

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Katherine Jones

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jones, Katherine, 1936-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Katherine Jones,
Dates:	October 14, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:23:40).
Abstract:	Nonprofit executive and historian Katherine Jones (1936 -) has been active in promoting equal housing in Newton, Massachusetts, and has authored books about the history of the equal housing movement in Massachusetts. Jones was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 14, 2004, in Newton, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_204
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Katherine Butler Jones was born on March 19, 1936, the only child of Meme, a hairdresser, and Theodore, a postal clerk. Jones grew up at 409 Edgecombe Avenue in Harlem's Sugar Hill neighborhood, an address that W.E.B. DuBois, Walter White, Thurgood Marshall, and Madame St. Clair also called home. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1957 with a B.A. in economics and sociology and married Hubie Jones later that year. After working as a teacher in the Boston Public Schools, Katherine became a mother to Karen in 1959. Daughters Lauren, Renee, Lisa, Cheryl, and Tanya, and sons Harlan and Hamilton would follow.

In 1961, she and her husband bought a home in Newton, Massachusetts, where only two realtors would show a house to a black family. They subsequently became active in the Newton Fair Housing and Equal Rights Committee. In 1964, Jones served as a founding director of the Roxbury/Newton Freedom School, an after-school program. In 1966, she founded the Newton Public Schools' Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunities (METCO) Program, which still enrolls students of color from Boston in Newton schools. She served as METCO's director through 1976.

In 1967, Jones received her M.A. in urban education at Simmons College, and continued to promote integration by working for the Cambridge and Boston Public Schools during Boston's turbulent desegregation efforts in the late 1970s. Jones was elected to the Newton School Committee in 1978 for the first of four terms, making history as the first successful African American candidate. In 1980, she earned her Ed.D. in administration and social policy from Harvard University.

In 1989, Jones discovered that black abolitionist Bishop Henry Highland Garnet had certified her great-great grandparents' 1843 marriage. Upon further investigation, she found that her great-grandfather, Edward Weeks, brought slaves to Canada through an Underground Railroad station in the Adirondacks, where he had purchased land for a dollar from abolitionist Gerrit Smith. Edward named his homestead Timbucto, and John Brown moved

to the area to support the settlers. Jones has shared this research in multiple museum exhibits and journal articles. In 1996, she received the New England PEN Discovery Author Award for her historical writing. In 2002, she co-authored *The Civil Rights Movement in Newton, 1960-1980*. Jones has also taught pedagogy and African American history at Simmons College, Wheelock College, and Boston University. She is currently working on her memoir, *Deeper Roots: An American Odyssey*. An excerpt, “409 Edgecombe Avenue, Baseball and Madame St. Clair,” was published in Herb Boyd’s *The Harlem Reader* in 2003 and inspired a play that was staged in Boston in 2004.

The Joneses live in Newton and have five grandchildren.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Katherine Jones was conducted by Robert Hayden on October 14, 2004, in Newton, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit executive and historian Katherine Jones (1936 -) has been active in promoting equal housing in Newton, Massachusetts, and has authored books about the history of the equal housing movement in Massachusetts.

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:

Jones, Katherine, 1936-

Hayden, Robert (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Jones, Katherine, 1936---Interviews

African American civil rights activists--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Academic Administrator

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Katherine Jones, October 14, 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 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 Katherine Jones, Section A2004_204_001_001, TRT: 0:31:00 ?

Educator, civil rights activist, and historian Katherine Jones gives a detailed description of her family background and genealogy. Jones describes her mother's side of the family, which is originally from Jamaica, and then talks about her father's family history back to the 1700s. Jones explains how her genealogical research has been publicized in different arenas, so as to educate people about black families in Upstate New York and the North before the Civil War. Jones also describes her mother's and father's personalities.

African American families.

African American mothers.

African American fathers.

Genealogy.

Video Oral History Interview with Katherine Jones, Section A2004_204_001_002, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Educator, civil rights activist, and historian Katherine Jones vividly describes her childhood neighborhood in Harlem, New York, focusing on the black community in her building, 409 Edgecombe Avenue, the home to many of the city's black elite and professionals. Jones also describes her schooling, which started at the all-black Modern School, which she attended for four years. Jones then describes her transfer to the Ethical Culture Fieldston School, a predominantly white private school, describing the adjustments she made in a white environment. Jones also explains her decision to attend Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts.

Childhood and youth--New York (State)--New York.

African American neighborhoods--New York (State)--New York.

Segregation in education--New York (State)--New York.

Ethical Culture Fieldston School.

Mount Holyoke College.

Video Oral History Interview with Katherine Jones, Section A2004_204_001_003, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Educator, civil rights activist, and historian Katherine Jones describes her experiences at Mount Holyoke College and explains how her studies in sociology and economics led her to begin her career of public service as a teacher in East Boston. Jones then details her involvement in the educational system of Newton, Massachusetts, where she helped found the Metropolitan Council of Educational Opportunities (METCO). Jones describes the growth of the program, and explains how it helped children from inner-city Boston receive a superior educational experience.

Mount Holyoke College.

Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (Boston, Mass.).

African Americans--Education--Massachusetts--Boston.

Teachers--Massachusetts--Boston.

Video Oral History Interview with Katherine Jones, Section A2004_204_001_004, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Educator, civil rights activist, and historian Katherine Jones continues to detail her efforts to improve education in the Greater Boston area. Jones describes serving on the school committees of both Newton and Cambridge,

Massachusetts, explaining the changes in curriculum and hiring practices that she helped to implement. Jones also describes her doctoral work at Harvard University, and the difficulties in raising eight children while pursuing all her professional and educational goals. Jones then reflects on her career, and discusses her interest in black history and genealogy.

African Americans--Education--Massachusetts--Boston.

Harvard University.

School administrators--Massachusetts.

African American children.

Video Oral History Interview with Katherine Jones, Section A2004_204_001_005, TRT: 0:23:30 ?

Katherine Jones narrates her photographs.

Photographs.