

Guide to the Civil Rights in Brooklyn Oral History Collection

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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:

August Meier and Elliott Rudwick. [*CORE: a study in the civil rights movement, 1942-1968*](#). Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975

[**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.

Clarence Taylor. [Knocking at our own door](#) : Milton A. Galamison and the struggle to integrate New York City schools. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard. [Groundwork : local black freedom movements in America](#). New York: New York University, 2005

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

article

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

Cassette 13: Lewinson, Edwin/Crayton, Frances Phipps November 20, 2003
 Cassette 14 : Phipps Crayton, Frances November 20, 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:

“I Remember Brooklyn: Civil Rights Movement 1960 - 1965”, February 2006.

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.