

# Oral Histories of Tompkins County

## *Archival Finding Aid*

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### **Black Experience in Tompkins County: Oral History Collection**

The *Black Experience in Tompkins County Oral History Collection* was established in 2021 to highlight interviews and stories in our archives that explore the experiences of Black, African-American, African diaspora, and African people living in Tompkins County. The topics of these interviews explore a wide range of experiences, community, and culture, and the stories shared may have been guided by the specific project the interview was recorded for. This collection will continue to expand as our Oral History archives continue to grow.

**Trigger warning(s):** systemic racism, antisemitism, sexism, descriptions of state sanctioned violence, child abuse, child sexual abuse, anti-Black sentiment, white supremacy.

*\*\*We are still processing this collection, and are creating accompanying transcripts and listing details for each interview.\*\**

#### *Interviews with:*

##### **Akua Akyea\* (15 minutes)**

Akua Akyea reflects on her childhood spent in Africa, Western Europe, and Canada and the lifelong connection with food that led her to opening Mama Loye's Cafe in Dryden. She also discusses her personal philosophy of the importance of growth and trying things outside of her comfort zone.

*Trigger warning(s): war, descriptions of state sanctioned violence*

- *Recorded 4/27/2019*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2019-4-27\_Akyea-Akua*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2019-4-27\_Akyea-Akua\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Generation to Generation: Immigration & Food Project in 2019.*

##### **Millicent Clarke-Maynard\* (38 minutes)**

Millicent Clarke-Maynard, who was born and raised in Harlem, NY, spent her career as an educator at the primary level in Ithaca, NY. In this interview, Ms. Clarke-Maynard reflects on her role in the community.

*Trigger warning: child abuse*

- *Recorded 10/16/2018*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2018-10-16\_Clarke-Maynard-Millicent*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2018-10-16\_Clarke-Maynard-Millicent\_Transcript*

- *Recorded as part of the Cornell Anthropology 1900 Project in 2018.*

**Kirby Edmonds\* (44 minutes)**

Kirby Edmonds discusses his ideas about humanity, violence, and peace, and his work in the Ithaca community addressing those topics.

*Trigger warning: descriptions of state sanctioned violence*

- *Recorded 10/16/2018*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2018-10-16\_Edmonds-Kirby*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2018-10-16\_Edmonds-Kirby\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Cornell Anthropology 1900 Project in 2018.*

**Candace Edwards\* (41 minutes)**

Candace Edwards, creator of Qinfock, an Ithaca-based festival that celebrates art made by the QTPOC (Queer and Trans People of Color) community, reflects on her childhood, time in college, and organization of the Qinfock Festival. She speaks about her work with the People's Hurricane Relief Fund in New Orleans during college and her future hopes for Qinfock, which started in 2019.

- *Recorded 10/31/2019*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2019-10-31\_Edwards-Candace*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2019-10-31\_Edwards-Candace\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Local Sisters of Change Project in 2019.*

**Marcia Fort Baum\* (48 minutes)**

Marcia Fort Baum reflects on the experiences that have informed her work in the community empowering young people with the Ithaca Youth Bureau and the Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC). She emphasizes the importance of encouraging others and pointing out their strengths, which put her on the path of serving the community as a long-time leader of GIAC.

*Trigger warning: anti-Black sentiment*

- *Recorded 10/22/2019*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2019-10-22\_Fort-Baum-Marcia*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2019-10-22\_Fort-Baum-Marcia\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Local Sisters of Change Project in 2019.*

**Addisu Gebre\* (54 minutes)**

Addisu Gebre discusses opening Enat Ethiopian Cuisine, a business that sells at the Ithaca Farmers Market and caters in Ithaca, with his wife. He also speaks on his education in Ethiopia and at Cornell University and his work in both countries as an engineer.

- *Recorded 4/20/2019*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2019-4-20\_Gebre-Addisu*
- *Transcript: OHTC\_2019-4-20\_Gebre-Addisu\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Generation to Generation: Immigration & Food Project in 2019.*

### **Jennifer “Jenny” Graham\***

Jenny Graham discusses her experience working at a segregated school in Georgia while studying elementary education at Fort Valley State College. She reflects on moving to Ithaca in 1965, working at Cornell, and belonging to Club Essence, a social group that promoted unity among Black women, as one of its first members.

*Trigger warning(s): systemic racism, child sexual abuse, anti-Black sentiment, sexism*

- *Recorded 12/3/2017*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2017-12-3\_Graham-Jenny*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2017-12-3\_Graham-Jenny\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Cornell Anthropology 1900 Project in 2017.*

### **James “Jim” Gibbs, Jr.\* (70 minutes)**

Jim Gibbs reflects on growing up in Syracuse and Ithaca, attending Ithaca High School, and studying at Cornell University, where he worked on a study on ethnic relations in Elmira, New York. Gibbs was the first Black man to graduate from Ithaca High School and Cornell University and the first Black student to get a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Harvard.

*Trigger warning(s): systemic racism, antisemitism*

- *Recorded 8/28/2015*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2015-8-28\_Gibbs-Jim*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2015-8-28\_Transcript*

### **Leslyn McBean-Clairborne\* (44 minutes)**

Leslyn McBean Clairborne discusses how her passion for teaching and equity took her from working in the Ithaca City School District to working as a case worker and trainer to working with the Southside Community Center and Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC). She also speaks to her personal philosophy of equity and justice.

*Trigger warning: white supremacy*

- *Recorded 10/24/2019*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2019-10-24\_McBean-Clairborne-Leslyn*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2019-10-24\_McBean-Clairborne-Leslyn\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Local Sisters of Change Project in 2019.*

### **Jacqueline “Jackie” Melton Scott\* (87 minutes)**

Jackie Melton Scott (aka Mama Scott) reflects on her life-long passion for equity and justice, from her organizing efforts in junior high to establishing the Cambridge Montessori School. Before her death in 2019, Jackie Melton Scott worked as the Family Literacy Facilitator at Beverly J. Martin Elementary School.

*Trigger warning(s): systemic racism, sexism*

- *Recorded 11/4/2008*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2008-11-4\_Scott-Melton-Jackie*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2008-11-4\_Scott-Melton-Jackie\_Transcript*

**Dr. Nia Nunn\* (48 minutes)**

Dr. Nia Nunn, President of the Board of Directors for Southside Community Center, speaks to the importance of Black spaces in her childhood, the Southside community of Ithaca in particular. She reflects on her foundation in Ithaca, her work in the Ithaca community surrounding education and the Black community, and the people who inspire her.

- *Recorded 10/31/2019*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2019-10-31\_Nunn-Nia*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2019-10-30\_Nunn-Nia\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Local Sisters of Change Project in 2019.*

**Karen Yearwood\* (37 minutes)**

Karen Yearwood discusses the mission of the Village at Ithaca and her work in the organization, from volunteering upon moving to Ithaca in 2005 to becoming the Executive Director in 2014. She discusses the tactics the Village uses to help students succeed and the limitations on their work and the advancement of equity in the Ithaca City School District.

- *Recorded 10/18/2018*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2018-10-18\_Yearwood-Karen*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2018-10-18\_Yearwood-Karen\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the Cornell Anthropology 1900 Project in 2018.*

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