

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bishop Arthur Brazier

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Brazier, Arthur M.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Arthur Brazier,
Dates:	January 7, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:13:41).
Abstract:	Pastor and bishop Bishop Arthur Brazier (1921 - 2010) served as diocesan bishop of the 6th Episcopal District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, in addition to his work as pastor of the Chicago's Apostolic Church of God. Brazier was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 7, 2005, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_003
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Bishop Arthur M. Brazier, pastor of the Chicago's Apostolic Church of God, was born in Chicago, Illinois, July 22, 1921. The son of Robert and Geneva Scott Brazier, Brazier grew up on Chicago's South Side during the Great Depression. Brazier attended Frances E. Willard and Stephen A. Douglas elementary schools; he dropped out of Phillips High School after a year of attendance to begin working. Drafted into a segregated United States Army in 1942, Brazier became a staff sergeant serving in India and Burma; after being discharged in 1945, he met his future wife, was baptized, and joined her church in 1947.

In 1948, Brazier began a twelve year career with the United States Postal Service. During this time, Brazier studied at Moody Bible Institute and became pastor of the Universal Church of Christ in 1952. In 1960, Brazier merged his congregation with the Apostolic Church of God in Chicago's Woodlawn community. Brazier became the spokesman for the Temporary Woodlawn Organization (TWO), organized by Nicholas Von Hoffman of Sol Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation. Brazier successfully led TWO against the expansion of the University of Chicago in 1963. With Bill Berry of the Chicago Urban League, Brazier also formed the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations which fought segregation in Chicago's public schools; he resigned in 1965, but was active with Al Raby in Dr. Martin Luther King's visit to Chicago in 1966.

As pastor of the Apostolic Church of God, Brazier's congregation grew from 100 members in 1960 to over 18,000. In 1976, Brazier became diocesan bishop of the 6th Episcopal District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. Brazier also founded the Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation, and the Fund for Community Redevelopment and Revitalization; he officially retired from the pulpit and addressed his congregation for the last time on June 1, 2008. In addition to his church activities, Brazier enjoyed a career as a teacher and lecturer and authored *Black Self-Determination*, *Saved By Grace and Grace Alone*, and *From Milk to Meat*. Brazier and his wife Isabelle raised four children.

Brazier passed away on October 22, 2010 at age 89.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Bishop Arthur Brazier was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 7, 2005, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Pastor and bishop Bishop Arthur Brazier (1921 - 2010) served as diocesan bishop of the 6th Episcopal District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, in addition to his work as pastor of the Chicago's Apostolic Church of God.

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:

Brazier, Arthur M.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brazier, Arthur M.--Interviews

African American bishops--Interviews.

African American clergy--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Pentecostal Assemblies of the World

Occupations:

Pastor

Bishop

HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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 Bishop Arthur Brazier, January 7, 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 Bishop Arthur Brazier, Section A2005_003_001_001, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Bishop Arthur Brazier was born on July 22, 1921 in Chicago, Illinois to Geneva Scott Brazier and Robert Brazier. Brazier's maternal grandfather was a Baptist minister, and his paternal grandfather was enslaved. His mother was born in Montevallo, Alabama. Brazier's parents married there. Brazier's father moved to Chicago after surviving a coal mining accident. Upon finding work as a mechanic at Hyde Park Laundry Company, Brazier's father sent for his mother in 1920. Brazier grew up in a large home with extended family north of Hyde Park and frequented the Chicago World's Fair, where he enjoyed the car company's exhibits. He disliked attending church with his family every Sunday and school, although Brazier gained a love of reading from his father. He attended Francis E. Willard Elementary School and Stephen A. Douglas Elementary School, where Maudelle B. Bousfield was principal and Brazier often was chastised for talking too much. Brazier dropped out of high school to find work during the Great Depression.

African American bishops--Interviews.

African American clergy--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Arthur Brazier, Section A2005_003_001_002, TRT: 0:29:36 ?

Bishop Arthur Brazier grew up in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood, where he enjoyed watching movies and attending dances at Savoy Ballroom, Regal Theater and other neighborhood institutions. Despite his appreciation of one teacher, Marie Baltimore, Brazier disliked school. After one year, he left Wendell Phillips High School to find work during the Great Depression and help his family. Brazier worked as a delivery boy for Kohl's Drug Store and washed dishes until he was hired at his father's place of employment, Hyde Park Laundry Company. Brazier worked there until he was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1942. Brazier encountered discrimination in the segregated South while undergoing basic training. He was deployed to India for a year before serving in Burma. Although he stopped attending church at fifteen, he identified himself as a Christian to distinguish himself from other religious groups in the region.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Arthur Brazier, Section A2005_003_001_003, TRT: 0:28:58 ?

Bishop Arthur Brazier registered for the 52-20 program for veterans upon leaving the U.S. Army in 1947. Brazier did not want to return to the segregated Army. Instead, he worked at Pullman-Standard Car Manufacturing and Western Electric until joining the U.S. Postal Service. At a church picnic, Brazier met his future wife, who convinced him to return to church. They married in 1949, the same year his mother died. Stephen A. Lucas preached at her church until his death in 1952, then Brazier succeeded him as pastor. In 1960, Brazier's church merged with the Apostolic Church of God. Dr. Charles T. Leber invited Brazier to a Greater Woodlawn Pastors' Alliance meeting, where he learned of organizer Saul Alinsky's desire to stop the University of Chicago's expansion into the Woodlawn neighborhood. While speaking at another meeting, Brazier impressed Alinsky and Nicholas von Hoffman. He led The Woodlawn Organization against Mayor Richard J. Daley's subordinates with assistance from a group of Puerto Rican residents.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Arthur Brazier, Section A2005_003_001_004, TRT: 0:29:36 ?

Bishop Arthur Brazier led The Woodlawn Organization in preventing the University of Chicago from expanding into the Woodlawn community, and worked with the city to build the Woodlawn Gardens, an affordable housing complex. With President of the Chicago Urban League Edwin C. Berry, Brazier established the Coordinating Committee of Community Organizations (CCCO). As CCCO president, Brazier fought to end de facto segregation in Chicago public schools. Albert Raby succeeded Brazier as president in 1965 and brought Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Chicago in 1966. Brazier, as pastor of the Apostolic Church of God, saw his congregation expand from one hundred to eighteen thousand members. He reflects upon how his political organizing impacted his church, his church's message and his ministry. In describing his hopes and concerns for the African American community, Brazier notes both the lack of unifying leaders like King that existed in the past, and the increased opportunities since the end of segregation.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Arthur Brazier, Section A2005_003_001_005, TRT: 0:16:01 ?

Bishop Arthur Brazier led the Apostolic Church of God in assisting the poor in the community and donating money to the 2006 tsunami in India. Brazier remembers the effect of voting for Chicago Mayor Harold Washington, and he describes the importance of the ballot in advancing civil rights and affecting the American power structure. Brazier talks about his wife of fifty-seven years, Esther Holmes Brazier, and his four children, including his son, Dr. Byron T. Brazier, assistant pastor and general administrator at Apostolic Church of God. He also reflects upon his life and legacy, and how he would like to be remembered.