Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Fruteland Jackson

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616
info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com

Creator: Fruteland Jackson

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Fruteland Jackson,

Dates: February 13, 2007

Bulk Dates: 2007

Physical Description: 5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:19:20).

Abstract: Blues musician and music instructor Fruteland Jackson (1953 - ) is an acoustic guitarist
and singer who founded the "Blues in the Schools" program. Jackson was interviewed
by The HistoryMakers® on February 13, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is
comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2007_064

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Blues musician and music instructor Fruteland Jackson was born Vincent Sherman Chandler on June 9, 1953 in
Doddsville, Sunflower County, Mississippi. His maternal family tree can be documented back to 1863. Jackson is
the fourth of six children born to John Chandler and Ida B. Andrew. His childhood years were spent in Chicago
and Mississippi. Jackson was raised in a musical family and was introduced to the guitar at the age of ten but had
little interest in studying the instrument. Instead, Jackson played bugle and trombone while in high school.
Jackson graduated from high school in 1970 and entered Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois, where he
majored in performing arts. He later studied vocal performance at Chicago's Roosevelt University. Jackson then
postponed his artistic ambitions to work as a private investigator and with the State of Illinois Department of
Human Rights.

In 1980, Jackson moved back to Mississippi, settling in Biloxi. From 1981 to 1985, he owned and operated
Camel Seafood Company. Hurricane Elena of 1985 had devastating effects in Mississippi and left Jackson
without a business. At this time, he returned to his musical ambitions and immersed himself in study of the guitar
and in blues music.

Jackson performs and preserves acoustic blues from both traditional and contemporary styles including field
hollers, work songs, Delta blues and Piedmont blues. In 1996, Jackson helped to establish the “Blues In The
Schools” program. Jackson’s educational blues programs have been presented at schools and universities
throughout the United States. In 1996, Jackson was awarded the Illinois Arts Council Folk/Ethnic Heritage
Award. In 2003, he was nominated for the W.C. Handy Award as “Acoustic Blues Album of the Year”, for his
album, "Blues 2.0". Jackson records for Electro-Fi Records.

Fruteland Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 12, 2007.
Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Fruteland Jackson was conducted by Sasha Daltonn on February 13, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Blues musician and music instructor Fruteland Jackson (1953 - ) is an acoustic guitarist and singer who founded the "Blues in the Schools" program.

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:

Jackson, Fruteland

Daltonn, Sasha (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jackson, Fruteland--Interviews

Blues musicians--Interviews.

African American musicians--Interviews.
Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Fruteland Jackson

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Blues In The Schools

HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

EducationMakers

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


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/22/2011 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 13, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Fruteland Jackson, Section A2007_064_001_001, TRT: 0:28:30 2007/02/12

Fruteland Jackson slates the interview. He provides a detailed description of
both his parents, especially his mother. He describes the geography of the small town of Doddsville, Mississippi, the birth place of his mother. Jackson details the multi-racial background of his maternal relatives, and describes the social opportunities that existed for blacks of fair skin in the area. He describes his mother, Ida Collins, who was nurse and a book lover who remained interested in self-education. He provides background information on his childhood, his young adult years and his journey towards becoming a blues musician. Jackson notes the significance of blues history to American history; his opinion is that imbedded within the blues is the cultural and political history of this country.

African American neighborhoods--Mississippi--Doddsville.
Human skin color--Social aspects--Mississippi.
African American families--Mississippi.
Blues (Music)--History and criticism.

Video Oral History Interview with Fruteland Jackson, Section A2007_064_001_002, TRT: 0:28:40 2007/02/12

Fruteland Jackson details his elementary school education and provides additional information about his family dynamics as well as his new responsibilities following his parents’ divorce. He discusses his conversion to the Nation of Islam during his teens. He enrolled at the secondary school called the University of Islam school in Chicago, Illinois and obtained his high school equivalency diploma from this school. Jackson also describes his disillusionment with the Nation of Islam which culminated in his leaving the organization at the age of twenty-four. He also begins to recount the origin of his stage name, Fruteland Jackson.

African American families--Mississippi.
African American children--Education (Primary)--Mississippi.
African American teachers--Illinois--Chicago.
Black Muslims--Education.
Nation of Islam (Chicago, Ill.)

Video Oral History Interview with Fruteland Jackson, Section A2007_064_001_003, TRT: 0:30:00 2007/02/12

Fruteland Jackson completes his explanation of the origin of his stage name, Fruteland Jackson. He describes his employment history and his business venture, Camel Seafood Company. Jackson details the genesis of his idea to begin a shrimp business. Devastated by the death of his mother, Jackson began to take up the guitar in 1977. He also discusses the circumstances under which he met his first wife, Sudika Chandler. He was seventeen and had just opened a cheap steakhouse, along with two acquaintances, in a former Chicago neighborhood known as Jew Town. Jackson describes his third marriage to Jennice Chandler and mentions his three children.

Shrimp industry--Gulf Coast (U.S.)
Parents--Death--Psychological aspects.

Video Oral History Interview with Fruteland Jackson, Section A2007_064_001_004, TRT: 0:30:00 2007/02/12

Fruteland Jackson provides more detail about his employment history prior to his pursuit of music. He recounts his move to Biloxi, Mississippi to found Camel Seafood Company. During the fall of 1985, Hurricane Elena struck the Gulf Coast, and Jackson's business was never able to recover. Following the failure of Camel Seafood, Jackson entered into a business venture with a
missile plant, McDonnell Douglas, from 1988-1990. He begins to describe how he prepared himself for a new career in music and how the idea for his "Blues in the Schools" program was born. The program provides seminars for the study of blues in a college setting. Jackson provides the names and ages for his children.

Hurricane Elena, 1985.
Hurricanes--Gulf Coast (U.S.)
Hurricanes--Economic aspects--Mississippi.
Shrimp industry--United States.
McDonnell Douglas Corporation.
Blues (Music)--Instruction and study.

Video Oral History Interview with Fruteland Jackson, Section A2007_064_001_005, TRT: 0:22:10
2007/02/12

Fruteland Jackson completes his overview of his various careers and his description of the Blues in the Schools program. He provides context and descriptions for the differences amongst the various types of blues including Piedmont blues, Delta blues, and acoustic blues as well as playing a brief sample of each on his guitar. Jackson theorizes on the history and the future of blues music, noting that few current blues musicians are African American. He also cites blues music as the forerunner of rhythm and blues as well as rock and roll music. Jackson answers several philosophical questions and ponders his legacy. He concludes the interview by mentioning his future ambitions and projects.

Blues (Music)--Instruction and study.
Blues (Music)--History and criticism.