



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Orlando Bagwell

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Orlando Bagwell
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Orlando Bagwell,
Dates:	December 17, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:00:12).
Abstract:	Documentary filmmaker Orlando Bagwell (-) has made Peabody Award-winning films; served as a staff producer for the PBS weekly program, Frontline; produced a documentary on the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr.'s presidential campaign, "Running with Jesse," in 1988; and served as the executive producer for the not-for-profit WGBH Educational Foundation. Bagwell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 17, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_339
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Documentary filmmaker Orlando Bagwell was born in Baltimore, Maryland, to Donald Bagwell, Sr. and Barbara Jones Bagwell in a family of seven. He attended Blessed Sacrament Baltimore Elementary and High school in Baltimore. In 1969, his family moved to Nashua, New Hampshire, where he was a member of the Nashua High School football team. After graduating from high school, Bagwell pursued his B.S. degree in film at the University of Boston. He completed his undergraduate studies in 1973 and furthered his education by earning his M.A. degree in broadcast journalism from Boston University in 1975.

In the early 1970s, Bagwell worked for the United South End Settlements (USES) and was active in the organization's after school program. He later became a substitute teacher for the South Boston Public School District where he taught political science and history. Bagwell was contracted by Boston's WGBH-TV to work as a film producer in 1975. In 1988, he served as a staff producer for the PBS weekly program "Frontline." That same year, he produced a documentary on the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr.'s presidential campaign entitled "Running with Jesse." In 1989, Bagwell founded the Boston based media company, Roja Productions, Inc. and produced "Roots of Resistance: A Story of the Underground Railroad." From 1991 until 1994, Bagwell was the executive vice president for the "Eyes on the Prize" PBS documentary series on the Civil Rights Movement. He produced episodes of the Blackside series entitled "Mississippi: Is this America?" and "Ain't Scared of Your Jails" for which he received the Alfred DuPont Award and the Peabody Award. In 1995, Bagwell served as the executive producer for the not-for-profit WGBH Educational Foundation, and in 1999, he produced the six hour documentary called "Africans in America: America's Journey through Slavery."

Bagwell became the program officer for the Ford Foundation's Media Arts and Culture unit in 2004. He works with the unit's director and oversees international operations to accomplish the foundation's goals.

Orlando Bagwell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 17, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Orlando Bagwell was conducted by Adrienne Jones on December 17, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Documentary filmmaker Orlando Bagwell (-) has made Peabody Award-winning films; served as a staff producer for the PBS weekly program, Frontline; produced a documentary on the Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr.'s presidential campaign, "Running with Jesse," in 1988; and served as the executive producer for the not-for-profit WGBH Educational Foundation.

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:

Bagwell, Orlando

Jones, Adrienne (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Bagwell, Orlando--Interviews

African American motion picture producers and directors--Interviews

African American television producers and directors--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

HistoryMakers® Category:

EntertainmentMakers

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 Orlando Bagwell, December 17, 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 8/24/2011 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, December 17, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Orlando Bagwell, Section A2007_339_001_001, TRT: 0:05:27

2007/12/17

Orlando Bagwell talks about the death of documentary filmmaker St. Clair Bourne, who died at age 64. Bagwell notes that Bourne was a young man and that people were expecting more years of work from him. Bagwell describes him as the "great networker" who introduced his colleagues to opportunities and people, and as the person that brought together many black documentary film makers. Bagwell also notes that Bourne was an example for the kind of filmmaker he wanted to be. He describes first meeting Bourne, and the kinship he felt immediately in working with him.

African American motion picture producers and directors--Interviews.

African American television producers and directors--Interviews.

Bourne, St. Claire, 1943-2007.

Mentoring.

Video Oral History Interview with Orlando Bagwell, Section A2007_339_001_002, TRT: 0:29:27
2007/12/17

Orlando Bagwell's mother, Barbara Valentine Jones Bagwell, grew up in Baltimore, Maryland and is the oldest of five children. Bagwell describes his maternal family, many of which were Native American and he is able to trace his maternal family back to his great-great grandmother. Bagwell's father, Donald Wesley Bagwell, Sr., was an orphan; both of his parents died of tuberculosis and he and his brother were taken in by their aunt and uncle. Bagwell discusses tracing the Bagwell family back to the late 1700s in Accomack County, Virginia. Bagwell's parents never finished high school, but returned to finish school at Morgan State University. His father served in World War II at age 15, and was later drafted to serve in the Korean War after he married. Bagwell describes his childhood and the responsibilities he had as child while his parents attended school and his earliest childhood memories.

Baltimore, (Md.)--Social life--African Americans.

African American families--Maryland--Baltimore.

World War, 1939-1945--African American involvement.

Korean War, 1950-1953--African American involvement.

African Americans--Childhood--Maryland--Baltimore.

African Americans Relations with Indians.

Video Oral History Interview with Orlando Bagwell, Section A2007_339_001_003, TRT: 0:24:25
2007/12/17

Orland Bagwell describes his childhood home. Bagwell's family moved to Radnor Avenue in the Wilson Park area of Baltimore, located within walking distance of Morgan State University. He describes the responsibilities he and his siblings had while his parents attended school and worked. Bagwell and his siblings attended Blessed Sacrament Catholic School. He describes the school as a predominantly Irish Catholic and the discrimination he faced as a student. Bagwell describes major family holidays, including Thanksgiving which was a big affair for his large family and the activities he participated in as a child. They attended Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, played neighborhood sports, were members of the Cub Scouts, and were altar boys. Bagwell's parents were activists, and often discussed the Civil Rights Movement. Bagwell discusses community attitudes towards the Civil Rights Movement, and notes that the sense of change and camaraderie that his community felt was noticeable.

African American families--Maryland--Baltimore.

Blessed Sacrament Church (Baltimore, MD).
Civil rights movement--Maryland--Baltimore.
Segregation--Maryland--Baltimore.
African American children--Social life and customs--Maryland--Baltimore.
African Americans--Education (Primary)--Maryland--Baltimore.
Morgan State University.

Video Oral History Interview with Orlando Bagwell, Section A2007_339_001_004, TRT: 0:29:40
2007/12/17

Orlando Bagwell describes African American attitudes during the 1960s and describes the mixed feelings of anger and shame along with pride and confidence that were a large part of the African American experience between the 1950s and 1970s. Bagwell also discusses the nuances of African American history and how his documentary film making draws from the complexities of African American history. Bagwell's father finished school in 1963 and his family moved to New Hampshire. Bagwell attended Nashua High School in New Hampshire and describes the school as not academically strong. Though he lacked the motivation, Bagwell applied and was accepted to Boston University, where he studied health sciences for a year. After taking a semester leave of absence, Bagwell got a job at the Harriet Tubman House, a community center in the south-end of Boston and decided to attend Boston University film school.

African American history and culture--1950-1970.
Vietnam War, 1961-1975.
Documentary films.
Boston University.
African Americans--Religion.
Civil Rights movement.
African Americans--Education (Secondary)--New Hampshire.
African American families--New Hampshire.
African American college students--Boston.

Video Oral History Interview with Orlando Bagwell, Section A2007_339_001_005, TRT: 0:31:13
2007/12/17

Orlando Bagwell entered Boston University film school, and during his first year took a film making course, and worked at the Harriet Tubman House as a Director of the After School Program. Lacking the necessary sophistication and training he needed to take advanced filmmaking courses, Bagwell befriended a network of local television crewmen and began learning lighting and camera techniques. He was later recruited to work for the public television network shows, "Say Brother and "Rebop". Bagwell was also producing independent films and was awarded an American Film Institute Independent Filmmakers grant. Bagwell worked for WETA as an editor and began working for Blackside as a filmmaker in 1977 producing government films, dramas and documentaries. Bagwell talks about the difference between learned ability and innate talent, and the ways that filmmakers use the filmmaking as a technique and language to tell stories.

American Film Institute--Awards.
WETA-TV (Television station: Washington, D.C.)
Blackside, Inc.
Boston University

Vocational guidance.

African American college students--Boston.

African Americans--Independent filmmakers--United States.

Public television--United States.