



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Louise Daniel Hutchinson
Oral History Interviews, 1987

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Washington, D.C.
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Louise Daniel Hutchinson Oral History Interviews
Identifier:	Record Unit 9558
Date:	1987
Extent:	4 audiotapes (Reference copies).
Creator::	Hutchinson, Louise Daniel, interviewee
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9558, Louise Daniel Hutchinson Oral History Interviews

Use Restriction

Restricted. The interviews are open to researchers but may not be cited, quoted or reproduced without the permission of Louise Daniel Hutchinson prior to 2025. Contact SIHistory@si.edu for more details.

Historical Note

Louise Daniel Hutchinson (1928-2014), was Director of the Research Center at the Anacostia Museum from 1974 to 1986. Born on June 3, 1928 in Ridge, Maryland, she grew up in Washington, D.C. Her parents, Constance Eleanor Hazel and Victor Hugo Daniel, were teachers and active in African American community affairs. She attended Miner Teachers College, Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College, and Howard University, where she received a B.A. degree in 1951 and pursued additional graduate studies in sociology. After her marriage to Ellsworth W. Hutchinson, Jr., she taught as a substitute teacher while raising their six children.

In 1971, Hutchinson began her Smithsonian career as a researcher at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG), where she worked with the William E. Harmon and Winold Reiss collections of portraits of African Americans and on the exhibit, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*. After her 1972 appointment as an Education Research Specialist, she focused on the creation of cooperative programs between the NPG and the District of Columbia Public Schools and the development of a curriculum on the history of the District of Columbia.

Hutchinson left the Smithsonian in 1973 to become an Education Research Specialist for the National Park Service at the Frederick Douglass Home in Anacostia. At the Douglass Home, she trained staff to use artifacts and historical writings to enhance interpretation of the site.

In 1974, Hutchinson was appointed Historian and Director of Research at the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum [renamed Anacostia Community Museum (ACM) in 2006]. At the museum, Hutchinson was responsible for research in support of exhibits, including *The Anacostia Story: 1608-1930*, *Out of Africa: From West African Kingdoms to Colonization*, and *Black Women: Achievements Against the Odds*. During her tenure, Hutchinson also worked to define a mission for the ANM; increase dialogue with the museums on the Mall; build a permanent collection; establish close ties with the local community; and create exhibits which responded to community needs and the changing mission of the ANM. She developed the ANM's program of recording community history through oral history and was a catalyst in the formation of the Anacostia Historical Society. Hutchinson retired from the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in 1986.

Introduction

The Smithsonian Institution Archives began its Oral History Program in 1973. The purpose of the program is to supplement the written documentation of the Archives' record and manuscript collections with an Oral History Collection, focusing on the history of the Institution, research by its scholars, and contributions of its staff. Program staff conduct interviews with current and retired Smithsonian staff and others who have made significant contributions to the Institution. There are also interviews conducted by researchers or students on topics related to the history of the Smithsonian or the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

Hutchinson was interviewed for the Oral History Collection because of her pioneering career in black history at the National Portrait Gallery and Anacostia Neighborhood Museum. Additional information about Hutchinson can be found in the Records of the Anacostia Community Museum, which are also housed in the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Hutchinson's personal papers will be available to researchers at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Descriptive Entry

The Louise Daniel Hutchinson Interviews were conducted for the Smithsonian Institution Archives in January and July of 1987 by Anne McPherson Rogers, a graduate student at the University of Maryland, as part of course requirements for an oral history seminar. The interviews discuss Hutchinson's family history, youth, education, work at the NPG and Frederick Douglass Home, career at the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, and reminiscences of colleagues such as John R. Kinard, S. Dillon Ripley, and Lawrence Erskine Thomas, c. 1928-1986. The interviews consist of 3.0 hours of tape and 77 pages of transcript.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- African Americans -- History
- African Americans -- Portraits
- African Americans -- Portraits
- African Americans -- Social life and customs
- African Americans -- Washington (D.C.)
- Art

Education
Historians
Interviews
Museum exhibits
Museums -- Educational aspects
Museums -- Educational aspects
Museums -- Public relations
Oral history
Teachers

Types of Materials:

Audiotapes
Transcripts

Names:

Anacostia Historical Society
Anacostia Museum
Anacostia Neighborhood Museum
Black Women: Achievement Against the Odds (Exhibition) (1984: Washington, D.C.)
Daniel, Victor Hugo
Frederick Douglass Memorial Home
Harmon, William E.
Hazel, Constance Eleanor
Howard University
Hutchinson, Ellsworth W., Jr.
Hutchinson, Louise Daniel
Kinard, John, 1936-1989
Miner Teachers College
National Portrait Gallery (Smithsonian Institution)
Out of Africa: From West African Kingdoms to Colonization (Exhibition) (1979: Washington, D.C.)
Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College
Public Schools of the District of Columbia
Reiss, Winold
Ripley, S. Dillon (Sidney Dillon), 1913-2001
Rogers, Anne McPherson, interviewer
The Anacostia Story: 1608-1930 (Exhibition) (1977-1978: Washington, D.C.)
The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1770-1800 (Exhibition) (1973: Washington, D.C.)
Thomas, Larry Erskine
Thomas, Larry Erskine
United States. National Park Service

Geographic Names:

Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (Washington, D.C.)
Ridge (Md.)
Washington (D.C.) -- History

Container Listing

Interviews

Interviews

Interview 1: January 21, 1987

Interviews

Covers her family background, early life, education, work at the NPG and Frederick Douglass Home, and her initial involvement with the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, c. 1928-1974, including: Family background; childhood in the Shaw district of Washington, D.C.; mother's community involvement and acquaintance with such noted figures as Mary McLeod Bethune, William Henry Hastie and Carter G. Woodson; enrollment at Miner Teachers College, especially the influence of Dr. Paul Phillips Cooke; recollections of segregation and community action in 1940s, including sit-in at Hecht's Department Store; attendance at U.S. Supreme Court hearings of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas; transfer to Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College in Hempstead, Texas; reminiscences of her father's interest in history and her parents life at Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama; transfer to Howard University in Washington, D.C., including classes with Ralph Bunche, John Hope Franklin and E. Franklin Frazier; marriage to Ellsworth W. Hutchinson and family life in Southeast Washington, D.C.; impact of assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., on her life; initial position at the NPG with James R. Vivian, III, and Robert N. Works conducting research on the William E. Harmon and Winold Reiss collections; appointment as Education Research Specialist at NPG, especially outreach programs with District of Columbia; collaboration with scholars such as Sidney Kaplan and Letitia Woods Brown; responsibilities as Education Research Specialist at Frederick Douglass Home, especially training of docents in the use of artifacts and historical documentation to enhance interpretation; involvement with the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum Advisory Committee and friendships with Zora Martin Felton and John Kinard; emergence of the ANM as an outlet for African American community concerns; support for the ANM from S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; and growing pains of the ANM, especially its struggle to achieve permanent status and acquire collections.

[Digital Content: Anacostia Historical Society members pose in front of the Carver Theater, which served as the first home for the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, now known as the Anacostia Community Museum, 1967. Louise Daniel Hutchinson, historian at the museum, is the seventh person from the left in the front row. \[Image no. 92-1705\]](#)

[Digital Content: Children in the forefront are painting and others are staging a play at the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, now known as the Anacostia Community Museum, c. 1970. \[Image no. 92-3568\]](#)

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 1-36, of audiotape recording, 1.5 hours.

Interviews

Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes

- Reference copies: 2 audiocassette tapes

Interviews

Interview 2: July 14, 1987

Interviews

Covers her career at the ANM and the status of the ANM in the Smithsonian Institution, c. 1973-1987, including: The multi-faceted role of the ANM, especially such exhibits as *The Anacostia Story: 1608-1930*, *The Frederick Douglass Years*, and *Out of Africa: From West African Kingdoms to Colonization*; establishment of a permanent mission statement for the ANM focusing on the study of African American history and culture; role of ANM and SI administrators in developing the mission statement, especially Julian T. Euell, Phillip S. Hughes, John R. Kinard and S. Dillon Ripley; buildings that housed the ANM; debate over permanency of the ANM; new building for ANM at Fort Stanton; influence of S. Dillon Ripley in expanding museum topics and audiences to include minorities; problems resulting from being labeled a "black" museum; collaboration with SI scholars and administrators on the Mall for such projects as *Portraits in Color* and *O Write My Name* exhibits; efforts to borrow and/or acquire objects for ANM exhibits; use of artifacts and other documentation in exhibits at the NPG and ANM; effects of the lack of a comprehensive collection, curators and registrars on the programs of the ANM; efforts to develop support for ANM and exhibits on African-Americana; varying levels of support from SI administrators; efforts to initiate African American studies at SI; support from Julian T. Euell; efforts to increase responsiveness to the concerns of the local community; problems raised by acquisition of artifacts for the exhibit, *The Anacostia Story*; establishment of an oral history collection; assistance from George Washington University, especially its School of Law and Department of Urban Studies; founding of the Anacostia Historical Society by John Tetrault and Hutchinson to continue community interest in local history and the ANM; abandonment of concept of ANM as a storefront museum and mini-version of museums on the Mall; and efforts to stimulate community involvement with the ANM.

[Digital Content: The new Anacostia Exhibits Center of the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum allowed the museum to design and produce exhibitions and also to provide training for minority groups, 1975. \[Image no. 92-1788\]](#)

Interviews

Transcript, pp. 38-77, of audiotape recording, 1.5 hours.

Interviews

Audio Recordings of Interviews: Total Recording Time: 1.5 hours

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 5" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Reference copies: 2 audiocassette tapes