

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Branche, George Clayton, 1925-2009
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	December 12, 2006 and December 6, 2006
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2006
<b>Physical Description:</b>	9 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:13:25).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Internal medicine physician Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. (1925 - 2009 ) was a medical officer during the Korean Conflict, was a founder of 100 Black Men and had his own internal medicine practice in New York City. Branche was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 12, 2006 and December 6, 2006, in White Plains, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2006_152
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Internal medicine physician Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. was born on March 22, 1925 in Tuskegee, Alabama to Dr. George Clayton Branche, Sr. and Lillian Vester Davidson. Branche attended Boston Latin High School in Boston, Massachusetts and graduated in June of 1942. He then attended and graduated from Bowdon College in Brunswick, Maine, earning his B.A. degree in 1946. Branche graduated from Boston University's Medical School in 1948 earning his M.D. degree.

After earning his medical degree, Branche worked as a medical intern at Boston City Hospital between 1948 and 1949. In July of 1949, Branche started his residency in internal medicine at Cushing Veterans' Hospital. After his residency ended in 1951, he earned a cancer fellowship at Tufts Medical School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After his cancer fellowship, Branche entered the U.S. Army. Between October and December of 1952, Branche attended medical field service school at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas in preparation for service overseas during the Korean Conflict. Between December of 1952 and May 15, 1954, Branche served in the U.S. Army as a medical officer. He was honorably discharged in November of 1954, achieving the rank of captain.

Branche started to practice internal medicine in Richmond, Virginia near the end of 1954 after leaving the U.S. Army. The following year, he got married and started a family. After seven years in Richmond, Branche and his family moved to New York City, where he practiced medicine with his brother, Dr. Matthew Branche. Branche worked in the Admissions Department at Columbia University Medical School. Branche also helped found the organization, 100 Black Men. He was involved with the organization for forty-three years and was an active member for many years.

Branche passed away on April 23, 2009 at age 84.

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## **Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. was conducted by Shawn Wilson on December 12, 2006 and December 6, 2006, in White Plains, New York, and was recorded on 9 Betacame SP videocassettes. Internal medicine physician Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. (1925 - 2009 ) was a medical officer during the Korean Conflict, was a founder of 100 Black Men and had his own internal medicine practice in New York City.

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## **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®.

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## **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.

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## **Controlled Access Terms**

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### **Persons:**

Branche, George Clayton, 1925-2009

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

### **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Branche, George Clayton, 1925-2009--Interviews

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## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Internal Medicine Physician

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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## 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 Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr., December 12, 2006 and December 6, 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 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:36 2006/12/06

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. was born on March 22, 1925 in Tuskegee, Alabama to Lillian Davidson Branche and George Clayton Branche, Sr. His mother was born in 1900 in Statesville, North Carolina, the daughter of Victoria Davidson and a white father whom she never knew. Branche's mother's family in Statesville was very poor, so she was raised by relatives in Winston-Salem. Branche's father was born in 1896 in Louisburg, North Carolina, and was adopted at the age of three by Dr. George Clayton Shaw and his wife, Mary Elizabeth Lewis Shaw. Shaw was born into slavery, attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Auburn Theological Seminary, and then founded Mary Potter Academy as well as Timothy Darling Presbyterian Church in Oxford, North Carolina. Branche's parents met while attending Mary Potter Academy, where his father was an outstanding athlete and student. After his parents graduated, his father attended Lincoln University, and his mother studied at Cheyney Training School for Teachers.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:46 2006/12/06

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.'s father, George Clayton Branche, Sr., played basketball at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and served in the U.S. Army during World War I. After graduating from Lincoln University in 1919, he studied psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine under Professor Solomon Carter Fuller. Branche's father joined both Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, and conducted neuroscience research at the Veterans Administration hospital in Tuskegee, Alabama. Branche grew up in Tuskegee, where he competed in tennis tournaments; attended Chambliss Children's House School, where he was taught by Booker T. Washington's daughter-in-law, Olivia Davidson

Washington; and traveled in the South with his family. In the summer, he attended Camp Emlen near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he befriended William T. Coleman, Jr. As a teenager, Branche moved to Boston, Massachusetts to live with a family friend, John Garrett, Jr., and they attended the Boston Latin School.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:40 2006/12/06

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. attended Chambliss Children's House School in Tuskegee, Alabama, where he saw George Washington Carver harvesting plants each day at recess. He moved to Boston, Massachusetts to live with the family of his friend John Garrett, Jr. There, Branche enrolled at the Boston Latin School, and befriended Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. In 1944, Branche's parents and siblings joined him in Boston, and his brother, Matthew Branche, enrolled at his school. During World War II, Branche's friends encouraged him to apply to join the Tuskegee Airmen, but Branche refused, as he feared flying, and wanted to study medicine. He attended Maine's Bowdoin College, where he was one of only a few black students, and was mentored by Ernst C. Helmreich. Branche went on to Boston University School of Medicine, where both his father, George Clayton Branche Sr., and his friend and role model, George I. Lythcott, Jr., were alumni. In 1948, he began his internship at Boston City Hospital as its sole black intern.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:41 2006/12/06

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. successfully organized his fellow interns at Boston City Hospital to demand wages in 1948. The next year, he began a residency at Cushing General Hospital in Framingham, Massachusetts, where he was mentored by Charles Pinderhughes and Solomon Carter Fuller. During the Korean War, Branche became a U.S. Army medical officer. Despite the integration of the U.S. military, he experienced discrimination, and his friend, Ashton Robinson, was denied from the V-12 Navy College Training Program due to his race. Branche trained at Fort Sam Houston, and served at hospitals in Jeonju and Yeongam-eup, South Korea. Discharged in 1954, Branche

settled in Richmond, Virginia, where he established a medical practice, and campaigned to integrate local department stores. In 1961, he moved to New York City, and Aubre de Lambert Maynard hired him at Harlem Hospital Center. Branche later succeeded his friend, George I. Lythcott, Jr. in Columbia University's medical school's admissions department.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_001\_005, TRT: 0:19:44 2006/12/06

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. married June Granger Branche, a fashion editor at Vogue, and moved to Richmond, Virginia to raise a family. There, he befriended President Samuel DeWitt Proctor of Virginia Union University. Branche began his medical career as a physician at an outpatient clinic for military families in Fort Lee, Virginia, then founded his own internal medicine practice in Richmond. He joined a local medical society for black physicians, who were barred from joining the American Medical Association. Seeking better education for his children, Branche moved to New York City in the 1960s. He opened a medical practice in Mount Vernon, New York with his brother, Matthew Branche, and worked at Harlem Hospital Center, specializing in hypertension care. Branche was a co-founder of several charitable organizations, including the Westchester Clubmen Foundation, the Youth Shelter Program of Westchester, Inc. and 100 Black Men of America, Inc., where he worked with David N. Dinkins and Roscoe C. Brown.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_002\_006, TRT: 0:29:30 2006/12/12

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.'s great uncle and great aunt, Mary Elizabeth Lewis Shaw and Dr. George Clayton Shaw, founded Mary Potter Academy in Oxford, North Carolina. Dr. Shaw also wrote a biography of John Chavis, a Princeton College of New Jersey alumnus and African American teacher during the 18th century. Later, Branche served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War with black physicians like Oscar Graves, Robert Morton and Herbert G. Cave. At the 11th Evacuation Hospital, he operated a dispensary for soldiers, and provided care to Korean civilians. Branche returned to the United States in

1954, and abandoned his plans for a medical practice with his father after his father's health declined. Instead, he settled in Richmond, Virginia, where he was a contract physician at Fort Lee, and then opened his own practice, which served black patients. In Richmond, Branche protested segregated department stores; joined Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity; and saw Arthur Ashe play tennis. He moved to New York City in 1962.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_002\_007, TRT: 0:29:53 2006/12/12

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. moved to New York City in 1962, and joined Harlem Hospital Center as an emergency room doctor. In the ensuing years, he opened a medical practice with his brother, Matthew Branche, in Mount Vernon, New York; and became an instructor at Columbia University, where he taught introductory courses, and worked in the admissions department. Branche also helped develop a program offering a six-year medical degree at the City College of New York. He joined 100 Black Men of America, Inc., and was active in developing its speakers bureau series as well as the Eagle Academy for Young Men in the Bronx. Branche moved with his family to Westchester County, New York, first to New Rochelle and then to Scarsdale, where his neighbors included Earl G. Graves, Sr. and Archie M. Bankston, Jr. He and his wife joined the Scarsdale Open Society Association, which worked to welcome more African American families to the town, as their children often had few black classmates.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_002\_008, TRT: 0:29:44 2006/12/12

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. joined the Westchester Clubmen of New York in the early 1960s. From that time, the group transformed from a social club to one devoted to providing scholarships and tutoring to disadvantaged youth. Branche himself mentored Victoria Holloway Barbosa, who became a dermatologist in Chicago. He helped found the Youth Shelter Program of Westchester, Inc. in Mount Vernon, New York, which provides residences, educational support and job training to formerly incarcerated youth. Branche was also a member

of the Westchester chapter of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. He describes how the closure of St. Vincent's Hospital Manhattan and Cabrini Medical Center impacted the availability of care to poor African Americans in New York City. Branche talks about the neglect of black patients in the medical field, and the efforts of the all-black National Medical Association to remedy this. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.,  
Section A2006\_152\_002\_009, TRT: 0:25:51 2006/12/12

Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr. describes his three children. His oldest son, George Clayton Branche III, attended Princeton University and then Howard University College of Medicine, where he originally planned to specialize in anesthesiology. With the guidance of Dr. Charles H. Epps, Jr., Branche III decided in his final year of medical school to change his focus to orthopedic surgery. Branche III then interned at Harlem Hospital Center under Dr. Harold Freeman, and established a practice in sports medicine, specializing in arthroscopic surgery. Branche's daughter, Leota Susan Branche, married Douglas Holloway of NBCUniversal and raised two sons in Scarsdale, New York. Branche's youngest son, Scott Branche, attended the University of Maryland, and managed a hobby shop, where he built model rockets. Branche reflects upon his life, and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.