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Guide to the

**African American Migration and Southern Folkways in New York City  
Oral History Project**

1992-1995

Sc MG 405

Home to Harlem Project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

## Summary

**Title:** African American Migration and Southern Folkways in New York City Oral History Project

**Date:** 1992-1995

**Size:** 0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

**Source:** Gift, City Lore, 1995

**Revision History:** Finding aid updated by Allison Hughes.

**Abstract:** In 1992 and 1993 City Lore coordinated an oral history project focusing on the Northern migration experience and the maintenance of southern folkways within New York City's African-American church community. Fifty men and women who migrated from the South to New York during the post World War II years were interviewed. Topics covered in the interviews include how and why individuals left the South (generally for economic reasons, not blatant racism and violence); their experiences adjusting to life in New York; their retention of Southern cultural practices (food, especially soul food, gospel music, crafts including quilting, worship practices and church activities); the individuals' ongoing connections to the South through regular family visits, homecoming, etc.; and their thoughts on moving back to the South (or for those few who had already moved from New York, they compared their lives in both areas). The informants recount their positive relations with other black families and with white neighbors in the South and school experiences with strict yet caring black teachers. Neighborhood life in Harlem, central Brooklyn and parts of Queens during the 1940's through the early 1960's were recounted, as well as discussions covering life up to the early 1990's during the time of the interviews is included. The New York City interviews were conducted by City Lore Project Director Ray Allen and the Virginia interviews were conducted by Dr. Marilyn White.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], African American Migration and Southern Folkways in New York City Oral History Project, Sc MG 405, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

### Related Materials:

Also located at: City Lore

## **Scope and Content Note**

In 1992 and 1993 City Lore coordinated an oral history project focusing on the Northern migration experience and the maintenance of southern folkways within New York City's African-American church community. Fifty men and women who migrated from the South to New York during the post World War II years were interviewed. Topics covered in the interviews include how and why individuals left the South (generally for economic reasons, not blatant racism and violence); their experiences adjusting to life in New York; their retention of Southern cultural practices (food, especially soul food, gospel music, crafts including quilting, worship practices and church activities); the individuals' ongoing connections to the South through regular family visits, homecoming, etc.; and their thoughts on moving back to the South (or for those few who had already moved from New York, they compared their lives in both areas). The informants recount their positive relations with other black families and with white neighbors in the South and school experiences with strict yet caring black teachers. Neighborhood life in Harlem, central Brooklyn and parts of Queens during the 1940's through the early 1960's were recounted, as well as discussions covering life up to the early 1990's during the time of the interviews is included. The New York City interviews were conducted by City Lore Project Director Ray Allen and the Virginia interviews were conducted by Dr. Marilyn White.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American artisans  
African American children  
African American churches  
African American cooking  
African American families  
African American neighborhoods  
African American parents  
African American teachers and the community  
African American women  
African American youth  
African Americans -- Folklore  
African Americans -- Migrations -- History -- 20th century  
African Americans -- Religion  
African Americans -- Social conditions -- 1964-1975  
African Americans -- Social conditions -- 1975-  
African Americans -- Social conditions -- To 1964  
African Americans -- Social life and customs  
Folk music -- New York (State) -- New York  
Gospel music -- New York (State) -- New York  
Migration, Internal -- 20th century  
Migration, Internal -- United States -- History -- 20th century  
Rural-urban migration -- United States -- History -- 20th century  
Southern States -- Economic conditions

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Interviews  
Oral histories (literary works)

### **Geographic Names**

United States -- Race relations

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Baldwin, Yvonne Stallings interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 15 (15 pages)
- b. 1 f. 1 Barnett, Ted interview with Ray Allen 1993 March 17 (15 pages)
- b. 1 f. 1 Barnett, Carol interview with Ray Allen 1993 April 8  
22 pp.
- b. 1 f. 1 Bonaparte, Carolyn interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 26
- b. 1 f. 1 Bridges, Sadie interview with Ray Allen 1993 August 10 (24 pages)
- b. 1 f. 1 Bridges, Len interview with Ray Allen 1993 August 10
- b. 1 f. 2 Brown, John and Rosa interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 15 (27 pages)
- b. 1 f. 2 Bryant, Clarence Albert and Loretta interview with Marilyn White 1993 August 8  
(40 pages)
- b. 1 f. 2 Butler, Chester interview with Ray Allen 1992 October 2 (26 pages)
- b. 1 f. 2 Butler, Lillie Eikens and Reverend Robert interview with Ray Allen 1993 June 17  
(48 pages)
- b. 1 f. 3 Chaney, Fanny Lou Roberts interview with Ray Allen 1993 April 3 (31 pages)
- b. 1 f. 3 Clark, Georgia interview with Ray Allen 1993 May 27 (14 pages)
- b. 1 f. 3 Cloud, Lee interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 22 (43 pages)
- b. 1 f. 3 Cooper, Trannie Mae interview with Ray Allen 1993 March 2
- b. 1 f. 4 Davis (Faison), Lucille F. interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 13 (18 pages)
- b. 1 f. 4 Dobson, Bill interview with Ray Allen 1992 August 6 (19 pages)
- b. 1 f. 4 Dobson, Wanda Hickson interview with Ray Allen 1993 June 28 (33 pages)
- b. 1 f. 4 Evans, Vivian interview with Ray Allen 1993 April 12 (87 pages)
- b. 1 f. 4 Faison, Paul interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 14 (28 pages)
- b. 1 f. 4 Hall, Virginia interview with Ray Allen 1992 September 9 (33 pages)
- b. 1 f. 5 Ham, Fannie Mae Moore interview with Ray Allen 1992 October 10 (25 pages)
- b. 1 f. 5 Ham, Reverend Roosevelt interview with Ray Allen 1992 October 7 (27 pages)
- b. 1 f. 5 Hickson, Mary interview with Ray Allen 1992 December 10 (36 pages)
- b. 1 f. 5 Holmes, Eleanor Ledbetter interview with Ray Allen 1993 May 27 (36 pages)
- b. 1 f. 5 Johnson, Keith interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 6 (27 pages)
- b. 1 f. 6 Johnson, Lottie interview with Ray Allen 1993 June 23 (22 pages)
- b. 1 f. 6 Lee, George Henry interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 13 (34 pages)
- b. 1 f. 6 Lee, Patricia interview with Ray Allen 1992 August 13 (28 pages)
- b. 1 f. 6 Marion, Daniel interview with Ray Allen 1993 June 13 (33 pages)
- b. 1 f. 6 McGriff, Sadie interview with Ray Allen 1993 May 10 (31 pages)
- b. 1 f. 7 Miller, John and Mary Louise interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 15 (18 pages)
- b. 1 f. 7 Morgan, Eunice interview with Ray Allen 1993 April 12 (31 pages)
- b. 1 f. 7 Ray, Geneva M. interview with Ray Allen 1993 June 10 (31 pages)
- b. 1 f. 7 Ray, William interview with Ray Allen 1993 June 10 (21 pages)
- b. 1 f. 7 Rieves, Mollie interview with Ray Allen 1993 April 8 (29 pages)
- b. 2 f. 1 Rose, Gertrude Dobson Stallings interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 15 (30  
pages)
- b. 2 f. 1 Ruffin, Mary interview with Ray Allen 1993 March 15 (30 pages)

- b. 2 f. 1 Sanders, Helen Ruth interview with Ray Allen 1992 November 16 (27 pages)
- b. 2 f. 1 Sanders, James interview with Ray Allen 1992 November 16 (27 pages)
- b. 2 f. 1 Searles, James Step interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 28 (33 pages)
- b. 2 f. 2 Thompson, Deacon John and Deacon James Daniels interview with Ray Allen 1993 January 30 (32 pages)
- b. 2 f. 2 Thorb, James and Lenora interview with Ray Allen 1993 July 14 (37 pages)
- b. 2 f. 2 Walker, Clara interview with Ray Allen 1992 September 24 (33 pages)
- b. 2 f. 2 Webber, Marian interview with Ray Allen 1993 March 29 (21 pages)
- b. 2 f. 2 Woods, Sylvia interview with Ray Allen 1992 October 1 (20 pages)
- b. 2 f. 2 Wright, Marie interview with Ray Allen 1992 August 19 (24 pages)
- b. 2 f. 3 Final Narrative Report prepared for the Ford Foundation 1995 June