Guide to the Civil Rights in Brooklyn Oral History Collection

Brooklyn Public Library
Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Contact: Brooklyn Collection
Phone: 718.230.2762
Fax: 718.857.2245
Email: bcref@brooklynpubliclibrary.org
www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org

Copyright © 2012 Brooklyn Public Library. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Brian Purnell
Title: Civil Rights in Brooklyn Oral History Collection
Date Span: 1987 - 2006
Abstract: 34 recorded interviews, many of them transcribed, with former members of the Brooklyn Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), with ephemera, notes and news clippings. Digital images of events at which the members and Brian Purnell spoke in 2006.
Quantity: 1 letter-sized document box, 3 6x6x6 boxes
Location: Brooklyn Collection Annex
Repository: Brooklyn Public Library – Brooklyn Collection
Reference Code: BC0138

Historical Note

The Civil Rights in Brooklyn Oral History Collection serves as a companion to the Civil Rights in Brooklyn Collection. In the course of his research for his dissertation at New York University, Dr. Brian Purnell interviewed several activists who were members of the Brooklyn Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). This collection also includes earlier interviews by other researchers that were obtained by Purnell for his study. During the early 1960s, the Brooklyn Chapter of CORE was one of the most dynamic civil rights organizations in New York City. From 1960-64, members of Brooklyn CORE led local demonstrations to desegregate apartments, integrate public schools, create jobs, and improve sanitation services to Bedford-Stuyvesant.

CORE members were also active in other civil rights organizations, including Freedom Organizations Coordinated for Unity in Shorefront (FOCUS), which protested housing discrimination in the Sheepshead Bay-Shorefront area, and Black News, a newsletter focusing on local and international issues in civil rights. Sonny Carson, who was an executive director of Brooklyn CORE and is interviewed by Purnell, published an autobiography in 1972, The Education of Sonny Carson, which was made into a film in 1974.
Scope and Content

The collection consists of 34 interviews of 32 former CORE members, recorded between 1987 and 2005. Most, but not all, of these interviews are in both their original cassette format and in a transcribed copy. Notes, ephemera, and newspaper clippings accompany the transcriptions. Two compact discs and six floppy disks contain photographs of events at which Purnell presented his research, with many of his interviewees, in 2006.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions
Collection is located in the Brooklyn Collection at the Central Branch at Grand Army Plaza. The collection may only be used in the library and is not available through interlibrary loan. Requests to view the collection must be made at least 48 hours in advance of visit.

Use Restrictions
While many items in the Brooklyn Collection are unrestricted, we do not own reproduction rights to all materials. Be aware of the several kinds of rights that might apply: copyright, licensing and trademarks. The borrower assumes all responsibility for copyright questions.

Access Points

Subject Topics:
Civil rights movements—New York (State)—New York
Race relations—New York (State)—New York
Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)—History

Related Materials

Available at the Brooklyn Collection:

Black News Table of Contents. A listing of articles in each issue of *Black News*, by date. *Black News* is a sub-series of the Civil Rights in Brooklyn Collection.

Brian Purnell. *A movement grows in Brooklyn: the Brooklyn chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the northern civil rights movement during the early 1960’s*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI 2006

Civil Rights in Brooklyn Collection. A collection of both original materials documenting the work of CORE, FOCUS and other Brooklyn civil rights groups during the 1960s, and secondary materials,
especially newspaper and magazine articles from the 1960s-1980s, that refer to ongoing civil rights struggles on the national stage.


---

**Administrative Information**

**Provenance**
The Civil Rights in Brooklyn Oral History Collection was donated to the Brooklyn Public Library by Brian Purnell in 2009.

**Preferred Citation**
This collection should be cited as the Civil Rights in Brooklyn Oral History Collection, Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

---

**Arrangement**

Interviews are arranged alphabetically by interviewee name. Audio versions are on numbered cassettes, and printed transcripts, correspondence, and notes for each are in folders. Not all of the interviews are transcribed, and, conversely, some interviews are email-based, with no accompanying audio. Event photographs are organized by format.

**Akula, John**
Date: April 25, 2005
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 41
Folder contents: interview transcript

**Banks, Gilbert**
Date: April 1, 2000
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 1
Folder Contents: interview transcript, 2 photocopies of photographs of Banks

**Bibuld, Douglass**
Date: May 31, 2004
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 21 and 22  
Folder Contents: interview transcript, consent form, notes

**Bibuld, Jerome**  
Date: January 2, 2003  
Interviewer: Brian Purnell  
Cassette Number: 9 and 10  
Folder Contents: interview transcript, notes, Harlem Educational Activities Fund pamphlet

**Bibuld McField, Elaine**  
Date: February 18, 2001  
Interviewer: Brian Purnell  
Cassette Number: 7  
Folder Contents: interview transcript, notes, memorial service program  
*See also: Group interview*

**Brezenoff, Stanley**  
Date: July 1, 2004  
Interviewer: Brian Purnell  
Cassette Number: 39  
Folder Contents: consent form, notes, correspondence, press release

**Carson, Sonny**  
Date: November 12, 1995  
Interviewer: Claire Jean Kim  
Cassette Number: 34  
No folder.

Date: November 13, 2000  
Interviewer: Brian Purnell  
Cassette Number: 6  
Folder Contents: interview transcript, obituary, newspaper clippings

**Craig, Maxine**  
Date: June 2, 2004  
Interviewer: Brian Purnell  
Cassette Number: 18 and 19  
Folder Contents: interview transcript, consent form

**Diamond, Edith**  
Date: July 20, 2004  
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 20
Folder Contents: interview transcript, consent form

**Flascher, Kurt**
Date: May 23, 2011
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
No cassette.
Folder contents: notes from interview

**Fredericks, Maurice and Winnie**
Date: May 9, 1990
Interviewer: Clarence Taylor
Cassette Number: 31
Folder Contents: interview transcript
    *See also:* Weusi, Msemaji and Nandi; Group interview

**Galamisen, Milton**
Date: October 21, 1987
Interviewer: Clarence Taylor
Cassette Number: 23
No folder.

**Goldwag, Arnold**
Date: October 13, 2000
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 5
Folder Contents: interview transcript, emailed correspondence, photocopies of newspaper clippings

**Group interview, Mary Ellen Phifer Kirton, Elaine Bibuld, Msemaji Weusi, Nandi Weusi, and Rioghan Kirchner**
Date: April 7, 2000
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 2
Folder Contents: interview transcript
    *See also:* Kirchner, Rioghan; Bibuld McField, Elaine; Weusi, Msemaji and Nandi; Fredericks, Maurice and Winnie; Phifer Kirton, Mary Ellen

**Heinegg, Paul and Rita**
Date: January 5, 2004
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 16
Folder Contents: interview transcript, consent forms, notes, correspondence, photocopy of newspaper
Ipiotis, Shelley
Date: March 24, 2005
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
No cassette.
Folder Contents: email interview transcript, email correspondence

Kirchner, Rioghan
Date: September 29, 2000/October 21, 2000
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 3 and 4
Folder Contents: interview transcript, consent forms

See also: Spiro, Phyllis and Rioghan Kirchner; Group interview

Kirton, Mary Ellen Phifer
Date: February 2003
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 11 and 12
Folder Contents: interview transcripts, consent form

See Also: Group interview

Law, Bob
Date: April 14, 2004
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 17
Folder Contents: interview transcript, consent forms, notes, correspondence, photocopy of newspaper article

Date: March 29, 2005
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 42
No folder.

Leeds, Oliver
Date: December 15, 1988
Interviewer: Dianne Esses
Cassette Number: 27 - 30
Folder Contents: interview transcript

Leeds, Oliver and Marjorie
Date: August 11, 1988
Interviewer: Clarence Taylor
Cassette Number: 25 and 26
Folder Contents: interview transcript, photocopies of newspaper clippings, obituaries of Oliver Leeds

Lewinson, Edwin
Date: November 20, 2003
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 13
Folder Contents: interview transcripts, consent form

Miller, Ed
Date: March 3, 2001
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
No cassette.
Folder Contents: email interview transcript

Owens, Congressman Major
Date: December 12, 2003
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 38
Folder Contents: interview transcript, notes, correspondence, photocopies of newspaper clippings, consent form, lifetime achievement award program

Phipps Crayton, Francis
Date: November 20, 2003
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 13 and 14
Folder Contents: interview transcripts, notes, consent form

Rich, Marvin
Date: March 22, 2005
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 40
Folder Contents: consent form

Salvatore, Nick
Date: January 6, 2003
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 35 and 36
Folder Contents: consent form, notes, correspondence, printouts from Cornell Libraries website
Spiro, Phyllis and Rioghan Kirchner
Date: July 16, 2003
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 37
Folder Contents: consent forms, notes

Stein, Eleanor
Date: March 23, 2005
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 41
Folder Contents: interview transcript, consent form, correspondence, notes

Taylor, Gardner
Date: August 1, 1988
Interviewer: Clarence Taylor
Cassette Number: 24
No folder.

Timmons, Gwendolyn
Date: August 29, 1993
Interviewer: Clarence Taylor
Cassette Number: 32 and 33
No folder.

Weusi, Msemaji and Nandi
Date: March 9, 2001
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 8
Folder Contents: interview transcripts

See Also: Group interview; Fredericks, Maurice and Winnie

Young, Jacqueline Lee
Date: December 3, 2003
Interviewer: Brian Purnell
Cassette Number: 15
Folder Contents: interview transcript, notes, consent form, obituaries of Vincent Young and Oliver Leeds
Box Listing

Box 1:
Folder listing (alphabetical by last name)
Akula, John
Banks, Gilbert
Bibuld, Douglass
Bibuld, Jerome
Bibuld McField, Elaine
Brezenoff, Stanley
Carson, Sonny
Craig, Maxine
Diamond, Edith
Fredericks, Maurice and Winnie
Goldwag, Arnold
Group interview
Heinegg, Paul and Rita
Ipiotis, Shelly
Kirchner, Rioghan
Law, Bob
Leeds, Oliver
Leeds, Oliver and Marjorie
Lewinson, Edwin
Miller, Ed
Owens, Congressman Major
Phifer Kirton, Mary Ellen
Phipps Crayton, Francis
Rich, Martin
Salvatore, Nick
Spiro, Phyllis and Rioghan Kirchner
Stein, Eleanor
Weusi, Msemaji and Nandi
Young, Jacqueline Lee

Box 2:
Cassette 1: Banks, Gilbert April 1, 2000
Cassette 2: Group Interview April 7, 2000
Cassette 3: Kirchner, Rioghan September 29, 2000/October 21, 2000
Cassette 4: Kirchner, Rioghan October 21, 2000
Cassette 5: Goldwag, Arnold October 13, 2000
Cassette 6: Carson, Sonny November 13, 2000
Cassette 7: Bibuld, Elaine February 18, 2001
Cassette 8: Weusi, Msemaji and Nandi March 9, 2001
Cassette 9: Bibuld, Jerome January 2, 2003
Cassette 10: Bibuld, Jerome January 2, 2003
Cassette 11: Kirton, Mary Ellen Phifer February 23, 2003
Cassette 12: Kirton, Mary Ellen Phifer February 23, 2003
Box 3:
Cassette 15: Young, Jacqueline Lee December 3, 2003
Cassette 16: Heinegg, Paul and Rita January 5, 2004
Cassette 17: Law, Bob April 14, 2004
Cassette 18: Craig, Maxine June 2, 2004
Cassette 19: Craig, Maxine June 2, 2004
Cassette 20: Diamond, Edith July 20, 2004
Cassette 21: Bibuld, Douglass May 31, 2004
Cassette 22: Bibuld, Douglass May 31, 2004
Cassette 23: Galamison, Milton October 21, 1987
Cassette 24: Taylor, Gardner August 1, 1988
Cassette 25: Leeds, Oliver and Marjorie August 11, 1988
Cassette 26: Leeds, Oliver and Marjorie August 11, 1988
Cassette 27: Leeds, Oliver December 15, 1988
Cassette 28: Leeds, Oliver December 15, 1988

Box 4:
Cassette 29: Leeds, Oliver December 15, 1988
Cassette 30: Leeds, Oliver December 15, 1988
Cassette 31: Fredericks, Maurice May 9, 1990
Cassette 32: Timmons, Gwendolyn August 29, 1993
Cassette 33: Timmons, Gwendolyn August 29, 1993
Cassette 34: Carson, Sonny November 12, 1995
Cassette 35: Salvatore, Nick January 6, 2003
Cassette 36: Salvatore, Nick January 6, 2003
Cassette 37: Spiro, Phyllis and Rioghan Kirchner July 16, 2003
Cassette 38: Owens, Congressman Major December 12, 2003
Cassette 39: Brezenoff, Stanley July 1, 2004
Cassette 40: Rich, Marvin March 22, 2005
Cassette 41: Stein, Eleanor/Akula, John March 23, 2005/April 25, 2005
Cassette 42: Law, Bob March 29, 2005

Compact Discs:
Brooklyn CORE Lecture at Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza, February 2006 (2 CDs of images)

Floppy Discs:
4 discs of images from the event, including pictures of many of the people interviewed by Purnell.
CORE Exhibit, January 2006 – March 2006
2 discs of images from the exhibit at Brooklyn Public Library’s Central branch.