Guide to the African American Museum & Library at Oakland Oral History Collection

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Collection number: MS 191

African American Museum & Library at Oakland
Oakland, California

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Sean Heyliger

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Descriptive Summary

Title: African American Museum & Library at Oakland Oral History Collection
Dates: 2002-2007
Collection number: MS 191
Creator: African American Museum & Library at Oakland
Collection Size: 2.75 linear feet (6 boxes)
Repository: African American Museum & Library at Oakland (Oakland, Calif.)
Oakland, CA 94612

Abstract: The African American Museum & Library at Oakland Oral History Collection consists of 79 oral history interviews conducted in 2002-2007. The interviews were initially conducted by the AAMLO Coalition, a group of volunteers and supporters of the African American Museum & Library at Oakland, which interviewed prominent and long-time Oakland residents in the fields of education, performing arts, politics and religion.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
No access restrictions. Collection is open to the public.

Access Restrictions
Materials are for use in-library only, non-circulating.

Publication Rights
Permission to publish from the African American Museum & Library at Oakland Oral History Collection must be obtained from the African American Museum & Library at Oakland.

Preferred Citation
African American Museum & Library at Oakland Oral History Collection, MS 191, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland, Public Library, Oakland, California.

Acquisition Information
Oral history interviews conducted by the African American Museum & Library at Oakland.

Processing Information
Processed by Sean Heyliger, December 10, 2015.

Biography / Administrative History
The African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO) was organized on July 2, 1965 in the home of Marcella Ford as the East Bay Negro Historical Society (EBNHS). In attendance at the first meeting were the seven founding members of the society: Marcella Ford, Jesse Ford, Eugene Lasartemay, Ruth Lasartemay, E. Harold Mason, Morrie Turner, and Madison Harvey Jr. The society’s mission was to “collect, preserve, record, and disseminate information related to the history, culture and experience, of persons of Black American and African descent, especially those in the East Bay, the State of California and throughout the West.” The society consisted of members, officers, and an executive board and included library, museum, publications and publicity, program, membership, finance, and nomination committees which met on the third Saturday of every month. Initially, the society operated as a unit of the Oakland Unified School District Volunteer
Program, with members giving lectures on black history to students that would visit the library and museum. In 1970, the society moved to a storefront located at 3651 Grove Street in Oakland, California and remained there for six years before moving to 4519 Grove St., where it established a museum and library. In 1982, the society was invited into the Golden Gate Branch of the Oakland Public Library, making it the first Oakland library branch with a collection focused on African American history and culture. Following the appointment of Dr. Lawrence Crouchett as its executive director in 1988, the society changed its name to the Northern California Center for Afro-American History & Life (NCCAAHL). In 1994, the City of Oakland and the NCCAAHL merged to create the African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO).

Scope and Content of Collection
The African American Museum & Library at Oakland Oral History Collection consists of 87 oral history interviews conducted in 2002-2007. The interviews were initially conducted by the AAMLO Coalition, a group of volunteers and supporters of the African American Museum & Library at Oakland, as the Eternal Voices oral history project which interviewed prominent and long-time Oakland residents in the fields of education, performing arts, politics and religion. Interviewees included artist Frances Dunham Catlett, educator Josephine Bynum Dukes, Rev. Herbert Guice, businesswoman Esther Mabry, Dorothy Reid Pete, Tuskegee airman Garnett Quinn, teacher Audrey Gibson Robinson, nurse and historian Alice Royal, musician Loraine Cody Richmond, politician Maudelle Shirek, baseball player Turley, Weathy Turley, cartoonist Morrie Turner, activist Ruth Villa, and filmmaker Allen Willis. The project continued with Eternal Voices 2, a program of audio interviews with multigenerational Oakland families, and “Youth Speaks,” a panel discussion with youth from various Oakland high schools. The remaining interviews were conducted beginning in 2007 with residents of Oakland, California discussing the history and evolution of the African American community in Oakland and form part of the museum’s permanent exhibit. The interviews are arranged alphabetically by interviewee's last name.

Arrangement
Series I: Oral history interviews
Series II: Eternal Voices oral history project

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
African American educators.
African American families -- California -- Oakland.
Oakland (Calif.) -- Social life and customs.
Oakland (Calif.), West Oakland.
Oakland (Calif.) -- History.

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Oral history interviews
Physical Description: 4 boxes
Series Scope and Content Summary
Contains 63 oral history interviews recorded on DVD, VHS, and mini digital video tapes. The oral history interviews were conducted by the African American Museum & Library at Oakland.
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by interviewee's last name.

Box 1
Description
Jose Arredondo discusses his experiences growing up in Oakland, California, changes he's seen in the city since his childhood, and the city's Latino community.

Box 1
Description
Judge Gordon Baranco discusses his family background and growing up in the San Antonio neighborhood in Oakland, California.
Oral history interviews

Bartholomew, Rev. Louis J. [two tapes] 2007-08-21
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000114
Description
Louis Bartholomew discusses his family's history migrating from the South, and his experiences growing up in Oakland, California, his work with the community at Allen Temple Baptist Church, and the importance of African American history.

Beckford, Ruth 2007-08-07
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000089
Bennett-Wilkes, Theresa 2007-03-22
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000098
Berry, Ethan 2007-12-05
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000090
Description
Ethan Berry discusses his family's history in the San Francisco Bay Area and the American South.

Blanc, Isandla Sindi 2007-08-16
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000092
Bong, Vanners 2007-09-12
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000102
Bowens, Milton [two tapes] 2007
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000117
Description
Artist Milton Bowens discusses growing up the youngest of ten children, mentorship and his development as an artist, and the importance of Oakland, California in his life and work.

Catlett, Frances Dunham 2007-09-07
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000088
Description
Frances Dunham Catlett discusses her family's history in the church, following Rev. Howard Thurman to California, and her work as a social worker and artist.

Clark, Jason 2007-12-05
Cooksey, Margaret 2007-08-17
Creely, Elizabeth 2007-08-01
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000095
Description
Elizabeth Creely discusses her family's migration to Oakland, California and the development and history of the city.

Dang, Ted 2007-05-21
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000103
Description
Ted Dang discusses his family's history migrating from China, the history and development of Oakland's Chinatown, his experiences growing up in Oakland, California, and his experience during the Oakland Hills Fire and it's aftermath.

Deterville, Duane 2007-06-14
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000129
Description
Duane Deterville discusses the art community in Oakland, California.

https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000123
Description
Ida Dunson reads excerpts from her poetry, discusses her family and growing up in Oakland, California in the 1930s.

Flores, Rosario 2007-06-22
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000101
Description
Rosario Flores discusses her family's migration to California and her childhood growing up in West Oakland and the Fruitvale District of Oakland, California.
| Box 1 | **Galvez, Daniel** 2007-07-31 | [https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000130](https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000130) |
| Box 1 | **Description** |
| Box 1 | Daniel Galvez discusses his family's history and living and working as a muralist in Oakland, California. |
| Box 2 | **Grillo, Evelio** undated |
| Box 1 | **Hall Family [two tapes]** 2007-05-29 |
| Box 1 | **Hall, Anthony and Phillip** 2007-10-20 |
| Box 1 | **Hallterman, H. Lee** 2005-10-20 |
| Box 1 | **Description** |
| Box 1 | Educator Gladys Jordan discusses her family's struggles with Jim Crow laws and the Great Depression in Oklahoma, migrating from Oklahoma and working at the Naval Supply Depot in Oakland during World War II, her participation in the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and her experiences as a teacher in Berkeley and Oakland. |
| Box 1 | **Description** |
| Box 1 | Rev. Carl and Beverly Kennedy discuss their migration to California from Texas in the 1960s, and their families' shared history, their association with social movements and programs in Oakland, California, and their family's values. |
| Box 1 | **Description** |
| Box 1 | Algeria Kirven discusses growing up in the San Antonio neighborhood in Oakland, California, fishing as a child in the Bay Area, and his participation in civil rights, and his work as a educator. |
| Box 1 | **Description** |
| Box 1 | Jerri Lange discusses her family's deep roots in Oakland, her father's military service as a 'Buffalo soldier,' the community of West Oakland before World War II, fishing as a child at Jack London Square, clashes between old families and new migrants, and her education and career. |
| Box 1 | **Lewis, Bishop Aurea** 2007-08-17 | [https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000086](https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000086) |
| Box 1 | **Description** |
| Box 1 | Bishop Aurea Lewis discusses her family's migration from Louisiana to California during World War II, tensions within the African American community, growing up in Oakland, California, the dispersal of the Black community, and her religious work. |
| Box 1 | **Description** |
| Box 1 | Lothario Lotho discusses changes he's seen living in Oakland, California and musical, political and cultural organizations in Oakland. |
| Box 1 | **McNeal, Rev. Lorraine** 2007-09-04 | [https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000133](https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000133) |
| Box 2 | **McClendon, James** undated |
| Box 2 | **Oyekanmi, Henry** 2007-08-16 |
| Box 2 | **Oyekanmi, Lillie** 2007-08-16 |
| Box 1 | **Portugal, Mayima** 2007-08-17 |
Oral history interviews

Box 1  Prince, Earl Martin "Marty" [two tapes] 2007-08-30
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000113
Description
Earl Martin Price discusses growing up in West Oakland, surfing as a child in Santa Monica, his parent's interracial marriage, his dad's membership in the Communist Party, his involvement in radical politics with Mark Comfort, and his visit to Cuba.

Box 1  Raineri, Ray [two tapes] 2007-09-11
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000104
Description
Ray Raineri discusses his family's history in Oakland, growing up in North Oakland, Oakland's diverse communities, his work as a deputy probation officer, and Oakland's Italian community.

Box 1  Reems, Bishop Ernestine 2007-08-22
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000097
Description
Bishop Ernestine Reems discusses her family's migration from Oklahoma to Richmond, California in the 1960s, and her ministry in East Oakland.

Box 1  Richardson, Susan 2007
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000096
Description
Susan Richardson discusses her involvement with social movements during the 1960s, Synanon, and the Black Panther Party.

Box 2  Royal, Alice Calbert 2004
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000010
Description
Oral history interview with nurse and historian Alice Royal recounting her family’s long history in California, growing up in Allensworth, California, and her experiences as a black nurse.

Box 1  Royal, Alice Calbert 2007
Box 1  Rush, Sarah O'Neal 2007-07-25
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000085
Description
Sarah O'Neal Rush discusses growing up in Oakland, California, the Pie Queen, and her great-grandfather Booker T. Washington.

Box 1  Scott-Brooks, Patricia and Jenee Scott [two tapes] 2007-08-30
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000109
Description
Patricia Scott-Brooks and Jenee Scott discuss growing up in North Oakland, their parents' barbershop business, and the discrimination they faced in business.

Box 1  Shelmire, Justin [two tapes] 2007-07-31
Box 1  Smith, Rev. J. Alfred Sr. 2007-09-05
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000091
Description
Rev. J. Alfred Smith Sr. discusses growing up in Kansas City, Missouri, his family's migration to Oakland, California in the 1960s, and his lament of the decay of values within the Black community.

Box 1  Sylvester, Odell Jr. [two tapes] 2007-09-12
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000120
Description
Odell H. Sylvester Jr. discusses attending the University of California Berkeley in the 1940s, his experiences as an Oakland police officer patrolling the night clubs on 7th Street, and growing up in Kansas City, Missouri.
Simmons, Herman M. Sr.  undated

Taylor, Dr. Leon  2007  https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000100

Description
Dr. Leon Taylor discusses his family’s migration to California in the 1950s, his family’s values growing up, his participation in the church, and his sense of community.


Description
Morrie Turner discusses becoming a cartoonist, growing up in West Oakland in the 1930s, and the inspiration and popularity of his comic strip Wee Pals.


Description
Antonio Valdivia discusses growing up in West Oakland in the 1940s, Pearl Harbor and the internment of their Japanese American neighbors, his family’s Mexican restaurant, and liberation theology.

Van, Paulina  2007-09-05  https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000132

Description
Dr. Paulina Van discusses migrating to California in the 1960s from Panama, her family, and the sense of community in Oakland, California.


Description
Geraldyne Washington discusses growing up in Oakland in the 1940s, dance, the housing crisis in West Oakland during World War II, tensions between Californians and emigrants from the South, Slim Jenkins and the music scene in Oakland.

Watson, James A.  undated


Description
Artist Arnold White discusses growing up in Campbell Village Housing Project in West Oakland, his family, and his artwork.


Description
Ted White discusses growing up in Oakland, his family’s history and work ethic, selling African clothing in the 1970s, Huey Newton and the Black Panther Party, the Vietnam War and his service in the U.S. Navy.


Description
Rev. Allen Williams discusses growing up in a religious family in Oakland, California, the Black Panther Party, fishing at Lake Merritt, and his educational background.


Description
Henry Delton Williams discusses his family’s migration from Louisiana and growing up in Oakland during the 1940s, protests to form a Black Student Union at Oakland High School, his love of gospel music, the joy of giving back, Slim Jenkins’ nightclub and the music scene on 7th St., and his career as a fashion designer.
Oral history interviews

Box 1  
Williams, Henry Delton [two tapes] 2007-06-14  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000119

Description  
Lee Williams discusses his family's migration to California from Texas, growing up in Oakland in the 1940s, his grandparents work in the shipyards during World War II, playing as a child in West Oakland, his experiences as a musician, and the effects of urban redevelopment on Oakland.

Box 1  
Williams, Lee [two tapes] 2007-08-30  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000121

Description  
Lee Williams discusses migrating to Oakland from Louisiana as a child in the 1940s and growing up in West Oakland.

Box 1  
Wong, William [two tapes] 2007-08-24  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000111

Description  
William Wong discusses growing up in Oakland's Chinatown in the 1940s, his parent's restaurant, the Oakland's ethnic diversity, his work as a journalist at the Oakland Tribune, and his family's celebration of the Chinese New Year.

Box 1  
Wong, Flo Oy 2007-08-24  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000094

Description  
Flo Oy Wong discusses growing up in Oakland's Chinatown, her family's history, barriers to Chinese migration to California, her experiences attending Oakland High School, games they played as children, and her decision to become an artist.

Box 2  
Wright, Mary Ann “Mother” undated

Box 1  
Wright, Oscar Carl [two tapes] 2007-05-22  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000115

Description  
Oscar Wright discusses growing up in Clarksdale, Mississippi the son of sharecroppers, his migration to West Oakland in 1956, discrimination he faced from labor unions, the loss of his house for urban development projects, and his work advocating for the education of African Americans.

Eternal Voices oral history project

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary  
Contains 25 oral history interviews recorded on VHS and audio cassette, biographical statements written by AAMLO Coalition members and/or interviewee, photographs of participants, copies of interview questions, acknowledgements, and supporting documentation of the project. The Eternal Voices oral history project which interviewed prominent and long-time Oakland residents was conducted from 2002-2004 by the AAMLO Coalition, a group of volunteers and supporters of the African American Museum & Library at Oakland. Eternal Voices 2, a program of audio interviews with Oakland families free to tell their story within a five minute period, was recorded in 2004. Eternal Voices 3 “Youth Speaks,” panel discussions with youth from Oakland high schools, was conducted in 2004 and 2005.

Arrangement  
Arranged alphabetically by interviewee's last name.

Recordings 2002-2005
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Catlett, Frances Dunham</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Oral history interview with social worker and artist Frances Dunham Catlett discussing her family history, moving to the Bay Area in the 1940s, and her career as a social worker and artist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dukes, Josephine Bynum</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Oral history interview with educator Josephine Bynum Dukes discussing her early life growing up in Mississippi, her father's work as a minister in the Methodist church, and her career as a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Golden, Samuel</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Oral history interview with Samuel Lewis Golden discussing his family history, his attempts to integrate the Oakland fire department during the 1950s, and his experience as Oakland's first Black fire chief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Guice, Rev. Herbert</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Oral history interview with Rev. Herbert Guice, minister of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, and he discusses his experiences as a Baptist minister and long-time champion for housing, education, and civil rights for African Americans in the Bay Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>King (Pauline) family</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Pauline King discusses moving to California from Louisiana in 1944 while daughter Bernice King Tingle recounts growing up in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Oakland, California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mabry, Esther</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Oral history interview with noted businesswoman and club owner Esther Mabry discussing her childhood in Palestine, Texas, moving to Oakland, California during World War II, her restaurant and night club, Esther's Orbit Room, and changes in West Oakland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mack (Carl) family</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Valerie and Carl Mack Sr. detail their coming to California from Houston, Texas, to work for the Boy Scouts of America. Carl Mack Jr. discusses growing up near Reid’s Records and Rumford's Pharmacy. Aladrian Mack discusses her father, the first African American to sit on the Alameda County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pete, Dorothy Reid</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Oral history interview with Dorothy Reid Pete discussing her family's history in the Bay Area and her integration of the Oakland YWCA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eternal Voices oral history project
Recordings 2002-2005

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Box 2
Description
Tuskegee airman Garnett Quinn discusses his childhood in Oakland and Berkeley, his training as a Tuskegee airman, and his business career as a civil engineer and real estate agent in Stockton, California.

Box 2
Description
Loraine Cady Rickmond, founder of the Oakland Bay Area Chapter of Links, discusses her early life and family in Osewayo, Pennsylvania, her husband's experience as the first African American physician at Herrick Hospital, and her memories as a concert pianist.

Box 3
Description
Oral history interview with educator Audrey Gibson Robinson discussing her family's history in California, her memories of growing up in Oakland, California, and her experience as a teacher and docent.

Box 1
Royal, Alice Calbert [two tapes] 2007-08-21
Description
Alice Royal discusses her family's history, growing up in Alameda and historic Allensworth, California, the African American community in West Oakland, and attending nursing training at Highland Hospital.

Box 5
Scott (Ralph E.) family 2004
Description
Ralph E. Scott shares memories of his father, first African American locksmith in California. Other members discuss the Scott family business, the Golden Gate Key and Lock Company, and historical African American-owned businesses located on Seventh Street in Oakland, California.

Box 3
Shirek, Maudelle 2002 =https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000019
Description
Politician and activist Maudelle Shirek. Shirek discusses her childhood and family's history in Arkansas, and her career as a politician and activist in Berkeley, California.

Box 5
Tribble (George D.) family 2004
Description
The Tribble family speak about relocating to Oakland, California, in the 1970s and African American cultural contributions of the period. George D. Tribble and Reverend Valerie Miles-Tribble discuss their civic activities and involvement with the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame.

Box 2
Description
Oral history interview with former baseball player Harold Weathy Turley discussing his family history in Paso Robles, California and his experiences as a baseball player on integrated baseball teams in California in the 1930s.

Box 3
Description
Syndicated cartoonist Morrie Turner discusses his childhood in Oakland and Berkeley, California and inspiration for his cartoon strip Wee Pals.
**Box 3**  
**Villa, Ruth 2003**  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000023  
**Description**  
Activist and ‘mother of the Black Panthers’ Ruth Villa discusses her childhood in Louisiana and her long association with members of the Black Panther Party in Oakland.

**Box 5**  
**Wiley (Judith) family 2004**  
**Description**  
Judith Wiley recounts details of her schooling and upbringing in Oakland, her siblings, and their occupations.

**Box 5**  
**Williams (Sam Houston) 2004**  
**Description**  
The four-generation Williams family, long-time residents of Oakland, California, introduce themselves and their children.

**Box 2**  
**Willis, Allen 2003**  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000011  
**Description**  
African American filmmaker Allen Willis recounts his childhood in Washington D.C., his involvement with socialist and civil rights movements, and his accomplishments as a filmmaker.

**Box 5**  
**Wilson (Paul) and Lange (Geraldine) Families 2004**  
**Description**  
The Lange family, residing in Oakland since the late 1880's, discuss their lives and careers. Geraldine “Jerri” Lange, pioneering Bay Area TV broadcaster, producer, print journalist discusses her media career.

**Box 3**  
**Wright, Oscar Carl 2003**  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000021  
**Description**  
Educator and activist Oscar Carl Wright recounts his childhood growing up the child of sharecroppers in Coahoma County, Mississippi, attending Alcorn State University, and his advocacy for education equality for Black students in the Oakland Unified School District.

**Box 5**  
**Youth panel 2004**  
**Description**  
Six youths from Oakland High School, McClymonds High School, and Oakland Technical High School respond to the question “What is it like being a teenager in 2004?” and share their experiences and challenges growing up in Oakland, California.

**Box 5**  
**Youth panel 2005**  
**Description**  
Youth from Skyline High School, Fremont High School, Oakland Technical High School, and St. Mary’s College High School respond to the question “What is it like being a teenager in 2005?” and share viewpoints on growing up in Oakland, California.

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**Project documentation 2002-2005**

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<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Box 6:1</td>
<td>Eternal Voices 2002-2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 6:2</td>
<td>Eternal Voices II 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 6:3</td>
<td>Youth Speaks 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>