



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Gail A. Hansberry

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hansberry, Gail A.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Gail A. Hansberry,
Dates:	February 9, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:27:54).
Abstract:	Federal government official and photographer Gail A. Hansberry (1939 -) served as national president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) from 1990 to 1992. Hansberry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 9, 2007, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_059
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Federal government official and photographer Gail Adelle Hansberry was born on September 4, 1939. Her mother, Myrtle Kelso Hansberry, was a French major and social worker. Her father, William Leo Hansberry, pioneered African Studies at Howard University and founded the African-American Institute. Playwright Lorraine Hansberry was her first cousin. Hansberry attended Mott Elementary School, Slowe Elementary School and Benjamin Banneker Junior High School. In 1954, her family accompanied her father to Egypt on a Fulbright Fellowship. There, in Egypt, Hansberry attended Manor House English School. She graduated from McKinley Technical High School's first integrated class in 1956. At Howard University, she enjoyed classes from Dorothy Porter, Merz Tate and Arthur Davis. Graduating cum laude in 1960 with her B.A. degree in art and art history, Hansberry earned her M.A. degree in art history and graphics from Smith College in 1962. She had postgraduate education at Howard University in 1962 and 1963 and taught art at Taft Junior High School.

From 1963 to 1966, Hansberry taught art and art history at North Carolina Central University and studied book making in New York City. In 1967, she joined Time Warner's Book Division researching texts and photos. As an independent editorial researcher and photographic consultant from 1976 to 1985, Hansberry's clientele included McMillan, "Black Enterprise" magazine, American Visions, "People," "Playboy," R.R, Bowker, Boone and Young, McGraw-Hill, James E. Hinton Enterprises, American Can Company, the United Methodist Church and Blackside, Inc. In 1980, Hansberry joined the United States Department of State as an escort officer/English language officer.

Active in the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), Hansberry served as national president from 1990 to 1992. She is board member of the International Association of Black Professionals in International Affairs and Crystal City Nursing Center. Her photographs have been exhibited at

the Brooklyn Museum, Intuitive Gallery, Rockefeller Center, Fashion Institute of Technology, American Museum of Natural History and Diana Gallery. Permanent collections of her work are housed at IBM, Smith College, the Library of Congress, the Schomburg Center for Black Research, Harvard University and Boston University.

Gail Hansberry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 9, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Gail A. Hansberry was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 9, 2007, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Federal government official and photographer Gail A. Hansberry (1939 -) served as national president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) from 1990 to 1992.

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:

Hansberry, Gail

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hansberry, Gail--Interviews

African American artists as teachers--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--Washington (D.C.)--Interviews.

African American photographers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Dept. of State

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

CivicMakers

ArtMakers

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 Gail A. Hansberry, February 9, 2007. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/26/2011 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, February 9, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Gail A. Hansberry, Section A2007_059_001_001, TRT: 0:29:33
2007/02/09

Gail Hansberry discusses her family background and their move from Mississippi to Chicago in 1912. Hansberry shares that her grandfather was interested in the plight of African Americans and how education was important to her family. Hansberry's father, William Leo Hansberry, pioneered African Studies at Howard University and founded the African-American Institute, formerly Africa House, in Washington, D.C. She mentions that her father taught her about African history and talks about some of her first memories of her father. Hansberry ends this segment of the interview discussing her perspective of Africa.

African American life--Illinois--Chicago..

African American fathers--Illinois--Chicago.

African Americans--Migrations--History--20th century.

Migration, Internal--United States--History--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Gail A. Hansberry, Section A2007_059_001_002, TRT: 0:29:47
2007/02/09

Gail Hansberry shares her family history and her childhood experiences growing up in Chicago, Illinois. As a child, Hansberry traveled to Egypt with her family. Hansberry discusses her interaction with many African students who visited and worked for her father, William Leo Hansberry. Hansberry also mentions her father's relationship with her cousin, Lorraine Hansberry. Hansberry's father visited her cousin in Chicago frequently. She discusses how her father's interaction with Lorraine Hansberry may have inspired her to include a Nigerian student in her play "A Reason in the Sun." Hansberry concludes the interview segment discussing how her father and uncle Carl Hansberry were interested in Africana history.

African American children--Illinois--Chicago.

Hansberry, Lorraine, 1930-1965.

Hansberry, William Leo.

African diaspora.

Egypt--Social life and customs--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Gail A. Hansberry, Section A2007_059_001_003, TRT: 0:29:33
2007/02/09

Gail Hansberry discusses her father William Leo Hansberry 's academic career as a history professor at Howard University in Washington, D.C. William Leo Hansberry co-founded the Africa-America Institute to help Africans build relationships with Americans through education and training programs. She discusses in more detail her trip to Egypt with her family and the great impact this trip had on her life perspective. Hansberry enjoyed being in a non-Western country, where she felt that racism and segregation were not issues. She ends this segment of the interview by describing her experience as a part of

McKinley Technical High School's first integrated class in 1956.
Howard University--Faculty.
Hansberry, William Leo.
Race Relations--history--United States.
School integration--United States
Egypt--Social life and customs--20th century.
Africa-America Institute.
African Americans--Education--Washington (D.C.)--1950-1960.
School integration--Washington (D.C.)--1950-1960.

Video Oral History Interview with Gail A. Hansberry, Section A2007_059_001_004, TRT: 0:29:47
2007/02/09

Gail Hansberry shares her educational experiences at Howard University in Washington, D.C. She was an active member of several school organizations in college including being elected as treasurer of her freshman class and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority. Many of her professors at Howard like Lois Mailou Jones, James Porter, Dorothy Porter, and James Welch were family friends. Hansberry discusses her attendance at Smith College, where she was one of only three other Black graduate students. After college, she spent a summer in Paris and returned to Washington, D.C. to work at the National Gallery of Art. Hansberry then talks about her teaching positions at Taft Junior High School in Washington, D.C. and later at North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina. She ends the interview segment by recounting the rising civil rights movement in North Carolina and describing segregated bus waiting rooms in some towns.

Howard University--Faculty.
Howard University--students.
African American college students--Social life and customs.
African American--educators.
African American artists as teachers.
Jones, Lois Mailou.
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.
National Gallery of Art (U.S.)--Employees.
Smith College.
African Americans--North Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Gail A. Hansberry, Section A2007_059_001_005, TRT: 0:29:14
2007/02/09

Gail Hansberry shares her career experiences, including her work as a researcher at Time-Life in the 1970s. Hansberry found many inaccuracies in the Africa editions of Time Life book series. Hansberry questioned the content, lack of African American researchers working on the editions and tried to keep the books from being published. She discusses being fired from Time-Life shortly afterward and how she decided to pursue an art career. From 1976 until 1979, Hansberry worked as a freelance photographer exhibiting an one woman show of photographs of the George Washington Bridge in 1974. Hansberry mentions returning to Washington, D.C. to become a family caretaker. She discusses how she became a contracted English language officer for the Department of State and ends the interview by describing how she became the Executive Director of the Association for the Study of Afro American Life and History (ASLAH).

Time-Life Books--Employees.

African American photographers--Exhibitions.

African American civic leaders--Washington (D.C.).

Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc.

Women caregivers.