

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham

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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>	Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks, 1945-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 25, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:02:04).
<b>Abstract:</b>	African american history professor Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (1945 - ) served as the Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and African American Studies and chair of the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. Higginbotham was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 25, 2013, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_007
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

African American history professor Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham was born in Washington, D.C. in 1945. Her father, Dr. Albert Neal Dow Brooks, was the secretary-treasurer for the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History and editor of the organization's *Negro History Bulletin*; her mother, Alma Elaine Campbell, a high school history teacher who later served as the supervisor for history in the Washington, D.C. public school system. Higginbotham received her B.A. degree in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1969 and her M.A.

degree in history from Howard University in 1974. She went on to receive a certification in Archival Administration and Records Management in 1975 from the U.S. National Archives, and a certificate in quantitative methodology in Social Science in 1977 from the Newberry Library in Chicago. She went on to earn her Ph.D. degree in history from the University of Rochester in 1984.

From 1969 to 1971, Higginbotham taught American history and served as an eighth grade counselor at Francis Parkman Jr. High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She then moved to Washington, D.C. where she taught American history and social studies at Woodrow Wilson High School. After working briefly as a manuscript research associate at the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center at Howard University from 1974 to 1975, Higginbotham served as professor of history at several institutions, including Dartmouth College, the University of Maryland, and the University of Pennsylvania. Higginbotham joined the faculty at Harvard University in 1993 as a professor of Afro-American Studies and African American Religious History. In 1998, she was named the Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and African American Studies. In 2006, Higginbotham was appointed chair of Harvard University's African American Studies department; and, in 2008, she served as acting-director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research. Higginbotham was appointed as the Inaugural John Hope Franklin Professor of American Legal History at Duke University Law School.

Higginbotham is the author of *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church: 1880-1920* (1993). She also updated and revised the late John Hope Franklin's African American history survey *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (2010). Higginbotham served as the editor-in-chief of *The Harvard Guide to African-American History* (2001), and was co-editor, with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., of the expanded, twelve-volume *The African American National Biography* (2012).

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASAALH) honored Higginbotham with the Carter G. Woodson Scholars Medallion in 2008 and the Living Legacy Award in 2012. She was awarded the Joan Kelly Memorial Prize in Women's History from the American Historical Association and the Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Award from the Association of Black Women Historians. In 2011, she received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree from Howard University. Higginbotham is a Fellow of the American Philosophical Society, and was chosen by Harvard University to be a Walter Channing Fellow in 2003.

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 25, 2013, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. African american history professor Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (1945 - ) served as the Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and African American Studies and chair of the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University.

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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:**

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks, 1945-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks, 1945---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:**

African American History Professor

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

EducationMakers

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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 Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, April 25, 2013. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

## Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham,  
Section A2013\_007\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:50 2013/04/25

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham was born on June 4, 1945 in Washington, D.C. to Elaine Campbell Wells and Albert N.D. Brooks. Her paternal great-grandfather, Albert Royal Brooks, was born into slavery in Richmond, Virginia. He bought his wife's freedom in 1862, but their daughter was sold to a family in Tennessee before emancipation. Higginbotham's paternal grandmother was raised by her adoptive father, James Henry Holmes, who pastored Richmond's First African Baptist Church. She married a minister in Washington, D.C., where Higginbotham's father was born in 1897. Her maternal grandparents migrated from Jamaica to New York City's Harlem neighborhood, where her mother grew up on Edgecombe

Avenue in the 1920s. Her grandmother worked in the city's Garment District. Higginbotham's mother studied history under Rayford W. Logan at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and went on to teach at Shaw Junior High School and Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. She later became a curriculum supervisor.

Video Oral History Interview with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham,  
Section A2013\_007\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:38 2013/04/25

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's paternal great-grandfather, Albert Royal Brooks, and grandfather, Walter Henderson Brooks, were enslaved in Richmond, Virginia. After they were freed by the Union Army in 1865, her great-grandfather served on the petit jury for the trial of Confederate President Jefferson Davis; and her great-grandmother, Lucy Goode Brooks, founded the Friends' Asylum for Colored Orphans. Higginbotham's grandfather graduated from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and worked as a lawyer before becoming a minister at Richmond's Second African Baptist Church. From 1882, he pastored the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., where the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs was founded and educator Nannie Helen Burroughs was a congregant. He also published a book of poetry, 'The Pastor's Voice,' which included an introduction by historian Carter G. Woodson. Brooks Higginbotham also talks about her paternal relatives, including Brigadier General Elmer T. Brooks.

Video Oral History Interview with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham,  
Section A2013\_007\_001\_003, TRT: 3:26:42 2013/04/25

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's paternal grandfather, Walter Henderson Brooks, was the minister of the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. The congregation included educator Nora Drew Gregory and attorney Wiley Branton. Higginbotham's father, Albert N.D. Brooks, graduated from M Street High School and enrolled in Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. He was drafted into the U.S. Army during World War I, and later earned a bachelor's degree from Howard University and a master's degree from New York University. He became a public school teacher, and met Higginbotham's mother, who was twenty-four years his

junior, while teaching at Shaw Junior High School. Higginbotham's father was also the editor of the Negro History Bulletin, and often brought her to Carter G. Woodson's home for meetings of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Higginbotham began her education at Slowe Elementary School in Washington, D.C. She had one older sister, Elaine Brooks.

Video Oral History Interview with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham,  
Section A2013\_007\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:37 2013/04/25

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham spent her early childhood years in the Brookland neighborhood of Washington, D.C. She attended Slowe Elementary School, which was named for Lucy Diggs Slowe, one of the founders of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. After moving with her family to Northwest Washington, D.C., Higginbotham continued her education at MacFarland Junior High School. There, she tutored a classmate in Latin, and developed an interest in teaching. After entering Theodore Roosevelt Senior High School, she studied history and literature under Helen M. Blackburn. Around this time, Higginbotham's father, Albert N.D. Brooks, served as the editor of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History's Negro History Bulletin, and published one of her poems. Higginbotham frequently traveled with her family to destinations like Yosemite National Park. She talks about her early experiences of segregation, and recalls being barred from Glen Echo Park, an amusement park in Glen Echo, Maryland.

Video Oral History Interview with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham,  
Section A2013\_007\_001\_005, TRT: 5:06:17 2013/04/25

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham narrates her photographs.