

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Timuel Black

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Black, Timuel D.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black,
Dates:	June 19, 2000
Bulk Dates:	2000
Physical Description:	8 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:41:06).
Abstract:	Historian and history professor Timuel Black (1918 - 2021) is a pioneer in the black political movement and the author of “Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Great Migration, Bridges of Memory: Chicago's Second Generation of Black Migration and Sacred Ground: The Chicago Streets of Timuel Black. Black was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 19, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2000_007
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Timuel Black was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on December 7, 1918, but was raised in Chicago – a place he loves to call home. He is a revered and highly respected educator, political activist, community leader, oral historian and philosopher.

After matriculating from Burke Elementary School and DuSable High School in Chicago, Black enrolled at Roosevelt University. There, he received his bachelor's degree. Black also later earned a master's degree from the University of Chicago. One of his first jobs involved working as a field representative for the Metropolitan Burial Society.

After being drafted into the Army during World War II, Black returned to school and became a social worker. He has taught at a variety of high schools as well as colleges and universities. He is a pioneer in the independent black political movement and coined the phrase "plantation politics." Timuel Black has run for public office several times, including campaigns for Chicago's 4th Ward alderman, state senator of the 22nd District and state representative of the 22nd District. Black has spent his life furthering the cause of social justice. Black has recently completed a book, *Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Great Migration*. The book chronicles black Chicago history from the 1920s to the present, and is based on interviews he conducted.

Black passed away on October 13, 2021.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Timuel Black was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on June 19, 2000, in

Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 8 Betacame SP videocassettes. Historian and history professor Timuel Black (1918 - 2021) is a pioneer in the black political movement and the author of “Bridges of Memory: Chicago's First Wave of Great Migration, Bridges of Memory: Chicago's Second Generation of Black Migration and Sacred Ground: The Chicago Streets of Timuel Black.

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:

Black, Timuel D.

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Black, Timuel D.--Interviews

African American historians--Interviews.

African American political activists--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Historian

Community Activist

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|EducationMakers

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 Timuel Black, June 19, 2000. 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 Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_001_001, TRT: 0:29:14 ?

Timuel Black remembers returning from World War II and becoming interested in local politics. He mentions important players and gives some initial background information. Black reveals that during this time he first realized that the best way to create social change was to start on the local political level.

Social problems that were hurting African Americans at this time, such as restrictive housing covenants and unfair employment, fueled Black and others to create the Progressive Party. Black talks about African American Illinois state legislators and their successes in dealing with the people on a grassroots level. He talks about the political atmosphere on Chicago's South Side and tells how Edgar G. Brown positively conveyed messages to the locals. Black then discusses how the second Great Migration affected Chicago politics by creating a voting culture. Black tells of African American political pioneer Oscar DePriest.

World War, 1939-1945--African Americans.

Chicago (Ill.)--Politics and government.

Community activists.

African Americans--Social conditions.

Brown, Edgar G.

De Priest, Oscar, 1871-1951.

Migration, Internal--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_001_002, TRT: 0:29:01 ?

Timuel Black names, and explains the roles of, some state legislators of the time. He provides information on Oscar DePriest, Charles Skyles and Bill Robinson. He then describes how the 'Democratic Machine,' which had its start after the 1936 mayoral election, had come into full effect by the mid-1950s with Richard J. Daley coming into office. He then recalls some of the goings-on surrounding Chicago politics in the 1960s and the troubles that came about. Black then talks about Harold Washington's rebellious tendencies inside of the machine and how he paved his way to becoming the city's first black mayor. He tells how the political infighting weakened the strength of the black vote. Black describes how he then helped to strengthen the black vote and the strategy used to get Harold Washington elected.

Chicago (Ill.)--Politics and government.

Daley, Richard J., 1902-1976.

Democratic Party (Ill.).

Washington, Harold, 1922-1987.

Political planning.

Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_001_003, TRT: 0:30:34 ?

Timuel Black discusses the bleak possibility of returning to a time similar to the one Chicago experienced under the leadership of Harold Washington. He tells how black legislators are not currently working together as they have in the past. This issue, as well as the deterioration of the city's 'Black Belt,' are some of the examples Black gives that support his reasoning that the city needs to change its ways. He also speaks about other minority groups in the city and the troubles they are having advancing in local politics. Black then details his hopes and fears for the black community.

Washington, Harold, 1922-1987.

African American legislators – Illinois.

Chicago (Ill.)--Race relations.

Chicago (Ill.)--Politics and government.

African Americans--Illinois--Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_001_004, TRT: 0:30:51 ?

Timuel Black discusses his parents' background and how the family ended up in

Chicago, Illinois. He also tells of his ancestors' origins and their lives in slavery and speaks about stories that have been passed down through the family's generations about their history. Black describes why family sizes started to become smaller and how children's potential was viewed. He then goes into depth about both his mother's and father's personalities, giving details about their lives and beliefs. Black tells of the traits he acquired from each of his parents. Then, Black discusses himself as a child and tells of his inquisitive attitude. Tim Black then talks about his mother's attitude towards education.

African American families--Illinois--Chicago.

African American mothers.

African American fathers.

Childhood and youth.

Education--Parent participation.

Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_001_005, TRT: 0:29:43 ?

After being drafted and fighting in World War II, Timuel Black tells of coming back home and attending college and about some of the inspiring people he met during this time before his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement pulled him away from his doctoral work at the University of Chicago. He tells of racism he encountered in the Army, corruption among the officers, and how he dealt with it as well as how his attitude changed upon arrival back in the United States. He talks about his positive experience at the University of Chicago and his relationship with Dr. William Allison Davis.

World War, 1914-1918--Participation, African American.

University of Chicago.

Civil rights movements--United States.

United States Armed Forces--Race relations.

Davis, Allison, 1902-1983.

Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_001_006, TRT: 0:30:41 ?

Timuel Black explains how education was an important part of his childhood. He talks about friends of his during his elementary and high school days who became successful later in life. Black tells of some mischief he found himself in when he became involved with a tough crowd of kids. Black remembers forging his mother's signature in order to transfer from Englewood High School to Wendell Phillips High School where he made a friend who would later become known as Nat King Cole. He goes in depth about his personality as a high school student and tells of some hard times he faced as well as some exciting moments. Black recalls experiences he and his friends had in a local poolroom, recounting his memory of celebrities who would drop in. Black lists a number of the musicians he met during his late teens. He then details his years upon graduating from high school. Timuel Black speaks about his experiences working for Metropolitan Burial Society and Jackson Funeral System.

Education--Illinois--Chicago.

Cole, Nat King, 1919-1965.

Childhood and youth--Activities--Illinois--Chicago.

Billiard parlors.

Funeral rites and ceremonies.

Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_001_007, TRT: 0:30:41 ?

Timuel Black talks about the Civil Rights Movement and the success that it had. He goes into details with his personal beliefs on what has been accomplished

and what remains to be done. He then describes his early involvement with politics and reveals that he never chose to become a political player, but was persuaded by others based on his natural ability as a leader. Black then tells how his work as an activist helped him through his teaching career. He mentions instances where he helped his students fight for their beliefs in the schools where he taught and in one instance he was forced to leave his position because of his choice to speak out. Black then reveals how he'd like to be remembered and touches upon what his legacy might be. Finally, Black is asked about what his parents would think of him if they could see him now.

Civil rights movements--United States.

Politics and government.

Community activists.

Educators.

Mentoring in education.

Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_001_008, TRT: 0:10:21 ?

A selection of photographs is narrated by Timuel Black and includes his friends, family and colleagues.

Photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Timuel Black, Section A2000_007_Black_Timuel_06_MED_002, TRT: 1:00:44