

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Valarie Justiss Vance

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Vance, Valarie Justiss, 1913-2015
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Valarie Justiss Vance,
Dates:	April 22, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:05:44).
Abstract:	Social work researcher and psychological consultant Valarie Justiss Vance (1913 - 2015) served as the director of social work at the Massachusetts Association for the Adult Blind, after which she began working for the City of Los Angeles, where she wrote the social work provisions that were included in the War on Poverty. She later became an assistant professor at the University of California, and a psychological consultant for the Head Start program. Vance was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 22, 2004, in Santa Ana, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_046
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Valarie Justiss Vance was born in Mt. Pleasant, Texas in 1913, but at a young age moved with her family to Toledo, Ohio. After graduating from Waite High School in 1931, she moved to Washington, D.C., where she attended Howard University, earning her A.B. in 1935. Returning to Toledo after her graduation, Vance earned

an M.A. in 1936 from the University of Toledo. She later attended the University of Chicago, and went on to earn the Ph.D. from the Ohio State University in 1949. For her doctoral dissertation, Vance focused on the unmarried father, and she was the first person in America to write extensively on the subject. She also spent time studying at the University of Vienna in Austria where she studied the German language.

After earning her M.A., Vance relocated to Jackson, Tennessee, where she was hired as a professor of English at Lane College. In 1938, she moved to Chicago to take a position with the Chicago Welfare Administration as the senior social worker. Vance spent the years between 1940 and 1960 working with the Public Schools of the District of Columbia as a research assistant in social work. Also during the 1940s, Vance was a broadcaster on the program *Americans All* in Washington, D.C. Vance became the director of social work at the Massachusetts Association for the Adult Blind in 1960, where she remained until being hired by the City of Los Angeles in 1963. While working for the City of Los Angeles, Vance wrote the social work provisions that were included in the War on Poverty. During that time, Vance was also served as a mentor at Loma Linda University. In 1970, Vance became an assistant professor at the University of California, and in 1973 she became a psychological consultant for the Head Start program. At that same time, she went to work for the California Department of Mental Health as a psychiatric social worker. Vance left the Department of Mental Health in 1984, and in 1999 she retired from Head Start.

In addition to her extensive working career, Vance spent large amounts of time active with various organizations across the country. For more than thirty years, she was a consultant and grant writer for the Council of Affiliated Negro Organizations (CANO). She also served on the board of directors of Loma Linda University, and remained involved with the school by serving on the advisory committee to the board of directors for social work. She was featured in *Who's Who in American Universities and Colleges*, the *University of Toledo Alumnus* and *The World's Who's Who of Women*.

Vance was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 22, 2004. Vance passed away on June 18, 2015.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Valarie Justiss Vance was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on April 22, 2004, in Santa Ana, California, and was

recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Social work researcher and psychological consultant Valarie Justiss Vance (1913 - 2015) served as the director of social work at the Massachusetts Association for the Adult Blind, after which she began working for the City of Los Angeles, where she wrote the social work provisions that were included in the War on Poverty. She later became an assistant professor at the University of California, and a psychological consultant for the Head Start program.

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:

Vance, Valarie Justiss, 1913-2015

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Vance, Valarie Justiss, 1913-2015--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Public schools--Washington (D.C.)

Head Start Program (U.S.)

Occupations:

Social Work Researcher

Psychological Consultant

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers|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 Valarie Justiss Vance, April 22, 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 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 Valarie Justiss Vance, Section A2004_046_001_001, TRT: 0:31:16 2004/04/22

Valarie Justiss Vance was born on January 7, 1913 in Mount Pleasant, Texas. Her mother, Beatrice Ann Price, was born in Texas in the late 19th century. Her maternal grandfather, Mose Price, was a successful farmer. He was born into slavery in 1864 and was freed in 1865, although he continued to work for his former owner. Due to his success as a farmer, Mose Price was able to build houses for each of his children as wedding presents, a tradition

which continued in successive generations. Vance's father, Jacob Justiss, met her mother while they were living in Cookville, Texas. He was ambitious; he read the newspaper and paid his way through school where he studied law. Vance had three siblings, two sisters and a brother, who were all only a year apart in age. Before the family moved to Lima, Ohio, Vance's mother's cousin was shot by a white man while they were arguing over house payments. Vance's family lived in Lima for one year before they moved to a house with indoor plumbing in Toledo, Ohio in 1920.

Video Oral History Interview with Valarie Justiss Vance, Section A2004_046_001_002, TRT: 0:30:20 2004/04/22

Valarie Justiss Vance was raised in Toledo, Ohio with her three siblings and her parents. In Toledo, they were the only African American family on their street and most of their neighbors were Catholic. Vance's brother was born in 1919 with infantile paralysis, but fortunately recovered within two years; and, her grandfather passed away in 1920. Vance remembers picking dandelion greens for a neighbor, the smell of baking bread from a nearby factory and indulging in hot chocolate and graham crackers while waiting outside in the winter for her school to open. Vance's mother attended the Baptist church and her father, who was a delinquent member of the Church of the Living God, enjoyed mocking the Baptist minister. Vance was primarily reared by her mother, who was a strict disciplinarian and emphasized education. As a child, she regularly visited the public library, learned etiquette in home economics and she was a member of her school's "bee industry" where she observed honeybees.

Video Oral History Interview with Valarie Justiss Vance, Section A2004_046_001_003, TRT: 0:30:20 2004/04/22

Valarie Justiss Vance attended Navarre School, and graduated from Morrison R. Waite High School in Toledo, Ohio in 1931. She graduated second in her high school class. Vance's father introduced her to the work of Jane Addams, which inspired her to be a social worker, additionally she gained exposure to social work through her involvement in the YWCA as a child. Vance decided to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C. after she

learned about the history of the school from a Baptist minister, who was a Howard alumnus. She remembers Kenneth and Mamie Clark, who were her classmates at Howard, and Howard professors Kelly Miller and Ralph Bunche. When she first moved to D.C., Vance stayed at the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs' (NACWC) residence, but eventually moved into the Howard dorms where her roommate was a Seventh-day Adventist. Vance eventually converted to the religion. She graduated from Howard in 1935, and worked for the Toledo Press over the summer, until she began graduate school.

Video Oral History Interview with Valarie Justiss Vance, Section A2004_046_001_004, TRT: 0:31:16 2004/04/22

Valarie Justiss Vance left her position at Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee in 1938 to work for the Chicago Welfare Administration. She was drawn to Chicago, Illinois because she wanted the opportunity to learn from Edith Abbott, Grace Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge, leaders in the field of social work who wrote about Social Security and the economic basis of the Great Depression. Despite her lack of child welfare experience, Vance passed a test to become Washington, D.C. public schools' research assistant in social work, a position she held from 1940 until 1958. During the 1940s, D.C. was segregated, but there was a strong community of African American professionals. Vance earned her Ph.D. degree in social work from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. In 1960, she became the director of social work for the Massachusetts Association for the Adult Blind in Boston, Massachusetts where she met with HistoryMaker Senator Edward Brooke. She moved to California to escape her abusive husband.

Video Oral History Interview with Valarie Justiss Vance, Section A2004_046_001_005, TRT: 0:31:15 2004/04/22

Valarie Justiss Vance hosted a Washington, D.C. radio program, 'Americans All,' which ran on Sunday mornings at eleven o'clock. Her friend Tomlinson Todd co-hosted the program, and the two received criticism from Christian individuals for hosting the show on Sundays. She moved from Los Angeles, California to Orange County,

California in 1969. Vance states that economic concerns, including Social Security allowances, increasing the minimum wage and affordable health care, are the predominant issues social workers care about and believes a good society must be a caring one. Vance talks about Robert C. Weaver, the first United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; reflects upon her contributions as a social worker in the United States and her legacy; and describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Valarie Justiss Vance, Section A2004_046_001_006, TRT: 0:31:17 2004/04/22

Valarie Justiss Vance was introduced to Tomlinson Todd through his mother. Vance and Todd became friends and together, developed and hosted the Washington, D.C. radio program, 'Americans All,' which was on air for nineteen years during the 1940s and '50s and was a pioneering African American radio program. Vance and Todd featured influential African Americans on their show, including Mordecai Wyatt Johnson, president of Howard University in Washington, D.C. Vance remembers Todd's involvement in *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Co., Inc.* (1953). The case was brought against Thompson restaurants for discriminating against African American patrons and refusing them service. Todd found legislation at the Library of Congress, which proved that a clause permitting African American patrons in restaurants had been taken out of D.C.'s City Code. Vance concludes by narrating her photographs.