

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Harry Boomer

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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>	Boomer, Harry, 1953-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Harry Boomer,
<b>Dates:</b>	February 10, 2014
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2014
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:53:40).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Broadcast journalist and radio personality Harry Boomer (1953 - ) was an anchor at CBS affiliate WOIO television station in Cleveland, Ohio. He has served as president of the Cleveland chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. Boomer was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 10, 2014, in Cleveland, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2014_040
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Television broadcast journalist and radio personality Harry Boomer was born on September 4, 1953 in Turkey, North Carolina. He is the youngest of ten children born to George and Lucy Boomer. Upon graduating from high school, Boomer, the son of a Baptist minister, moved to Washington D.C. to pursue his interest in broadcast journalism. He studied at the Columbia School of Broadcasting, Northern Virginia Community College, and Cleveland State University.

In 1971, at the age of seventeen, Boomer was hired as an emcee at the Mark IV Supper Club in Washington D.C. He then worked on a number of different major radio stations in D.C. until 1988, when a family friend asked Boomer to come to Canton, Ohio to work as a program director at the WBXT AM/900 radio station. While still working at WBXT, Boomer began volunteering at the WUAB television station in Cleveland, Ohio. The station soon hired him as a reporter and over his more than twenty years of dedication Boomer was promoted to morning and noon co-anchor/reporter of 19 Action News at the WOIO television station (an affiliate of CBS). In addition to his work at both WUAB and WOIO, Boomer hosted and helped produce the program “InfOhio After Nine,” at the time Ohio’s first and only statewide public radio newscast; he served as an award-winning reporter/producer and assistant news director for WCPN, Cleveland Public Radio; and has been a regular guest on the Emmy-winning WVIZ Cleveland Public Television show Feagler and Friends.

In recognition of his achievements, Boomer was inducted into the Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2007. He is also the recipient of a number of awards, including the Cleveland Communicators' award for best single hard news story, the Cleveland Communicators' award for public affairs service program, the Ohio Educational Telecommunications' award for public affairs and special news, the Excellence in Journalism award from the Press Club of Cleveland, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Fellowship award from the Multicultural Producers Forum.

Boomer has also been involved in many professional and civic organizations. He served as the president of the Cleveland chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists and has been a member of the board of directors for the Ohio Associated Press, the First Tee Cleveland, the Ohio Center for Broadcasting, and the North East Ohio Health Services.

Boomer lives in Cleveland, Ohio and often serves as keynote speaker and the master of ceremonies at community and college events. He has one daughter and two grandchildren.

Harry Boomer was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 10, 2014.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Harry Boomer was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 10, 2014, in Cleveland, Ohio, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Broadcast journalist and radio personality Harry Boomer (1953 - ) was an anchor at CBS affiliate WOIO television station in Cleveland, Ohio. He has served as president of the Cleveland chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists.

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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:

Boomer, Harry, 1953-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Boomer, Harry, 1953---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:

Broadcast Journalist

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Radio Personality

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## 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 Harry Boomer, February 10, 2014. 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 Harry Boomer, Section A2014\_040\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:22 ?

Harry Boomer was born on September 4, 1953 in Turkey, North Carolina, the youngest of ten children. His mother, Lucy Boomer, was also born in Turkey, North Carolina in 1912 and raised by relatives after her mother died shortly after her birth. Raised on a farm, she only had a third grade education but taught herself to read. His father, George Boomer, was born in New Bern, North Carolina and moved to Turkey to farm. His father also spent part of the year working as a cement mason and Baptist minister in Washington D.C. While his father was away, Boomer's mother protected the family when visitors came. Boomer inherited his father's speaking ability and his mother's temperament. His earliest memory is when his sister got her first television set. Boomer also remembers the sounds of frogs, dogs, and crickets and watching the stars at night on the farm. Boomer attended church at First Baptist of Turkey and Hargrove High School for elementary school.

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Boomer, Section A2014\_040\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:51 ?

Harry Boomer speculates about why his father did not serve in World War II. At Hargrove High School in Turkey, North Carolina, Boomer was a good student and stood up for himself against athletes who cut in line. An avid reader, Boomer recited Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s I Have A Dream speech at his eighth grade graduation. Boomer's father participated in the March on Washington in 1963 and Boomer marched in North Carolina with HistoryMaker Ben Chavis of the Wilmington Ten. Boomer shares his memories of Dr. King's and President John F. Kennedy's assassinations. In 1966, Boomer attended Union High School during the tense first years of the school's integration and remembers that black males pulled their knives in self-defense although they never used them. Boomer was elected as president of several student organizations and formed The Black People's Voices to advocate for black students. Fascinated by radio and television, Boomer was inspired by newsmen Chet Huntley and David Brinkley.

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Boomer, Section A2014\_040\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:01 ?

Harry Boomer talks about race relations at Union High School in Clinton, North Carolina which led him to found The Black People's Voices. During the interview, Boomer envisions his life had he stayed in Turkey, North Carolina and worked at a meat packing plant without higher education. Boomer attempted to enlist in the U.S. Army after high school graduation but instead moved to Washington, D.C. and attended Columbia School of Broadcasting in Arlington, Virginia. In 1971, at the age of seventeen, Boomer was hired as an emcee at the Mark IV Supper Club in Washington D.C. Boomer talks about radio personalities and musicians in Washington, D.C. at the beginning of his radio career like Petey Green, HistoryMaker Kojo Nnamdi and Dewey Hughes. He talks about popular R&B and funk music in the 1970s, and his parents' distaste for secular music. Boomer's favorite musicians were The Temptations and The Dells. Boomer transitioned from music to news radio but he continued to mix beats as a disc jockey in Washington, D.C.

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Boomer, Section A2014\_040\_001\_004, TRT: 4:28:09 ?

Harry Boomer talks about discovering information about his ancestor, George Boomer, who served as a quartermaster in the Civil War. Boomer describes go-go era performers Chuck Brown and Experience Unlimited (E.U.). Boomer

recalls stories of racial discrimination in the broadcasting industry told by HistoryMaker Carole Simpson and Max Robinson. Following an encounter with a racist program director at WSFL, Boomer chose to pursue his career in broadcasting rather than to sue the station. From 1982 to 1988, he was the producer and host of the Harry Boomer Show on Storer Cable in Washington, D.C. In 1988, a friend asked Boomer to come to Canton, Ohio to work as a program director at the WBXT AM/900 radio station. In addition to his radio work on WBXT and Cleveland Public Radio, Boomer volunteered at the WUAB television station in Cleveland, Ohio. The station hired him as a reporter and Boomer became the morning and noon co-anchor/reporter of 19 Action News at the WOIO television station, a CBS affiliate.

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Boomer, Section A2014\_040\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:41 ?

Harry Boomer talks about his ascent from volunteer to weekly host at WUAB Channel 43 and the value of volunteering and internships. In 1992, Boomer produced a special for WCPM FM entitled “A Separate City: Race Relations in Cleveland.” Boomer describes his twenty years as a television broadcast career at WOIO and WCPN and talks about notable African Americans at WOIO including Romona Robinson, HistoryMaker Leon Bibb, Wayne Dawson, and Russ Mitchell. Boomer comments on organizational burnout at the National Association of Black Journalists. Boomer produced award-winning shows on Cleveland Public Radio covering topics such as the anti-Newt Gingrich protest, sex education, and police chasing. Boomer recalls his coverage of missing women Gina DeJesus and Amanda Berry and the discovery that Ariel Castro held them hostage for a decade in Cleveland, Ohio. Boomer describes his commitment to civic action in his community and his decision to live in Cleveland’s Huff neighborhood in order to be a role model to youth.

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Boomer, Section A2014\_040\_001\_006, TRT: 6:30:36 ?

Harry Boomer describes his hopes and concerns for the black community. Boomer plans to retire from television and would like to host a radio show in the future. He talks about his use of social media. Boomer reflects on his regrets in life and talks about his daughters and grandchildren. He talks about covering HistoryMaker Barack Obama’s presidential campaigns. Boomer reflects upon his legacy and describes how he would like to be remembered. Boomer concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.