



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Veronica Claypool

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Veronica Claypool
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool,
Dates:	October 12, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:47:49).
Abstract:	Stage manager Veronica Claypool (1948 -) became Managing Director of the Theatre Development Fund, the United States' largest not-for-profit theatrical service organization in 1998. She has served as company manager for several staged shows including the 1994 national tour of "Porgy and Bess." Claypool was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 12, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_287
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Stage manager Veronica Claypool was born on July 17, 1948 in Indianapolis, Indiana to Margie and Leander Warner. Claypool attended Shortridge Public High School in Indianapolis, where she graduated in 1966, and moved to New York City in 1970, where she attended Hunter College.

In 1973, Claypool worked on the production team for the tour and live broadcast of the Jackson 5 from Senegal, West Africa. One year later, Claypool became an associate producer for Metromedia Television in New York City, producing such programs as "Midday Live," a daily talk show, "Wonderama," a live children's show and "People of Paradise," a documentary filmed in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Claypool joined McCann and Nugent Productions in 1977, working as company manager for twelve Broadway productions, which included "Mass Appeal," "Dracula" and "The Gin Game," as well as the original 1976 Houston Grand Opera European tour of "Porgy and Bess." In 1981, Claypool left McCann and Nugent when she was employed as manager for the Broadway and national tours of "Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music," including a live broadcast of the performance from the Nederlander Theatre on Broadway. In 1983 and 1984, Claypool was general manager for the Last Vegas national and international tours of the show, "Sophisticated Ladies." Upon completion of this tour, Claypool worked as general manager, for "The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe, starring Lily Tomlin." 1988 marked Claypool's move to Los Angeles where she worked as general manager for the Center Theatre Group/ Ahmanson and Doolittle Theatres, working on such performances as "Les Liaisons Dangereuses," "Phantom of the Opera," "Into the Woods," and August Wilson's "The Piano Lesson." In 1990, Claypool worked as assistant production auditor for the Columbia-Tri Star release "The Fisher King." The next year, Claypool moved to Blanki & Bodi Productions, working on such pieces "Tube Test Two" for ABC Productions and "Silent Killer: Women and Heart Disease" for the American Heart Association. For the next two years, Claypool was the

general manager for "OBA OBA," a Brazilian production that toured both nationally and internationally.

Claypool managed the Houston Grand Opera tour of "Porgy and Bess." After managing this tour, she served as general manager of the Jackie Mason show, "Love Thy Neighbor." In 1997, she became managing director of Theatre Development Fund, the country's largest nonprofit theatrical service organization. In 2005, Claypool married John Gordon Butler in Kona, Hawaii.

Veronica Claypool was interviewed by "The HistoryMakers" on October 12, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Veronica Claypool was conducted by Adrienne Jones on October 12, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. Stage manager Veronica Claypool (1948 -) became Managing Director of the Theatre Development Fund, the United States' largest not-for-profit theatrical service organization in 1998. She has served as company manager for several staged shows including the 1994 national tour of "Porgy and Bess."

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:

Veronica Claypool

Jones, Adrienne (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Veronica Claypool--Interviews

African American theatrical managers.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Theatre Development Fund

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Veronica Claypool, October 12, 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 8/11/2011 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, October 12, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool, Section A2007_287_001_001, TRT: 0:29:15 2007/10/12

Veronica Claypool discusses her family history and growing up in Indianapolis, Indiana. Receiving a formal education was not important to Claypool when she was growing up. She recalls moving to New York City to live with her uncle. While in New York, she worked for CBS studios. As child, she did not watch television; instead, she listened to jazz music by Ella Fitzgerald, James Moody and Billy Eckstein. Claypool fondly remembers her childhood home in Indiana; once she moved to New York City and was subjected to living in an apartment, she realized how important having a home was. As a child, Claypool attended Scott United Methodist Church in Indiana. In the late 1950s, she attended Shortridge High School; she wanted to learn math and science had to take home economics because she was a female student.

African American families--Indiana--Indianapolis.

Indianapolis--Indiana--Social life and customs

African American churches.

African American high school students.

Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool, Section A2007_287_001_002, TRT: 0:29:31 2007/10/12

Veronica Claypool remembers being focused on leaving Indianapolis, Indiana as a child, instead of attending college. She believes that she has her current job as a theater manager because she knew what she wanted out of life. Claypool moved to New York City in 1970, where she was hired at CBS to work in audience development. While working as an audience developer she gave surveys to audience members. At CBS, Claypool was one of five African American employees, not including the talent. After CBS, she went on to work for Earl Graves at Black Enterprise Magazine as his assistant. While working with the Jackson 5 in Senegal, the Senegalese apologized to the Jacksons and Claypool for what they had to endure in the U.S. The Senegalese believed that Claypool and the Jacksons were slaves to American culture and ideals. Claypool discusses the difference between Broadway and African American theater.

African American theatrical managers--New York (State)--New York.

Performing arts--Audience development

CBS Broadcasting Inc.--Employees.

Jackson 5 (Musical group)

African American theater--New York (State)--New York.

Broadway (New York, N.Y.)

Theater and society—United States—History—21st century.

Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool, Section A2007_287_001_003, TRT: 0:29:14 2007/10/12

Veronica Claypool discusses meeting Lily Tomlin. Claypool believes that she is good with people and has exceptional organizational skills. It is these skills that have her in such a high demand as a theater manager. Claypool believes that African Americans do not go to the theater because they feel excluded. Often only African American based shows are marketed to the African American community. She believes that most African Americans want to see a variety of

shows. After moving to Los Angeles, California, Claypool produced films and commercials. Claypool became the managing director of the Theatre Development Fund. Some of the prominent programs The Theatre development Fund have provided are TKTS Booth and Open Doors. Claypool discusses the Lucille Lortel Awards, that honors Off Broadway shows exclusively.

African American theatrical managers--United States.

Tomlin, Lily

Theatre Development Fund

Off-Broadway theater--Awards.

Performing arts--Audiences.

Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool, Section A2007_287_001_004, TRT: 0:19:49 2007/10/12

Veronica Claypool discusses the Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations. She then expresses the importance of arts education in public schools. Claypool helped found The League of Professional Theatre Women, their mission is to bring attention to women that work in the arts. Her mother, an educator, founded the Black Studies Program at Sunni Newpont. Claypool then describes how she met her husband, Jack Butler. After meeting her husband, she completed Harvard Business School, and spent fifteen years in Kenya working as a developer and building houses. In the closing, she expresses her support of The HistoryMakers' mission and its' efforts to preserve the oral histories of prominent and lesser known African Americans. She believes it is a wonderful program for African Americans that are pioneers in their field. Lastly, Claypool narrates a collection of photographs.

Nonprofit organizations--New York (State)--New York

Art--Study and teaching

African American marriage

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

League of Professional Theatre Women