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 18, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2000_003
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Baseball player Ernie Banks was born in Dallas, Texas, on January 31, 1931. As legend has it, his father had to bribe young Ernie with nickels and dimes in order to get his son to play catch.

An all-around athlete, Banks was a high school star in football, basketball and track. At age seventeen, he signed to play baseball with a Negro barnstorming team. Manager Cool Papa Bell recognized Banks’ talent and signed him to a contract with the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro Baseball League.

In 1953, Banks was recruited directly from the Negro League into the majors with the Chicago Cubs. He hit his first home run on September 20, 1953, beginning a long career as one of the Cubs' most beloved players. From 1955 to 1960, Ernie Banks hit more homers than anyone in the majors, including Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays and Hank Aaron, and he finished his career with five seasons of forty or more home runs. In 1959 he became the first player in National League history to win consecutive Most Valuable Player trophies, a year removed from setting an NL record for homers by a shortstop with forty-seven.

After retiring from the major leagues as a career Cub in 1971, Banks became the first Cub to have his uniform number retired. In 1977, Banks was elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Cubs fans will always remember him as the ballplayer who said, "What a great day for baseball! Let's play two!" On March 31, 2008, Banks was honored with a permanent statue of his likeness at Wrigley Field.

Banks passed away on January 23, 2015 at age 83.

---

## **Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Ernie Banks was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on July 18, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Baseball player Ernie Banks (1931 - 2015 ) nicknamed "Mr. Cub," played his entire nineteen year baseball career with the Chicago Cubs. Elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1977, Banks was the first Chicago Cub to have his number retired.

---

## **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

## 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:

Banks, Ernie, 1931-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Banks, Ernie, 1931---Interviews

---

Baseball--History

---

African American baseball players--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

---

## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

Chicago Cubs (Baseball team)

---

## **Occupations:**

Baseball Player

---

## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

SportsMakers

---

## **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 Ernie Banks, July 18, 2000. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### **Processing Information**

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Ernie Banks, Section  
A2000\_003\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:53 2000/07/18

Ernie Banks describes photos he has brought to the interview, including images of Banks with Lou Brock and Buck O'Neil, Banks's extended family, Willie Mays, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, and Ernie Banks and his father. Banks ends by describing his relationship with his father as a child.

Photographs.

Baseball.

Davis, Ossie.

Mays, Willie.

Dee, Ruby.

African American families.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernie Banks, Section  
A2000\_003\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:31 2000/07/18

Ernie Banks begins by describing his family background, including the harmonious marriage shared by his parents. He details the personality of his mother, who had a positive influence on Banks when he was young. Banks shares some stories from his childhood involving his family and friends, including being jilted on his prom night. He explains how he acquired his work ethic from his father. Banks details his personality as a child, describing himself as an introvert, especially during elementary school. He talks about his parents' occupations, and relates a story of his own employment as a teenager. Banks describes his athletic exploits as a high school student, saying that he had only average athletic ability and his favorite sport was softball. He explains how

his father encouraged him to play baseball from an early age. Banks closes by outlining his stint in the Army, and briefly explains that he entered Major League Baseball shortly after his discharge.

Family histories.

African American families.

Work ethic.

Major League Baseball (Organization).

School sports.

African American parents.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernie Banks, Section  
A2000\_003\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:28 2000/07/18

Ernie Banks begins by describing his experience playing in the Negro Baseball League. He describes the adjustments he made upon moving to the Chicago Cubs of Major League Baseball. He discusses his process of learning from experience during his early years with the Chicago Cubs. Banks details his mindset while playing baseball, explaining the solitude he feels on the field of play. He explains why he generally deflected praise from his achievements to those of his teammates. Banks explains the origin of his nickname, "Mr. Cub," and his ambivalence regarding his moniker. He describes his relationship with Cubs owner Philip K. Wrigley. Banks closes by describing his experience of being elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Baseball--History.

Negro leagues.

Wrigley, Philip K. (Philip Knight), 1894-1977.

Chicago Cubs (Baseball team).

Major League Baseball (Organization).

Video Oral History Interview with Ernie Banks, Section  
A2000\_003\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:51 2000/07/18

Ernie Banks begins by discussing his foray into politics, running for alderman in the City of Chicago. He discusses how politicians have used his life as a positive example for society. Banks discusses the roots of his positive attitude, and how some have difficulty understanding his

personal outlook. Banks details how he and other prominent African Americans with positive outlooks are vilified as being disloyal to their race. Banks outlines his many connections with well-known personalities, explaining that he does not feel a personal connection with other celebrities. He professes contentment in his life because he is not attached to society. Banks explains his future plans to become a philanthropist. He talks about his admiration for many athletes who now participate in an industry rather than a game. Banks closes by discussing his empathy for children, created by the numerous negative influences in society.

Chicago (Ill.)--Politics and government--History.

Children.

Philanthropy.

Famous African Americans.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernie Banks, Section  
A2000\_003\_001\_005, TRT: 0:27:21 2000/07/18

Ernie Banks begins by discussing his views on the strenuous nature of modern society. He explains his hopes and fears for the future of African Americans, advising young African Americans never to give up. Banks explains why he does not want to be remembered. He explains why some cynics feel history is irrelevant. Banks talks about his current state of contentment. He closes by recalling instances in which sports have influenced society positively and negatively. Three photos are shown, including images of Banks's children, Banks receiving and award, and Banks with his twin sons at Wrigley Field.

Photographs.

Wrigley Field (Chicago, Ill.)

Sports history and society.

Video Oral History Interview with Ernie Banks, Section  
A2000\_003\_ERNIE\_BANKS\_06\_MED\_002, TRT: 0:09:18 2000/07/18

This tape contains footage that is a loop of clips from The HistoryMakers Video Oral History with Ernie Banks.

This tape only contains audio, there is no video present.