

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ethel Bradley

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Bradley, Ethel, 1919-2008
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ethel Bradley,
Dates:	September 18, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:29:10).
Abstract:	Civic leader Ethel Bradley (1919 - 2008) was the first lady of Los Angeles during Thomas Bradley's mayoral administrations from 1973 to 1992. Bradley organized the Women's Volunteer Corps, Las Angelenas, and was a co-founder of the Black Women's Forum. Bradley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 18, 2008, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_113
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civic leader Ethel Bradley was born in Tyler, Texas to Benjamin and Lucille Arnold on February 9, 1919. In 1941, she married Thomas Bradley, a man she met at The New Hope Baptist Church as a teenager. Thomas Bradley, the son of share-croppers, was from a less socially prominent family than Bradley. Thomas worked as a police officer and then went on to earn a law degree. The Bradley's had two daughters, Phyllis and Lorraine.

Thomas Bradley's political career began when he was elected as a representative of 10th District to the Los Angeles City Council . In 1973, Thomas became the first African American mayor of Los Angeles, California. Over the next twenty years, Ethel Bradley would become a humanitarian as the first lady of Los Angeles. As first lady, she was known for being an avid Dodgers fan and cultivating fuschia flowers at the Getty Mansion, the mayoral residence. Bradley organized a women's volunteer corps, Las Angelenas and was co-founder of the Black Women's Forum. She also worked with the YWCA and the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission. In 1992, Thomas Bradley joined the downtown law offices of Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison. His law career came to a premature end when in 1996 he suffered a heart attack and stroke, which left him unable to speak. Two years later, her husband suffered a fatal heart attack. Over 1,700 people attended his funeral at the African Methodist Episcopal Church. One attendee at the funeral, Vice President Al Gore, spoke in his honor. Bradley donated over 100 of her late husband's artifacts to the California African American Museum in 2000.

In 2003, The Tom and Ethel Bradley Foundation was established. The goals of this foundation were, to honor the legacy of both of the Bradley's and to encourage individuals to become responsible citizens. In 2006, The Ethel Bradley Early Education and Health Career Center was unveiled by the Los Angeles Unified School District, it was envisioned by the co-founders of the Black Women's Forum. This center was designed to provide training, employment and childcare to the Los Angeles, California community.

Bradley passed away on November 25, 2008 at the age of 89.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ethel Bradley was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 18, 2008, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civic leader Ethel Bradley (1919 - 2008) was the first lady of Los Angeles during Thomas Bradley's mayoral administrations from 1973 to 1992. Bradley organized the Women's Volunteer Corps, Las Angelenas, and was a co-founder of the Black Women's Forum.

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:

Bradley, Ethel, 1919-2008

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Bradley, Ethel, 1919-2008 --Interviews

Government executives' spouses--California--Los Angeles--Interviews

Women in nonprofit organizations--California--Los Angeles--Interviews

African American women civic leaders--California--Los Angeles--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civic Leader

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Ethel Bradley, September 18, 2008. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 6/7/2022 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

Video Oral History Interview with Ethel Bradley, Section A2008_113_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00
2008/09/18

Ethel Bradley was born on February 9, 1919 in Tyler, Texas to Lucille Lomax Arnold and Benjamin Arnold. Her maternal grandfather, Rufus Lomax, was Native American. In Texas, he and his wife raised five children, including Bradley's mother. Bradley's paternal grandmother was also Native American. Bradley's father worked as a painter and decorator in Texas. After moving from Tyler to Dallas, Texas, Bradley's parents raised five children, including Bradley, in an integrated neighborhood. There, Bradley attended the all-black Julia C. Frazier Elementary School and Booker T. Washington High School. In 1931, she moved with her family to Los Angeles, California, where she transferred to Jefferson High School. Her father found work as a city contractor, and taught her brother, Verlanders Arnold, the painting and decorating trade. Bradley and her sister, Louise Arnold, sang professionally in films like 'Vogues of 1938'; and her other sisters, Maggie Arnold and Hazel Arnold, worked for actor Jimmy Durante.

African American families--Texas.

United States--Race relations.

Discrimination in public accomadations--Texas.

Segregation in education--Texas--Dallas.

Migration, Internal--United States.

Motion pictures--1930-1940.

Durante, Jimmy, 1893-1980.

Earthquakes--California--Long Beach--1930-1940.

Video Oral History Interview with Ethel Bradley, Section A2008_113_001_002, TRT: 0:29:00
2008/09/18

Ethel Bradley moved with her family in 1931 to Los Angeles, California, where her father, Benjamin Arnold, worked as a decorator. She graduated from Jefferson High School in 1935, and briefly attended Los Angeles City College before transferring to the Henrietta Beauty School. Bradley earned her cosmetology license in 1939, and worked at a salon in Santa Barbara, California before opening her own beauty shop in Los Angeles. There, she met her future husband, Tom Bradley, at the New Hope Baptist Church. He was a student at John H. Francis Polytechnic High School at the time, and went on to join the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, where Bradley became one of the National Silhouettes. The couple married in 1941. After graduating from college, Bradley's husband worked as a police officer, and then as a lawyer. He was the first black lieutenant of the Los Angeles Police Department, and the first African American elected to the Los Angeles City Council. He and Bradley also belonged to the Crenshaw Democratic Club.

Beauty culture--Study and teaching--California.

African American businesspeople.

Discrimination in housing--California.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

Baseball--California.

Unruh, Jesse, 1922-1987.

Bradley, Tom, 1917-1998.

City council members--California.

Video Oral History Interview with Ethel Bradley, Section A2008_113_001_003, TRT: 0:31:10
2008/09/18

Ethel Bradley's husband, Tom Bradley, ran his first campaign for the mayoralty of Los Angeles, California in 1969. He lost, but campaigned again in 1973, and became Los Angeles' first African American mayor that year. Bradley's husband served as the mayor of Los Angeles for twenty years. During this time, Bradley was instrumental in the establishment of the Getty House, the official residence of Los Angeles' mayors. She also founded the Black Women's Forum with Los Angeles Sentinel publisher Ruth Washington and Congresswoman Maxine Waters. A lifelong sports fan, Bradley attended the 1984 Summer Olympics, where her husband waved the Olympic flag; and participated in many parades, including the Hollywood Christmas Parade and the Rose Parade. She also hosted numerous foreign dignitaries, including King Juan Carlos I of Spain. She and her husband had two daughters, Phyllis Bradley and Lorraine Bradley, the latter of whom concludes the interview by narrating Bradley's photographs.

Bradley, Tom, 1917-1998.

African American mayors--California--Los Angeles.

Mayoral dwellings--California--Los Angeles.

Hirohito--Emperor of Japan--1901-1989.

Mandela, Nelson, 1918-.

Charles, Prince of Wales, 1948-.