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## William S. M. Banks, From beginnings in the Sip

1995

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ABSTRACT

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**Background on William S. M. Banks**

BIOGHIST.

Born in rural Amite County, Miss., on Dec. 18, 1914, educated by his mother, a teacher who had prepared with one year at Alcorn State. Lived near Centerville. Painful experiences being inculcated in racial hierarchy Religious conversion during revival Move to NO after double tragedy of losing their mule and then their house to fire, no prospects in Amite County. Father found seasonal work in cane fields and then as stevedore in NO. Kept connections to Centerville for several years, returning in summers, even as other extended family moved north to Detroit and elsewhere. During summers as they grew, were often sent to live with relatives in the country during summer, working to earn their keep. Started in second grade in NO and worked through junior high and high school. played football, worked delivery for pharmacy Fall 1933 enrolled at nou, now defunct. Depression led to extreme unemployment among Black workers, father exemplified last hired, first fired. Began to drink with fellow union members, though never had before. Wm and bros kept family afloat by trying to check fathers spending and jobs, still had to move for eviction for not paying rent eight times before ending up in a Federal low rent housing. Won state championship in football 1934, and NOU merged with Straight University the next year to form Dillard University. Near end of school year in 1936, received letter from HM Bond to take part in summer work camp sponsored by Society of Friends. With support from New Deal programs, went to camp in Dillonvale, Ohio, a mining community where did work w mostly white students from the eastern college, which led to being asked to serve as counselor at other camps. Camps and working with white colleagues eventually eased the "deep seated antagonism towards whites which had been engendered by early experiences." Graduated 1937 and met Horace Mann Bond at celebratory dinner with the president of Dillard. After graduation, worked with father as a stevedore while vainly seeking employment to teach school in a Depression economy. Bond called and asked if he would like to attend grad school at Fisk and furthermore obtained a National Youth Authority grant to pay his way, even arranging a ride for him to Nashville. Studying a year, then worked for a year to earn enough to return and complete MA in Sociology, June 1940 Applied for job at Fort Valley State, taken over by the state in 1939 and now headed by HMB.

## Scope of collection

SCOPE.

## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Gift of Bil Banks, Oct. 2017.

### Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Aug. 2017.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use (More information )

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## Search terms

### Subjects

Employers' associations--Massachusetts  
Massachusetts--Economic conditions--20th century  
Smith Art Enterprises  
Smith, Harriet D.

### Contributors

Banks, William S. M. [main entry]

### Genres and formats

Autobiographies

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