

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Fatin Dantzler

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Dantzler, Fatin, 1973-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Fatin Dantzler,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 22, 2012
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2012
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:57:28).
<b>Abstract:</b>	R & B singer and songwriter Fatin Dantzler (1973 - ) was best known along with his singing partner and wife, Aja Graydon, as the critically acclaimed R&B and Soul music group, Kindred the Family Soul. Dantzler was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 22, 2012, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2012_102
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Singer and songwriter Fatin Dantzler was born in Camden, New Jersey in 1973. Dantzler attended the Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) before transferring to Overbrook High School. Dantzler began his musical career in the early 1990s as a performer with a group called "Side by Side." He also became a producer and songwriter, contributing to the 1993 album by R&B pop stars "Bell Biv DeVoe." Dantzler left "Side by Side" to pursue songwriting and producing opportunities and later becoming affiliated with burgeoning Philadelphia hip-hop group "The Roots." In 1997, Dantzler met his future wife and musical collaborator Aja Graydon and two years later, they went on to form an R&B and Soul music duo called "Kindred the Family Soul." After being discovered by Jill Scott at a Philadelphia music showcase, "Kindred" signed a recording contract with Hidden Beach Recordings (HBR) in 2001. In March of 2003, the group released its first studio album titled, *Surrender to Love*, which peaked to seven and twenty nine on the Billboard Heatseekers and R&B albums' charts, respectively. Two years later, the duo released their second studio album, *In This Life Together*, which climbed to number fifteen on the Billboard R&B chart. In 2006, Kindred's song "My Time" was named the official song of the National Education Association's *Read Across America* campaign. Kindred then released *The Arrival*, its third album on Hidden Beach, in 2008. The album rose to number seven on the Billboard R&B albums' chart. The duo released its fourth album *Love Has No Recession* in 2011, which rose to number nineteen and fifteen on the R&B and Independent Albums' charts, respectively. The group also launched a web-based reality television show in 2010.

Dantzler and his wife, Aja Graydon, have garnered critical acclaim with their work as "Kindred the Family Soul." In 2003, the duo garnered a Soul Train nomination. Three years later, the group was nominated for a BET Award. They have worked with Grammy Award-winning recording artists like Jill Scott, The Roots and Snoop Dogg. Dantzler and Graydon reside in Philadelphia and have six children.

FatinDantzler was interviewed by the *The HistoryMakers* on May 22, 2012.

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Fatin Dantzler was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 22, 2012, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. R & B singer and songwriter Fatin Dantzler (1973 - ) was best known along with his singing partner and wife, Aja Graydon, as the critically acclaimed R&B and Soul music group, Kindred the Family Soul.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Dantzler, Fatin, 1973-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dantzler, Fatin, 1973- --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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### Occupations:

R & B Singer

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Songwriter

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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## 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 Fatin Dantzler, May 22, 2012. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Fatin Dantzler, Section A2012\_102\_001\_001, TRT: 1:30:14 ?

Fatin Dantzler was born on December 7, 1973 in Camden, New Jersey to Delica Dantzler Sulaiman and David Williams, Jr. His maternal grandfather sang in a gospel group called The Vocalaires, and was acquainted with Sam Cooke and James Brown. His maternal grandmother was murdered when his mother was young. Dantzler's mother was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was

raised by her parents and great-grandmother in Glassboro, New Jersey. There, she attended Glassboro High School and Glassboro State College, and met Dantzler's biological father, whom Dantzler never knew. Instead, Dantzler was raised by his stepfather, Gerald Solomon. His mother and stepfather were introduced by a mutual friend while his stepfather was incarcerated. He escaped from prison to marry Dantzler's mother, and moved the family to Atlanta, Georgia during the late 1970s. In Atlanta, Dantzler's family became Sunni Muslims. After five years, they returned to Philadelphia, where his stepfather was recaptured by the police.

Video Oral History Interview with Fatin Dantzler, Section A2012\_102\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:59 ?

Fatin Dantzler was born in Camden, New Jersey. At a young age, he moved with his mother, Delica Dantzler Sulaiman, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he attended Rudolph S. Walton School. Around 1980, Dantzler's mother married Gerald Solomon, and their family moved to Atlanta, Georgia. There, Dantzler attended Dean Rusk Elementary School and a local Islamic center operated by H. Rap Brown, who was then known as Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. Dantzler aspired to become a musician from an early age. Although Sunni Islam did not have a musical tradition, music was prevalent in Dantzler's household, where his mother listened to Miles Davis, Lonnie Liston Smith and Muddy Waters. He was also influenced by early hip hop artists like Run-DMC and Kurtis Blow. When Dantzler was twelve years old, he lived for a short time in Anniston, Alabama with his stepfather and brother, Mustafa Sulaiman. Their family then returned to Philadelphia, where Dantzler attended Thomas Fitzsimons Junior High School.

Video Oral History Interview with Fatin Dantzler, Section A2012\_102\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:07 ?

Fatin Dantzler moved with his family to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the early 1980s. Shortly after their arrival, his stepfather, Gerald Solomon, was arrested for escaping from prison, and was incarcerated for the next decade. In Philadelphia, Dantzler attended Rudolph S. Walton School and Thomas Fitzsimons Junior High School, where he began playing clarinet and saxophone. He went on to attend Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts. Dantzler planned to focus on the saxophone, but his interests soon turned to singing. He began studying under George Williams III, who was the son of The Tymes' soul vocalist George Williams. After receiving low grades as a sophomore, Dantzler was forced to transfer to Overbrook High School, where he began performing and writing music with Lionel Caviness. Prior to graduating in 1992, Dantzler and Caviness wrote the single "Please Come Back" for Bell Biv DeVoe's album, 'Hootie Mack.' The duo then moved to Atlanta, Georgia to work with LaFace Records.

Video Oral History Interview with Fatin Dantzler, Section A2012\_102\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:08 ?

Fatin Dantzler wrote R and B songs for LaFace Records while living in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1995, Dantzler moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and began developing R and B tracks for an emerging hip hop group called The Roots. In 1997, Dantzler met Aja Graydon, who came to work with The Roots on an album, and the couple soon began dating. After marrying in 1998, Dantzler and Graydon left the music industry, and Dantzler worked as a sales manager at American Appliance in Philadelphia to provide for their growing family. In 1999, a group of black women from the Philadelphia neo soul scene organized a weekly music showcase called the Black Lily at the Five Spot nightclub. That year, Dantzler and Graydon returned to the stage at the Black Lily, where they performed as Kindred the Family Soul for the first time. During their early performances, Kindred the Family Soul included a large band comprised of

Dantzler's family and friends.

Video Oral History Interview with Fatin Dantzler, Section A2012\_102\_001\_005, TRT: 5:28:26 ?

Fatin Dantzler and his wife, Aja Graydon, released their first album as Kindred the Family Soul, 'Surrender to Love,' on Hidden Beach Recordings in 2003. The album featured the song "Far Away," whose music video was shot at the Five Spot club in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with fellow neo soul artists India.Arie and Jill Scott. After the release of 'Surrender to Love,' Kindred the Family Soul toured the United States and internationally to promote the album, which was nominated for the best R and B soul album award at the 2003 Soul Train Music Awards. In 2005, the duo released their second album, 'In This Life Together,' which they named after Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee's memoir. That same year, Dantzler organized a Black Lily reunion, which was documented for the film, 'Last Night at the Five Spot.' In 2006, Kindred the Family Soul's song, "My Time," was named the official song of the National Education Association's Read Across America program. Dantzler also remembers the birth of his twin daughters in 2008.

Video Oral History Interview with Fatin Dantzler, Section A2012\_102\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:19 ?

Fatin Dantzler met record producer Kenny Gamble of the songwriting duo Gamble and Huff in 1991. Through his relationship with Gamble, Dantzler collaborated with artists like Dexter Wansel and Bunny Sigler. With his wife, Aja Graydon, Dantzler documented the pregnancy and birth of their sixth child, Deen Dantzler, for their reality web series, 'Six Is It.' At this point, Dantzler talks about raising their family while performing with Kindred the Family Soul. He reflects upon his musical career, and the Kindred the Family Soul discography. He also talks about the future of Kindred the Family Soul and their production company, Media Shack, which was based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dantzler describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and reflects upon his life and legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Fatin Dantzler, Section A2012\_102\_001\_007, TRT: 7:02:15 ?

Fatin Dantzler describes how he would like to be remembered.