



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Xernona Clayton

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Xernona Clayton
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Xernona Clayton,
Dates:	June 22, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	2 Betacam SP videocassettes (0:55:30).
Abstract:	Broadcast executive, foundation chief executive, nonprofit executive, television host, and television producer Xernona Clayton (1930 -) Clayton is founder of the Trumpet Awards was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 22, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_143
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Broadcast executive, foundation chief executive, nonprofit executive, television host, and television producer Xernona Clayton and her twin sister, Xenobia, were born August 30, 1930 in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Clayton's parents, Reverend James M. and Lillie Brewster, were actively engaged in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Muskogee. In 1952, Clayton earned her B.A. degree from Tennessee State Agricultural and Industrial College, now Tennessee State University. She later earned a scholarship and pursued graduate studies at the University of Chicago. In 1957, Clayton married noted journalist and civil rights activist Edward Clayton, who died in 1966. She later married jurist Paul L. Brady, the first African American appointed as a Federal Administrative Law judge.

Clayton's civic involvement and participation in the Civil Rights Movement was informed by the Chicago Urban League, where she worked to investigate discrimination in employment. As an activist, Clayton was instrumental in coordinating activities for the Doctor's Committee for Implementation project, which culminated with the desegregation of hospital facilities in Atlanta, Georgia. Clayton also worked closely with Dr. and Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr., helping to organize fundraising initiatives for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). By the mid-1960s, Clayton was writing for the "Atlanta Voice," and in 1968, she became the first black woman in the South to host a regularly scheduled prime-time talk show, "Variations," which became "The Xernona Clayton Show" on WAGA-TV in Atlanta. Her guests included Harry Belafonte and Lena Horne. Later that year, Clayton successfully convinced the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan to renounce the Klan. In 1982, Clayton began her long standing and impressive career with Turner Broadcasting System (TBS). At TBS, she assumed many roles throughout the years, including producing documentaries, hosting a public affairs program entitled "Open Up" and serving as director and vice-president of public affairs in the early 1980s. Ted Turner, founder of TBS, promoted Clayton to assistant corporate vice-president for urban affairs in 1988. In 1993, Clayton created the Trumpet Awards for Turner Broadcasting to honor African American achievements. The

program is seen in over 185 countries.

As Governor of Georgia, former President Jimmy Carter appointed Clayton to the State Motion Picture and Television Commission. She is a member of the Academy for Television Arts and Sciences, the National Urban League, among other civic and professional organizations. Clayton is also a board member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change and served as chairman of the Atlanta University Board of Trustees. The recipient of numerous accolades, Clayton received the Leadership and Dedication to Civil Rights Award and the Drum Major for Justice Award from SCLC in 2004. In her honor, the Atlanta Chapter of the Association of Black Journalists established the Xernona Clayton Scholarship. Clayton's autobiography, "I've Been Marching All the Time" was published in 1991.

Xernona Clayton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 22, 2005.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Xernona Clayton was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 22, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 2 Betacam SP videocassettes. Broadcast executive, foundation chief executive, nonprofit executive, television host, and television producer Xernona Clayton (1930 -)

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:

Clayton, Xernona

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Clayton, Xernona--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--Georgia--Atlanta--Interviews.

African American executives--Georgia--Atlanta--Interviews.

Clayton, Xernona--Interviews.

African American corporate executives.

African American television journalists--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Turner Broadcasting System.

Rainbow/PUSH Coalition

Trumpet Awards Foundation, Inc.

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

BusinessMakers

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 Xernona Clayton, June 22, 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 8/12/2011 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, June 22, 2005

Video Oral History Interview with Xernona Clayton, Section A2005_143_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00
2005/06/22

Xernona Clayton shares knowledge about her family history. Clayton and her twin sister Xenobia were born on August 30, 1930 in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Her mother, Lillie Elliot Brewer, who is of African American and Native American descent, was born in Mt. Pleasant, Texas in 1902. Lillie had high cheekbones, long dark hair, a long nose, and flawless skin complexion. According to Clayton, her maternal grandmother shared these distinctive physical features. She also describes her grandmother as an enigmatic figure, who grew to be a loving and attentive woman in her life. Clayton's father, James Moore Brewster, was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, where his family was landowners and worked largely in the timber business. Though James only had a seventh grade education, he emerged as a highly regarded figure in Muskogee due to his involvement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. James was also an important force in the family and encouraged his children to be self-reliant and competent as well as to strive for excellence. Clayton mentions his time as a Pullman Porter and his position as a Baptist minister at Mt. Zion Baptist church. Together, Lillie and James were proactive parents, who equipped their children with the philosophy and wherewithal to be leaders and to protect themselves from discrimination.

African American families--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

African American grandmothers.

African American fathers--Influence.

United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Oklahoma Area.

Indians of North American--Politics and government.

Pullman porters.

Landowners--Louisiana--Shreveport.

African American families--Louisiana--Shreveport.
African American parents.
African American clergy--Oklahoma--Muskogee.
Indians--Mixed descent--Oklahoma--Muskogee
African American--Relations with Indians.

Video Oral History Interview with Xernona Clayton, Section A2005_143_001_002, TRT: 0:26:30
2005/06/22

Xernona Clayton continues to describe her family and childhood experiences. Clayton talks about her father's involvement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Muskogee and the many lessons he taught his children. He stressed the importance of humility and urged Clayton and her siblings to avoid vanity. Clayton goes on to talk about the close relationship she shared with her twin sister, Xenobia. The pair participated in a study on twins at the University of Wisconsin and found out they were mirror [image] twins. Xenobia was Clayton's best friend and stood as a source of inspiration. Clayton remembers Xenobia's efforts to lift the spirits of those suffering with multiple sclerosis, a disease she would later succumb to. Clayton goes on to talk about her experiences at Dunbar elementary, an exclusive African American school, which was directly across the street from an all-white school. She recalls never missing a day of school and being helpful to teachers and administrators in her role as "errand-runner." Clayton's favorite subjects included math and grammar and literacy. She not only loved Dunbar and its teachers, but she also appreciated the opportunities to socialize with her classmates.

African American families--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

African American fathers--Influence.

United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Oklahoma Area.

Indians of North American--Politics and government.

Segregation in education--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

African American children--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

African American children--Education (Elementary)--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

Multiple Sclerosis--Psychological aspects.

Twins--United States--Personal Narratives.

University of Wisconsin.

Brothers and sisters--Death.