



# Guide to the Allen Building Takeover Oral History collection, 1985

---

This collection guide was produced in **2016**.

This PDF version was created on **May 1, 2026**.

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

[askRL@duke.edu](mailto:askRL@duke.edu)

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

---

## Table of Contents

---

<a href="#">Summary</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Background</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Administrative Information</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Related Materials</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Names and Subjects</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Collection Inventory</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Armstrong, Brenda</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Budd, Louis</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Cahow, Clark</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Campbell, Tom</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Cell, John</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Cook, Samuel</a> .....	9
<a href="#">DeMik, Harry</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Griffith, William</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Hammond, Samuel</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Kerckhoff, Alan</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Newsome, Clarence</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Pye, Kenneth</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Semans, Mary</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Turner, Bill</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Watson, Richard</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Williams, Fred</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Williams, Janice</a> .....	12
<a href="#">Unidentified</a> .....	13

## Summary

---

**Collection Title:**

Allen Building Takeover Oral History collection, 1985

**Creator:**

Yannella, Don

**Abstract:**

On February 13, 1969, Duke University students in the Afro-American Society occupied the the main administration building to bring attention to the needs of Black students. These needs included an African American studies department, a Black student union, and increased enrollment and financial support for Black students. This and subsequent events became known as the Allen Building Takeover. The Allen Building Takeover Oral History Collection includes oral histories conducted by Duke student Don Yannella in 1985 leading to his thesis Race Relations at Duke University and the Allen Building Takeover. The collection includes the original interview tapes, transcripts of the some of the interviews, and copies of several of the original recordings.

**Extent:**

1.5 Linear Feet

**Language:**

Materials are in English.

**Collection ID:**

UA.31.04.0016

**Permalink:**

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1v70f>

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Allen Building Takeover Oral History Collection, Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## **Background**

---

### **Scope and Content**

The Allen Building Takeover Oral History Collection includes materials collected by Duke student Don Yannella while writing his senior thesis in 1985. The oral histories offer first-hand accounts of and reactions to the Takeover from Duke students, staff, administrators, and members of the Durham community.

The interviews were recorded on cassette tapes, and these original tapes are in Box 1. Access copies and transcripts for many of the interviews are included in the collection.

### **Biographical/Historical**

On the morning of February 13, 1969, between 50 and 75 Black students entered the Allen Building and proceeded to barricade and occupy it. They renamed the building the Malcolm X Liberation School. The students issued a list of demands to the administration, [which included an accredited African-American Studies Department, a Black dorm, a Black student union, an increase in enrollment and financial support for Black students, protection from police harassment, and better working conditions for non-academic staff of the University]. Provost Marcus Hobbs read a statement to the students at about 3:30 PM, urging them to leave the building within one hour to begin a peaceful discussion of the issues. Sometime after 5 o'clock, after a warning from Provost Hobbs that they would face legal ramifications for staying, the students decided to exit. Although the exit was peaceful, a large crowd of mostly white students had gathered outside the building during the day, and this crowd and the police became entangled. The police fired tear gas on the students.

Immediately following the police action, students met to discuss how to proceed. Many students and faculty were upset by the administration's support of the police action; other students and faculty felt that the takeover of the Allen Building was lawless and disruptive. Those who supported the Takeover called for a three day strike on campus and offered alternative classes. Students opposed to the Takeover urged fellow students to attend classes as normal. The administration attempted to calm the campus and address some of the demands posed by the Takeover participants. President Knight addressed Duke on the campus radio station, WDBS.

Afro-American Society and administration members met several times to begin forming an African-American Studies program. The two parties could not reach an agreement on what type of committee should oversee the program. On March 10, a group of students marched to downtown Durham along with students from other colleges to protest the situation. The next day, March

11, 1969, students again went to downtown Durham and marched with other students and Durham residents. The march turned violent, with store windows smashed and other damage to property. The mayor put a curfew on the city for several days.

Dozens of Duke's Black students threatened to leave campus following the lack of agreement on the African-American Studies program. They instead planned to attend the Malcolm X Liberation University, a newly-developed school led by community activist Howard Fuller. However, the students soon reversed their decision and decided to remain at Duke University. On March 19, a University Hearing Committee found the students who had occupied the building guilty of violating university regulations. All defendants were sentenced to one year of probation.

In 1985, Duke student Don Yannella conducted oral history interviews with a number of individuals at Duke who were involved with or present during the events of the Allen Building Takeover. He used the information gathered in these interviews to write a senior honors thesis entitled "Race Relations at Duke University and the Allen Building Takeover."

[Taken from text written by Valerie Gillispie as part of the web exhibit, Campus Protest: Duke University, 1967-1969.]

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## **Administrative Information**

---

### **Publication Statement**

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

[askRL@duke.edu](mailto:askRL@duke.edu)

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

### **Access Restrictions**

Access restricted. Portions of this collection are restricted due to the absence of a release form from the persons interviewed. Contact Research Services for more information.

Access note. Collection contains original audiovisual items that need to be reformatted before use. Contact Research Services for access.

### **Acquisition Information**

The Allen Building Takeover Oral History Collection was received by University Archives as a gift in 1985.

### **Processing Information**

Processed by University Archives staff as part of the Allen Building Takeover Collection.

Materials arranged and described as separate collection by Tracy M. Jackson, March 2016.

Accession described in this collection guide: UA1985-101.

### **Use Restrictions**

Copyright for Official University records is held by Duke University; all other copyright is retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## **Related Materials**

---

### **Related Material**

[Race relations at Duke University and the Allen Building takeover](#), Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Allen Building Takeover Collection, Duke University Archives](#), David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Names and Subjects

---

- African American student movements
- African American students -- North Carolina -- Durham
- African Americans -- North Carolina -- Durham -- Political activity
- African Americans -- North Carolina -- Durham -- Social conditions
- African Americans -- North Carolina -- History -- 1964-
- Civil rights demonstrations -- North Carolina -- Durham
- College students, Black -- North Carolina
- Race relations
- Student participation in administration
- Students -- Political activity
- Students, Black -- North Carolina
- Oral histories
- Sound recordings
- Armstrong, Brenda E.
- Cahow, Clark R.
- Cell, John Whitson
- Cook, Samuel DuBois, 1928-2017
- DeMik, Harry
- Duke University -- Administration
- Afro-American Society (Duke University)
- Duke University -- Buildings -- History
- Duke University -- Students -- Political activity
- Duke University -- Students -- Social conditions
- Griffith, William
- Hammond, Sam
- Kerckhoff, Alan C.
- Newsome, Clarence G. (Clarence Geno), 1950-
- Pye, A. Kenneth
- Semans, Mary Duke Biddle Trent
- Turner, William Clair, 1948-
- Watson, Richard L., 1914-2000
- Williams, Fred J.
- Williams, Janice

---

## Collection Inventory

---

### Armstrong, Brenda, January 31, 1985

Brenda Armstrong Interview: Cassette 4, Side  
A, January 31, 1985

Box 1

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

---

Brenda Armstrong Interview: Transcript,  
January 31, 1985

Box 4

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

**Budd, Louis, circa 1985**

Budd Louis Interview: Transcript, circa 1985

Box 3

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

**Cahow, Clark, January 23, 1985**

Clark Cahow Interview: Cassette 3, Side A,  
January 23, 1985

Box 1

Clark Cahow Interview: cassette use copy, Side  
A, January 23, 1985, copied 11/03

Box 2

Clark Cahow Interview: Transcript, January 23,  
1985

Box 3

Clark Cahow Interview: CD use copy, January  
23, 1985

Box 2

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

**Campbell, Tom, February 8, 1985**

Tom Campbell Interview: Cassette 5, Side A,  
February 8, 1985

Box 1

Tom Campbell Interview: Transcript, February  
8, 1985

Box 3

Tom Campbell Interview: CD use copy, February  
8, 1985

Box 2

### **Scope and Contents**

CD not working.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Cell, John, March 7, 1985**

John Cell Interview: Cassette 12, Side A, March 7, 1985 Box 1

---

John Cell Interview: CD use copy, March 7, 1985 Box 2

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Cook, Samuel, March 1, 1985**

Samuel Cook Interview pt. 1: Cassette 8, Side A, March 1, 1985 Box 1

#### **Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

---

Samuel Cook Interview pt. 2: Cassette 8, Side B, March 1, 1985 Box 1

#### **Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **DeMik, Harry, February 12, 1985**

Harry DeMik Interview: Cassette 5, Side B, February 12, 1985 Box 1

---

Harry DeMik Interview: Transcript, February 12, 1985 Box 3

---

Harry DeMik Interview: CD use copy, February 12, 1985 Box 2

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Griffith, William, March 5, 1985**

William Griffith Interview: Cassette 11, Side A,  
March 5, 1985 Box 1

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Hammond, Samuel, February 13, 1985**

Samuel Hammond Interview: Cassette 6, Side  
B, February 13, 1985 Box 1

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

---

Samuel Hammond Interview: CD, February 13,  
1985 Box 2

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Kerckhoff, Alan, March 4, 1985**

Alan Kerckhoff Interview: Cassette 10, Side B,  
March 4, 1985 Box 1

---

Alan Kerckhoff Interview: cassette use copy,  
Side B, March 4, 1985, copied 11/03 Box 2

---

Alan Kerckhoff Interview: CD use copy, March  
4, 1985 Box 2

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Newsome, Clarence, January 31, 1985**

Clarence Newsome Interview: Cassette 4, Side  
B, January 31, 1985 Box 1

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

---

Clarence Newsome Interview: Transcript,  
January 31, 1985

Box 4

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

**Pye, Kenneth, March 2, 1985**

Kenneth Pye Interview pt. 1: Cassette 9, Side A,  
March 2, 1985

Box 1

Kenneth Pye Interview pt. 1: CD use copy,  
March 2, 1985

Box 2

Kenneth Pye Interview pt. 2: Cassette 9, Side B,  
March 2, 1985

Box 1

Kenneth Pye Interview pt. 2: CD use copy,  
March 2, 1985

Box 2

Kenneth Pye Interview: Transcript, March 2,  
1985

Box 3

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

**Semans, Mary, March 11, 1985**

Mary Semans Interview: Cassette 13, Side A,  
March 11, 1985

Box 1

Mary Semans Interview: cassette use copy, Side  
A, March 11, 1985, copied 11/03

Box 2

Mary Semans Interview: CD use copy, March  
11, 1985

Box 2

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

**Turner, Bill, January 23, 1985**

---

Bill Turner Interview: Cassette 3, Side B, January 23, 1985	Box 1
Bill Turner Interview: cassette use copy, Side B, January 23, 1985, copied 11/03	Box 2
Bill Turner Interview: Transcript, January 23, 1985	Box 3
Bill Turner Interview: CD use copy, January 23, 1985	Box 2

---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Watson, Richard, March 4, 1985**

---

Richard Watson Interview: Cassette 10, Side A, March 4, 1985	Box 1
Richard Watson Interview: cassette use copy, Side A, March 4, 1985, copied 11/03	Box 2
Richard Watson Interview: CD use copy, March 4, 1985	Box 2

---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Williams, Fred, February 15, 1985**

---

Fred Williams Interview: Cassette 7, Side A, February 15, 1985	Box 1
---	-------

---

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

---

---

Fred Williams Interview: Transcript, February 15, 1985	Box 4
---	-------

---

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### **Williams, Janice, February 13, 1985**

---

Janice Williams Interview: Cassette 6, Side A, February 13, 1985	Box 1
Janice Williams Interview: Transcript, February 13, 1985	Box 3
Janice Williams Interview: CD use copy, February 13, 1985	Box 2

---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

### Unidentified, undated

---

Unidentified Interviewee: Cassette 1, Side A, undated	Box 1
--	-------

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

---

---

Unidentified Interviewee: Cassette 2, Side A, undated	Box 1
--	-------

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

---

---

Unidentified Interviewee: Cassette 11, Side B, undated	Box 1
---	-------

**Access Restrictions:**

Interview restricted due to lack of signed release form from the interviewee.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)