

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Esther Jackson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jackson, Esther Cooper
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Esther Jackson,
Dates:	November 15, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2018
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:09:56).
Abstract:	Civil rights activist Esther Jackson (1917 - 2022) worked for social reform organizations like the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC), the Progressive Party, and the Civil Rights Congress before serving as managing editor for Freedomways journal from 1961 to 1985. Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 15, 2018, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2018_213
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civil rights activist Esther Jackson was born on August 21, 1917 in Arlington, Virginia to Esther Irving and George Cooper. She graduated from Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. in 1934, and enrolled at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, where she earned her B.A. degree in social work. Jackson went on to earn her M.A. degree in sociology at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1940. Her thesis, *The Negro Woman Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism*, examined the issues faced by African American domestic workers, and the benefits of labor unions.

Jackson joined the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) in 1940 and became a member of the voter registration project in Birmingham, Alabama. From 1942 to 1946, she worked as the organization's executive secretary. In 1947, Jackson and her family moved to Detroit, Michigan, where she became active with the local branches of the Progressive Party and the Civil Rights Congress. During the 1950s, Jackson worked for the National Committee to Defend Negro Leadership and the Families of Smith Act Victims. In 1961, Jackson became the managing editor of *Freedomways*, a globally distributed journal that featured the work of Derek Walcott, C. L. R. James, Julius K. Nyerere, Alice Walker and Nikki Giovanni. Jackson also co-edited the books *Black Titan: W. E. B. DuBois*, published in 1970, and *Paul Robeson: The Great Forerunner*, published in 1978. Jackson remained the managing editor of *Freedomways* until it ceased production in 1985. In 2015, Sara Rzezutek Haviland published, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement*, a biography detailing Jackson and her husband's activism.

Jackson was the recipient of several awards including the 1987 Community Contribution Award from the Harlem School of Arts, the 1989 Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York Association of Black Journalists, and the 1990 Mary Church Terrell Award from Clara Barton High School. In 2003, Jackson was awarded an honorary doctorate degree of Humane Letters from the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University.

Jackson and her late husband, James Jackson, had two daughters.

Jackson passed away on August 23, 2022.

Esther Jackson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 15, 2018.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Esther Jackson was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 15, 2018, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Civil rights activist Esther Jackson (1917 - 2022) worked for social reform organizations like the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC), the Progressive Party, and the Civil Rights Congress before serving as managing editor for Freedomways journal from 1961 to 1985.

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®.

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:

Jackson, Esther Cooper

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jackson, Esther Cooper--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civil Rights Activist

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Esther Jackson, November 15, 2018. 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).

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.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Esther Jackson, Section A2018_213_001_001, TRT: 1:28:42 ?

- Video Oral History Interview with Esther Jackson, Section A2018_213_001_002, TRT: 2:29:03 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Esther Jackson, Section A2018_213_001_003, TRT: 3:27:31 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Esther Jackson, Section A2018_213_001_004, TRT: 4:27:46 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Esther Jackson, Section A2018_213_001_005, TRT: 5:16:54 ?