

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bennett Johnson

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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>	Johnson, Bennett Jones, 1929-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 22, 2013 and August 24, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	12 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:56:24).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Book publishing executive Bennett Johnson (1929 - ) founded the publishing house, Path Press, which produced ten books over a twenty-four year period, and has been the vice president of Third World Press since 2001. Johnson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 22, 2013 and August 24, 2013, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_241
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Book publishing executive Bennett J. Johnson was born in 1929 in Chicago, Illinois. At the age of two his mother, Kathryn Burnice Johnson, moved to Evanston where he lived with his two sisters and five cousins. After graduating from Evanston Township High School in 1946, Johnson attended Paine College in Augusta, Georgia for three semesters. In 1948 he went to Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois where he became close friends with Harold Washington, Frank London Brown and Gus Savage. After lengthy illness he enrolled in the University of California at Los Angeles in 1953, where he graduated with his B.A.

degree in English and a minor in science in 1955 and his M.A. degree in English and a concentration in education in 1956. When he returned to Chicago, Illinois and began working alongside such Chicago greats as Washington, Frank Brown, Gus Savage, Richard Durham, Herman C. Gilbert and Dempsey Travis on crucial issues such as political action, social equality and economic justice.

While at Roosevelt College Johnson participated in organizing a sit-in at a restaurant across the street from Roosevelt that refused to serve Harold Washington and forced the hiring of the first Black sales clerk on State Street. In 1966 he acted as the primary liaison for the historic meeting between Elijah Muhammad and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Johnson, Frank L. Brown, and Herman C. Gilbert began the independent publishing house, Path Press, Inc. in 1961. Path Press, Inc. was the first Black-owned book publishing company in the United States. The company published books from 1969 to 1972, and then again from 1982 to 2001. In 2001, Johnson temporarily closed Path Press to join Haki R. Madhubuti at Third World Press.

Bennett Johnson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 19, 2013.

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## **Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Bennett Johnson was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 22, 2013 and August 24, 2013, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 12 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Book publishing executive Bennett Johnson (1929 - ) founded the publishing house, Path Press, which produced ten books over a twenty-four year period, and has been the vice president of Third World Press since 2001.

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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

## 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:

Johnson, Bennett Jones, 1929-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Johnson, Bennett Jones, 1929---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:

## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

MediaMakers

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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 Bennett Johnson, August 22, 2013 and August 24, 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 Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:50 2013/08/22

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_001\_002, TRT: 2:26:51 2013/08/22

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:45 2013/08/22

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_001\_004, TRT: 4:34:33 2013/08/22

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_001\_005, TRT: 5:30:46 2013/08/22

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:08 2013/08/22

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_002\_007, TRT: 7:30:58 2013/08/24

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_002\_008, TRT: 8:28:27 2013/08/24

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_002\_009, TRT: 9:28:52 2013/08/24

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_002\_010, TRT: 10:29:06 2013/08/24

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_002\_011, TRT: 11:29:36 2013/08/24

Video Oral History Interview with Bennett Johnson, Section A2013\_241\_002\_012, TRT: 12:29:32 2013/08/24