

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr.

Overview of the Collection

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | McClinton, Curtis, 1913-2012 |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr., |
| Dates: | August 28, 2002 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2002 |
| Physical Description: | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:15:27). |
| Abstract: | State senator The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr. (1913 - 2012) is a former Kansas state legislator who passed the first civil rights act in twentieth-century Kansas. McClinton also holds the honor of being Kansas' first African American state senator. McClinton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 28, 2002, in Wichita, Kansas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2002_164 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Political activist Curtis McClinton was born in Braggs, Oklahoma, in 1913. He credits his father with exposing him at a young age to ideas of community and responsibility. The political rallies and courtroom proceedings McClinton attended as a young boy ignited within him an awareness of democracy, change and civic participation. McClinton experienced first hand the inequitable conditions of segregated schooling. He attended a segregated elementary school in Poteau and graduated from the segregated Manuel Training High School in Muskogee, Oklahoma. McClinton continued his education at Langston University, receiving his B.A. in Education in 1937.

Soon after moving to Wichita, Kansas in 1943, McClinton began his political career. He served one term as the President of Wichita's NAACP chapter before pursuing a political career. In 1956, McClinton was elected to Kansas' House of Representatives. During his first of two terms, McClinton worked to pass a public accommodations law for the state of Kansas to ensure equal treatment for all races in public places, such as restaurants, hotels and other businesses. McClinton also holds the honor of being Kansas' first African American state senator, tirelessly working throughout his 1964-1968 term to combat social inequities.

McClinton was an active member of a group called Urban Housing Management and Development Council. The Kansas African American Museum selected McClinton as one of the recipients of its Doris Kerr Larkins Heritage Award. This honor is presented in recognition of outstanding service to the community.

Curtis McClinton was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 28, 2002.

Curtis McClinton passed away on June 27, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 28, 2002, in Wichita, Kansas, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. State senator The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr. (1913 - 2012) is a former Kansas state legislator who passed the first civil rights act in twentieth-century Kansas. McClinton also holds the honor of being Kansas' first African American state senator.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

McClinton, Curtis, 1913-2012

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

McClinton, Curtis, 1913-2012--Interviews

State governments--Officials and employees--Interviews

African American legislators--Kansas--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Kansas

Occupations:

State Senator

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr., August 28, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr., Section
A2002_164_001_001, TRT: 0:29:15 ?

Curtis McClinton describes his family background. McClinton was born in Braggs, Oklahoma on March 20, 1913 to Waymon and Agnes McClinton. His father was born in Evansville, South Carolina. Her mother was raised by a relative in Muskogee, Oklahoma. McClinton's parents married when his mother was fifteen and his father was seventeen, and the family moved to Poteau, Oklahoma when McClinton was three years old. McClinton's father worked as a cook at Jenkin's Hotel and had entrepreneurial ventures on the side. McClinton credits his father with exposing him at a young age to ideas of community and responsibility. The political rallies and courtroom proceedings McClinton attended as a young boy ignited within him an awareness of democracy, change and civic participation. McClinton experienced firsthand the inequitable conditions of segregated schooling. He attended a segregated elementary school in Poteau and graduated from the segregated Manuel Training High School in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

State governments--Officials and employees--Interviews.

African American legislators--Kansas--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr., Section
A2002_164_001_002, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Curtis McClinton describes his parents and his activities as a child. He remembers that his parents were positive, active people who encouraged his education. At school, McClinton was initially shy and struggled with reading. However, by high school, he was a good student and a member of the debate team. As a child, he liked to hunt, fish, and play baseball. He recalls celebrating Juneteenth and the 4th of July in his community. After graduating from Manuel Training High School in Poteau, Oklahoma, McClinton attended Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma where he aspired to be a teacher. He also liked to read the congressional record and practice speeches. After college, he worked as a teacher and a carpenter before buying his own store in Wichita, Kansas. He married Mary Ella McClinton in 1936 in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and one year later, they had a son, Curtis McClinton, Jr.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr., Section
A2002_164_001_003, TRT: 0:31:27 ?

Curtis McClinton talks about his career in politics. Soon after moving to Wichita, Kansas in 1943, he served one term as the President of Wichita's NAACP chapter and vice-president of the Kansas NAACP before pursuing a political career. In 1956, McClinton was elected to Kansas' House of Representatives as a black Democrat in a Republican-controlled state. During his first of two terms, McClinton worked to pass House Bill 54, a public accommodations law for the State of Kansas to ensure equal treatment for all races in public places, including restaurants, hotels and other businesses. He gave a forty-five minute speech and it passed the House and the Governor signed it into law in 1958. Unfortunately, the public did not hear about the law passage and it was not as effective as intended. McClinton was Kansas' first African American state senator and worked tirelessly throughout his 1964-1968 term to combat social inequities.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr., Section
A2002_164_001_004, TRT: 0:28:35 ?

Curtis McClinton describes serving in the Kansas State House of Representatives despite only being paid \$3.00 per day during the 1950s. McClinton was elected due to support from the unions, churches, African

Americans, and the Democratic Party. He went on to serve two terms in Kansas State Senate. While working in the state legislature, his son, Curtis McClinton, Jr. rose to the height of his football career with the Kansas City Chiefs and played in two Super Bowls in 1967 and 1970. In his later years, McClinton learned to play the saxophone. Although his mother died before she could see him elected to the legislature, McClinton speaks of his pleasure in that his father lived long enough to see his success. McClinton recounts the speech he delivered in support of the civil rights legislation he wrote and passed in the late 1950s. McClinton wants to be remembered for his work in civil rights and his sense of humor.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Curtis McClinton, Sr., Section A2002_164_001_005, TRT: 0:16:30 ?

Curtis McClinton narrates his photographs.