

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Henry H. Brown

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Brown, Henry H., 1930-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown,
Dates:	August 12, 2007 and August 9, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	11 Betacame SP videocassettes (5:07:12).
Abstract:	Marketing executive Henry H. Brown (1930 -) was senior vice president of Anheuser-Busch for thirty-five years, where he worked and launched major initiatives for the company, including the Budweiser Community Health Mobile, Budweiser's Living Legends and the 'Lou Rawls Parade of Stars.' Brown was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 12, 2007 and August 9, 2007, in Houston, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_228
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Henry Hartford Brown was born on November 17, 1930 in Houston, Texas. Brown attended Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana and graduated from Texas Southern University where he also did graduate study.

Brown served as an adjunct professor at Howard University School of Business and Industry. In 1959, he started his career at Anheuser-Busch, Inc. as a wholesaler representative. Brown was recognized as a superior sales achiever, was promoted and received "The Adolphus Award," the company's highest recognition for excellence in sales, named after the founder of Anheuser-Busch and the Fortune 500 Corporation. In 1975, Brown developed Budweiser's Great Kings and Queens of Africa, an educational program that showcases the rich ancestral history of African Americans. In 1980, he was named Vice President of Marketing Development at Anheuser-Busch for his meritorious contributions resulting from his many innovative programs and projects. In 1990, Brown was elected as Senior Vice President of Anheuser-Busch, becoming the first African American to be elevated to the Senior Executive Suite of the world's largest brewery. In 1994, Brown retired from Anheuser-Busch as Senior Vice President after thirty-five years of work and launching major initiatives for the company including the Budweiser Community Health Mobile, Budweiser's Living Legends and *The Lou Rawls/UNCF Parade of Stars* (He assumed a key role in developing the initial corporate sponsored telethon.).

Brown has received several honors and awards during his career including the Thurman Award from the Association for Retarded Children, 1992; the Presidential Award from the National Conference of African American Mayors, 1994; the Friend of the Community Award from the State of Texas, 1997; and the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Lifetime Achievement Award, 2004.

Brown lives in Houston, Texas.

Brown was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 9, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Henry H. Brown was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 12, 2007 and August 9, 2007, in Houston, Texas, and was recorded on 11 Betacame SP videocassettes. Marketing executive Henry H. Brown (1930 -) was senior vice president of Anheuser-Busch for thirty-five years, where he worked and launched major initiatives for the company, including the Budweiser Community Health Mobile, Budweiser's Living Legends and the 'Lou Rawls Parade of Stars.'

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:

Brown, Henry H., 1930-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brown, Henry H., 1930- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Anheuser-Busch Companies

Occupations:

Marketing Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Henry H. Brown, August 12, 2007 and August 9, 2007. 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 Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_001_001, TRT: 0:28:40 ?
Henry H. Brown was born on November 17, 1930 in Houston, Texas to Willie Valentine Brown and John H. Brown, Sr. His paternal great-grandfather, Henry

Brown, traveled by boat from Jamaica to Corpus Christi, Texas, where he founded the St. Matthew Missionary Baptist Church. Brown's father was born in 1878 in San Antonio, Texas, and became a hod carrier and delivery driver. Brown's mother was born in 1915 in Gonzales, Texas, a predominantly Hispanic area; and relocated with her family to San Antonio, where she met Brown's father. They later moved to Houston, and raised eight children, including Brown, in the Third Ward neighborhood. During his childhood, Brown suffered from frequent illnesses, and was close to his mother as a result. He worked at Houston's Christian Home Missionary Baptist Church as an assistant to Reverend L.B. Tolson, who often brought him to religious conferences. Brown was also influenced by his basketball coach, Andrew "Pat" Patterson.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_001_002, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Henry H. Brown grew up in the Third Ward of Houston, Texas. He often played basketball in his backyard, where his father, John H. Brown, Sr., had built a court with a hoop made from a peach basket. Brown was mentored by his basketball coach, Andrew "Pat" Patterson; as well as Reverend L.B. Tolson of the Christian Home Missionary Baptist Church. In Houston, Brown began his education at Blackshear Elementary School, and went on to attend the segregated Jack Yates Senior High School, where he belonged to the glee club, and served as the football team's press secretary. At the time of Brown's upbringing, Houston's black business community included entrepreneurs like Hobart Taylor, Sr., who owned the H.T. Cab Company; and Clarence A. Dupree, who worked in the entertainment industry. Under their influence, Brown aspired to a career in business. He also talks about the roles of Texas State Representative Albert Edwards and white philanthropist Jesse H. Jones in the establishment of Juneteenth as a state holiday.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_001_003, TRT: 0:31:45 ?

Henry H. Brown joined Reverend L.B. Tolson's all-black Boy Scout troop, which met at the Christian Home Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas; and eventually became an Eagle Scout. He also played basketball with his neighbor, Ollie Matson, who went on to a career as a professional athlete. While a student at Jack Yates Senior High School, Brown played on the basketball team, and helped win the state championship in 1949. In addition, he served as class vice president, and performed with the operetta club at the Houston Music Hall. After class, he worked as a delivery assistant for the Lone Star Creamery Co., and as a bagger at the Wine Gardens grocery store. Brown aspired to a career in business; and, upon graduating in 1950, enrolled at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans. In 1951, Brown was drafted into the U.S. Army. He decided to join the U.S. Army Military Police Corps; and, after training at Camp Gordon in Georgia, was deployed to Frankfurt, Germany.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_001_004, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Henry H. Brown served in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps in Germany during the early 1950s. In this role, he was responsible for maintaining relations between the American soldiers and German citizens in the aftermath of World War II. Brown was discharged in 1953, and returned to Houston, Texas to complete his undergraduate studies in business at Texas Southern University. Impressed by the community contributions of businessmen like Moss H. Kendrix, who worked for The Coca-Cola Company, Brown aspired to a career in Corporate America. He received support from Dean Milton Wilson of Texas Southern University's business school. At this point in the interview, Brown describes the university's history, and talks about the importance of mentorship. While in college, Brown worked at Houston's Lakeside Country Club, but quit

after a club member made a racist statement. Then, Brown approached Frank Glispin, Jr., the local distributor for the Anheuser-Busch Companies, with a marketing idea.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_001_005, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Henry H. Brown approached the Anheuser-Busch Companies' regional manager, Bill Whatley, with the idea to target the African American market in Houston, Texas. Brown's pitch was a success, and he was hired by the Anheuser-Busch Companies' wholesale distributor in Houston in 1959. As his marketing career progressed, he frequently interacted with executives from the Anheuser-Busch Companies' headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri. Brown also received support from his boss, Jay R. Rideout, who recommended him for a position in the corporate office. In 1975, vice president of sales Michael J. LaMonica, Sr. promoted Brown to a directorship in St. Louis. After several years there, Brown sought another promotion; and, in 1980, became an officer of the company. He was promoted to senior officer in 1990. During this period, Brown developed marketing programs aimed at the black community, including the Budweiser Community Health Mobile, Budweiser's Living Legends and the Great Kings of Africa.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_001_006, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Henry H. Brown began his career at the Anheuser-Busch Companies in Houston, Texas in 1959, and transferred to the company headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri as a marketing director in 1975. That year, Brown spearheaded the development of the Great Kings of Africa, a cultural heritage program that commissioned paintings of African leaders. Prior to its implementation, the D'Arcy MacManus and Masius advertising agency conducted focus groups in which participants rejected Brown's idea. However, Brown maintained it would be an effective marketing strategy. He hired artists to create portraits of African kings, and enlisted historian John Henrik Clarke to confirm their accuracy. The first four paintings were unveiled at the Johnson Publishing Company in Chicago, Illinois. At this point in the interview, Brown describes his approach to marketing. He also talks about the history of racial tension in Houston, including the uprisings of 1917, and the police riot at Texas Southern University in 1967.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_002_007, TRT: 0:31:00 ?

Henry H. Brown served as a marketing executive at the Anheuser-Busch Companies in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1975, Brown developed the Great Kings of Africa program to increase the company's appeal to the black community. For the project, Brown recruited African American artists to paint portraits of African monarchs like the Zulu King Shaka and the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaton. The first four portraits were unveiled in 1975. The following year, author Alex Haley released his book, 'Roots: The Saga of an American Family,' which increased interest in the Great Kings of Africa project. Brown recruited Haley and actor Roscoe Lee Browne to further promote the program; and, as it gained momentum, heeded requests to include paintings of African queens. The Great Kings and Queens of Africa debuted at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Brown describes the collection's subsequent exhibitions, one of which was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_002_008, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Henry H. Brown developed the Great Kings of Africa program in 1975, while working as a marketing executive at the Anheuser-Busch Companies in St. Louis, Missouri. For the project, Brown commissioned portraits of African monarchs, and recruited historian John Henrik Clarke to ensure that the paintings were accurate. The program featured artists like watercolorist Jerry

Pinkney and painter Thomas Blackshear; and eventually expanded to include both the Great Kings and Queens of Africa. In addition to exhibitions throughout the country, the portraits were printed as posters, and distributed to educators and other members of the African American community by the Anheuser-Busch Companies' field representatives. With the support of his supervisor, Michael J. Roarty, and marketing executive Victor Julien, Brown continued the program until his retirement in 1994. Brown describes the public response to the program, as well as a similar cultural heritage project conducted by the Molson Coors Brewing Company.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_002_009, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Henry H. Brown served as a marketing executive at the Anheuser-Busch Companies from 1975 to 1994. During his tenure, Brown collaborated with Christopher Edley, Sr. and Virgil E. Ecton of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) to redevelop the 'Lou Rawls Parade of Stars.' Eventually, Anheuser-Busch executives Wayman Smith and Victor Julien assumed leadership of the program, which generated significant revenue for the UNCF. In addition to the successful Great Kings and Queens of Africa project, Brown developed the Chief I, Chief II and Budweiser's Living Legends programs to salute black leaders like Dorothy Height and Rosa Parks. He was also instrumental in the creation of programs to honor the legacy of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1994, Brown retired as the Anheuser-Busch Companies' senior vice president of marketing. He reflects upon his career and community engagement, as well as Corporate America's responsibility to the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_002_010, TRT: 0:31:37 ?

Henry H. Brown was a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and also served as the sire of the Boule chapter in Houston, Texas. He talks about the difference between the Boule, which required an invitation to join, and other collegiate Greek letter organizations. Brown was married to public schoolteacher Mary Lee Brown, who passed away in 1994. Together, they had a son and three daughters. Brown reflects upon his upbringing and legacy, his hopes for the African American community and how he would like to be remembered. He concludes this part of the interview by narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry H. Brown, Section A2007_228_002_011, TRT: 0:02:40 ?

Henry H. Brown narrates his photographs.