



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with John Carlos

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	John Carlos
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with John Carlos,
Dates:	March 29, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	3 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:13:00).
Abstract:	Track and field athlete John Carlos (1945 -) is most well known for being the bronze medalist for the 200-meter race during the 1968 Olympic games and raising a black power salute on the podium with Tommie Smith Carlos was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 29, 2006, in Palm Springs, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_055
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

John Carlos was born in 1945 in Harlem, New York. Carlos attended Machine Trade and Medical High School, where he was a talented track star. He received a full scholarship to East Texas State University (ETSU), and became that school's first track and field Lone Star Conference Champion. After only one year at ETSU, Carlos was accepted at San Jose State University. Under the tutelage of Lloyd "Bud" Winter, a notable coach who would eventually be inducted into the National Track & Field Hall of Fame, Carlos began to thrive as an athlete.

While attending San Jose State University, Carlos met sociologist Harry Edwards, and under Edward's influence helped to co-found the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR). Edwards wanted to boycott the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City as a protest of the United States' inability to deal with its human rights injustices. Despite the support of Carlos, Carlos' newfound friend and fellow athlete Tommie Smith and a variety of civil rights leaders, the boycott never occurred. However, Carlos remained impressed by Edward's ideas. His athletic career, meanwhile, had taken off – in the 1967 Pan-American games, Carlos was a bronze medalist for the 200 meter event.

At the time of the trials for the 1968 Olympic Games, Carlos beat Smith's world record time for the 200 meter dash by 0.3 seconds, although a technicality kept the score from being officially recorded. During the actual 200 meter event, Carlos finished third, behind Smith and Australian Peter Norman. While receiving their medals, Smith and Carlos raised their gloved fists as a silent protest of racism and economic depression among oppressed people in America. In response, International Olympic Committee president Avery Brundage banned the two men from the Olympic Village and forced them from the United States Olympic team. After their return to the United States, both men received death threats. However, they had become a significant symbol of the Civil Rights struggle. Carlos also saw Martin Luther King, Jr. just ten days before King's assassination.

Carlos continued to compete and excel in the field of track, and 1969 proved to be a year of great accomplishment. He tied the 100-yard dash record that year with a time of 9.1 seconds and led San Jose State to the NCAA championship for the first time, thanks to his winnings in the 100, 220 and 4x100-yard relay events. After his track career ended, Carlos joined the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles, where an unfortunate knee injury cut his professional football career short after only one year. He continued to play football in Canada for the CFL, with one season as a player for the Montreal Alouettes and one year with the Toronto Argonauts. In 1985, Carlos became a counselor for Palm Springs High School in California. In 1998, both Smith and Carlos were honored in a ceremony to commemorate their protest at the 1968 Olympic Games, and the two reunited again at the funeral for Australian runner Peter Norman's funeral ceremony in 2006. John Carlos was interviewed by "The HistoryMakers" on March 29, 2006.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with John Carlos was conducted by Paul Brock on March 29, 2006, in Palm Springs, California, and was recorded on 3 Betacam SP videocassettes. Track and field athlete John Carlos (1945 -) is most well known for being the bronze medalist for the 200-meter race during the 1968 Olympic games and raising a black power salute on the podium with Tommie Smith

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:

Carlos, John, 1945-

Brock, Paul (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Carlos, John, 1945- --Interviews

African American athletes--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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 John Carlos, March 29, 2006. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/11/2011 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, March 29, 2006

Video Oral History Interview with John Carlos, Section A2006_055_001_001, TRT: 0:28:40
2006/03/29

John Carlos discusses the irony of attending an elementary school named after Frederick Douglass, but how there were not any pictures of the African American leader in the school. Carlos remembers having trouble reading and writing while in kindergarten at PS 5 in New York, New York. Due to his undiagnosed learning disability Carlos was labeled an idiot by the New York City Board of Education. When he was a child Carlos was surprised to find out that a well dressed man in the neighborhood, who appeared to be prosperous, was an elevator operator. One of Carlos' life philosophies' is that he is willing to answer only to God for his actions and thoughts.

Public schools--New York (State)

African American Elementary School Students--New York

Learning disabled children--Ability testing--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with John Carlos, Section A2006_055_001_002, TRT: 0:28:30
2006/03/29

John Carlos describes himself as a precocious child that often got into fights. Carlos recalls the racism his father Earl Vanderbilt Carlos experienced after returning from overseas after fighting in World War II. He discusses his theories about why drug addiction occurs in the African American community and believes that it is related to unemployment and racism. As a young man Carlos admired the philosophy of Robin Hood, stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. He used this philosophy to rationalize robbing freight trains of their contents. Carlos considers most churches to be ineffective institutions that are more about paying spiritual tithes, not practicing religion. Carlos then goes on to describe a he had vision about people applauding him at a big event, but slowly their cheers turned into jeers of hatred, this was an apparent premonition about the 1968 Olympics.

Racism--Harlem--New York

Drug addiction--The United States--Social conditions

World War, 1939-1945--African American soldiers

Social life and customs--The United States

Video Oral History Interview with John Carlos, Section A2006_055_001_003, TRT: 0:15:50
2006/03/29

John Carlos recalls his tumultuous primary school career. Carlos was expelled from P.S. 139 after confronting the dean about the treatment of his mother, Vioris, after she was called in to pick him up from school. Carlos then attended a Catholic high school that he eventually got expelled from for refusing to take a class. He then discusses running track at Machine and Metal Trades High School in New York, New York. Although Carlos excelled at track and field, his true passion was swimming. He hoped that one day he would become the first African American swimmer to represent the United States in the Olympics. Two neighborhood police officers are credited for giving Carlos the phone number for Mr. Levy and Joe Yancy, two coaches at the New York Pioneer Track Club. Carlos considers The New York Pioneer Track Club to be where he launched his career as a sprinter.

African American Elementary School Students--New York

African American Track and field athletes--Sprinting