Overview of the Collection

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Repository:</th>
<th>The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 <a href="mailto:info@thehistorymakers.com">info@thehistorymakers.com</a> <a href="http://www.thehistorymakers.com">www.thehistorymakers.com</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator:</td>
<td>Berry, Paul, 1944-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dates:</td>
<td>January 29, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulk Dates:</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Description:</td>
<td>9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:00:39).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract:</td>
<td>Broadcast journalist Paul Berry (1944 - ) , founder of Paul L. Berry &amp; Associates, LLC and the R &amp; B Travel Agency, worked as an anchor for ABC-7 in Washington, D.C. for over twenty-five years. He also established the first independent FM radio station in South Vietnam, and is the host of Radio America Network’s “Home &amp; Family Finances.&quot; Berry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 29, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.</td>
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<td>Identification:</td>
<td>A2014_034</td>
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Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Broadcast journalist Paul Berry was born on February 15, 1944 in Detroit, Michigan, and was raised by his grandmother Annie M. Talley. Berry joined the U.S. Air Force in 1961 and graduated from the Department of Defense Information School. He went on to serve with the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) assigned to the Tuy Hoa Air Force Base in Vietnam, where he worked as program director and sportscaster. While on assignment,
Berry established the first independent FM radio station in South Vietnam.

In 1969, Berry was hired as an anchor and reporter at the ABC-owned outlet WXYZ-TV in Detroit, Michigan. In 1972, he joined ABC-7 (WJLA-TV) in Washington, D.C., where he served as senior news anchor. Berry went on to establish two of WJLA's community service programs, "Crimesolvers" and "Seven on Your Side."

In 1999, Berry left the news desk and hosted Washington, D.C.'s “The Paul Berry Show” for a number of years. He has also produced and hosted his own nationally syndicated weekly radio talk show, “Home & Family Finances,” which is now entitled “Family Financials with Paul Berry.” The show is owned by Berry, sponsored by the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), and airs on Radio America Network. In addition, Berry established and heads the media consulting business Paul L. Berry & Associates, LLC. He is also a licensed realtor and founder of R & B Travel Agency.

Berry has been a member of several civic, charitable and professional organizations. He served on the boards of Ford's Theatre, The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, The Neediest Kids, Inc., The Washington Jesuit Academy, and the Paul Berry Academic Scholarship Foundation. He was a member of the Talbot County Tax Assessment Board; named president of the Chesapeake Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences; and serves as commissioner for Maryland Public Television. In 1982, Berry was the winner of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Ted Yates Award. Also, in 1982, Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry honored Berry by declaring November 12, "Paul Berry Day in the District." He received the 1986 Humanitarian Award of the National Martin Luther King, Jr., Student Leadership Conference; the 1989 Mid-Atlantic Professional Golfers' Association -Citizens Award; and the 1989 Olender Foundation’s Generous Heart Award. Washingtonian Magazine named Berry "Washingtonian of the Year" in 1991. He also won the 1993 Capital Region Emmy Award for Outstanding News Anchor, and in 1994, he was voted into the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences "Silver Circle." In addition, Berry has received community service awards from the National Capital Optimist Club and the Associated Press.

Berry is married to Amy Berry; they live in Easton, Maryland and have three children: Talley, Hudson and Paul.

Paul Berry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on January 28, 2014.
Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paul Berry was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 29, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Broadcast journalist Paul Berry (1944 - ), founder of Paul L. Berry & Associates, LLC and the R & B Travel Agency, worked as an anchor for ABC-7 in Washington, D.C. for over twenty-five years. He also established the first independent FM radio station in South Vietnam, and is the host of Radio America Network’s “Home & Family Finances."

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of 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.

Controlled Access Terms

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

Berry, Paul, 1944-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Berry, Paul, 1944---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Broadcast Journalist

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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.
Broadcasting Paul Berry was born in Detroit, Michigan on February 15, 1944. His mother, Donnella Sneed, was born June 22, 1923 in Detroit, Michigan, to Annie and Plez Talley. She grew up on Detroit’s west side and attended the Church of God church in the Black Bottom neighborhood. She sang in the church with her siblings and cousins. Her birth name was Gladys Talley, but she legally changed it to Donnella in 1968, after marrying Berry’s stepfather, Mel Sneed. Berry spent a great deal of time with his grandfather and great-grandfather, Plez Talley and James “Papa Jim” Hudson, respectively, in his childhood. He recalls that his great-grandfather often gave him life advice. Berry’s grandfather worked for Ex-Cell-
O, an auto parts and machine tools company. He taught his grandson to farm from a young age. Berry remembers sawing wood and driving the tractor from the age of seven when he moved with his grandparents and sister to Swanton, Ohio. He now lives in Easton, Maryland.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry, Section A2014_034_001_002, TRT: 2:28:16 2014/01/29

Paul Berry describes his mother, Donnella, who attended Highland Park High School in Highland Park, Michigan, before attending Wayne State University. She received her nursing license and became a union representative for SEIU. His father, Paul Lawrence Berry, was born on June 12, 1918, near Paris, Kentucky. His parents, Corrine and Ed Berry, had nine children. Berry’s father served in the military and travelled to bases around the country as a cook. After being discharged, he worked in the automobile industry and as a member of United Automobile Workers in Detroit, Michigan. He and Berry’s mother met in church, married, then separated when he was three years old. Berry was sent to live with his grandparents in Swanton, Ohio and his sister, Debra, went to live with their Aunt Armentha. He sometimes travelled to church conventions with his pastor, Reverend Jackson. Berry also describes his relationship with his maternal grandmother, who raised him, and how she taught him how to cook when he was eight years of age.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry, Section A2014_034_001_003, TRT: 3:28:23 2014/01/29

Paul Berry describes his sister, Debra, as two years younger. Although she no longer practices, she was trained as a nurse. Berry describes his earliest childhood memory and how it taught him to reflect on his life. He also describes his memories of living in Highland Park, Michigan. The boxer Joe Louis Barrow was a close friend of Berry’s uncle, Kenneth Talley, and often visited their home. Berry recalls his youth in Swanton, Ohio, noting that there were few African Americans in the area. He compares living in Swanton to having lived in Detroit, noting that his grandparents’ home in Swanton did not have running water. His grandparents, having both been born in Tennessee, placed a lot of importance on “working
Born in Tennessee, placed a lot of importance on "working the land". Berry describes attending his local Church of God church four times a week and having to memorize the Old Testament books forwards and backwards. Berry listened to Gabriel Heatter’s radio show with his grandfather. Radio was an important part of family life at the time.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry, Section A2014_034_001_004, TRT: 4:28:12 2014/01/29

Paul Berry remembers his childhood in Swanton, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan and the role of radio and the used Zenith television set. In second grade, he and his classmates from Willard Elementary School in Detroit, Michigan, took a field trip to a television station where he took great delight in the television station, the cameras and the lights. In Swanton, Ohio, Berry was one of several African American children who were bused to schools as a part of the town’s desegregation efforts. He describes experiencing racism and his attempts at making friends. At the start of high school, Berry returned to Detroit to live with his father and stepmother. There he attended the High School of Commerce, which was part of Cass Technical High School, and graduated in the spring of 1961. Afterwards, he joined the U.S. Air Force. Without his college degree, he was prevented from flying and instead was assigned to work as a medical, and then a dental, technician. He was assigned to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, then Gunther Air Force Base in Alabama.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry, Section A2014_034_001_005, TRT: 5:28:22 2014/01/29

Paul Berry describes facing unbridled racism while stationed at Gunther Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama. He arrived in Alabama in 1961, around the time of the Freedom Rides, but was unprepared for the racism he would encounter. He was stationed at Gunther for three months before moving to Germany to continue his training and with school. After being stationed at Bitburg Air Force Base in Germany for three years, he returned to the United States and was stationed in California, where he began flight school. His training was interrupted when he was assigned to Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas. The Pentagon sent a memorandum saying they wanted to
integrate the Air Force’s radio and television services; Berry applied and was selected for training. He relocated to Fort Benjamin in Indiana, for training. Shortly after, he was stationed in Vietnam at Tuy Hoa, where he started the base’s radio station and reported on the deaths of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy which there had been talk of censoring.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry, Section A2014_034_001_006, TRT: 6:28:23 2014/01/29

Paul Berry talks about his time in the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam, where he started a radio station. After returning to the United States in 1968, he made his first civilian foray into television broadcasting with Detroit’s WXYZ Channel 7, where he worked as a copywriter before appearing on television as a reporter. He initially expected to return to Gunther Air Force Base in Texas after leaving Vietnam, but returned to Detroit to visit family and was hired at ABC 7 (WXYZ), which was actively recruiting African American reporters at the time. He notes that his on-air presence served as a type of pacifier in times of unrest. In 1972, he had the opportunity to leave Detroit for Washington, D.C., where he worked for WJLA (then WMAL). Berry describes the double standards African Americans such as Max Robinson faced regarding their credentials. He also comments on his brief tenure as a newscaster for BET.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry, Section A2014_034_001_007, TRT: 7:29:08 2014/01/29

Berry describes leaving his position as anchor at the ABC-TV owned WXYC in Detroit, Michigan to become anchor for WJLA-TV in Washington, D.C. He found the Washington, D.C. news environment to be more restrictive and political. Berry described his reporting about the lack of knowledge, different from international students, in Howard University’s African American student population about South Africa and Rhodesia. ABC-TV national news anchor Max Robinson demanded that he attend a meeting at Howard University, but he declined and WJLA-TV supported his decision despite the pressure placed on them. Later, Robinson would apologize to Berry, give him a painting and befriend him. He also shares stories about
Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry and his contributions to the African American community, radio deejay Petey Greene, who he describes as a “real personality”; and the Washington Post’s Nicholas Von Hoffman who criticized his driving a Roll Royce.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry, Section A2014_034_001_008, TRT: 8:28:21 2014/01/29

Paul Berry recalls coming to work at Washington, D.C.’s WJLA-TV in 1972, the same year as the Watergate scandal. He had previously met Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein on the “local” beat. He also describes his role in several local shows including “7 On Your Side,” where viewers could call in complaints that the station would help to resolve. Berry started a show called “Crime Solvers,” which provided cash rewards for those providing information on area crimes and then he also developed the “No-No List,” about local food establishments that had been closed for health violations. Berry also describes his role as vice president in the Neediest Kids, a non-profit organization that provided resources to school-aged children. He also talks about the problems with Washington D.C. public schools.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Berry, Section A2014_034_001_009, TRT: 9:12:54 2014/01/29

Paul Berry narrates his photographs.