

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Florida Yeldell

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Yeldell, Florida, 1915-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell,
Dates:	December 5, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:57:15).
Abstract:	History professor Florida Yeldell (1915 - 2006) has taught history at a number of colleges throughout Texas, including Prairie View A&M University, Jarvis Christian College, and Texas College. Yeldell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 5, 2002, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_221
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator Florida Jackson Yeldell lived out her father's dream in her life and career. Born in Georgetown, South Carolina, on January 2, 1915, Yeldell grew up in the town until she went to boarding school at Morris College at age fifteen. Yeldell remained until she earned her A.B. in English from the school in 1936 before moving to Andrews, South Carolina, where she taught fifth- and sixth-graders for two years.

Yeldell's father, a mail carrier, told his daughter of dreaming about returning to school to study history, which fascinated him because their Georgetown neighborhood was particularly rich in it. During the Great Depression, Yeldell did just that, receiving a scholarship from the National Youth Administration to study history at Howard University, where she earned an M.A. in 1941. She worked for the government during World War II and then embarked on a long career teaching at colleges in Texas. She first taught social studies at Butler College and taught U.S. history at Jarvis Christian College and Texas College. Yeldell finally settled down at Prairie View A&M, where she taught courses in Western civilization, U.S. history and social studies until retiring in 1979. Even after retiring, she continued to teach, working at Houston Community College, and lived in Texas for ten years before returning to her childhood home of South Carolina.

In retirement, Yeldell keeps active by volunteering to teach history. She gave guided tours at Brook Green Garden and worked with the Friends of the Library. Under the aegis of the Senior Scholars, Yeldell and David Drayton, principal of the last black-only school in Georgetown County, began teaching a course on the history of blacks in Georgetown County. For her work in teaching the history her father loved, Yeldell has been honored by Coastal Carolina University.

Yeldell passed away on May 25, 2006, with one son, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Florida Yeldell was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 5, 2002, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. History professor Florida Yeldell (1915 - 2006) has taught history at a number of colleges throughout Texas, including Prairie View A&M University, Jarvis Christian College, and Texas College.

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:

Yeldell, Florida, 1915-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Yeldell, Florida, 1915---Interviews

African American women educators--Interviews.

African American historians--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

History Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Florida Yeldell, December 5, 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 Florida Yeldell, Section A2002_221_001_001, TRT: 0:28:20 ?
Florida Yeldell was born on January 2, 1915 to Robert James Jackson and Janie Alizabeth Anderson Jackson. Her paternal grandfather, Alonzo Jackson, was sold out of Virginia as a slave to South Carolina and her grandfather was a

carriage driver and tended the horses at the Hagley rice plantation. Yeldell's father worked as blacksmith in Salters, South Carolina before being posted as a mail carrier in Georgetown County, South Carolina for thirty years. Yeldell's maternal grandfather was a slave driver on the Friendfield plantation in Georgetown County, South Carolina. Yeldell's mother was a housewife and a teacher, and died during childbirth around 1925. Yeldell's family was the only black family in her neighborhood in Georgetown. They lived on Highmarket Street next to Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church. Yeldell describes the racism she encountered from her white neighbors when playing with them, especially the time when her neighbor threw pecans in her face.

Slavery--South Carolina.

Plantation life--South Carolina--Georgetown County--History.

Slave-driver.

Childbirth--Complications.

Blacksmithing--South Carolina--Salters.

Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell, Section A2002_221_001_002, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Florida Yeldell attended The Howard School until tenth grade, where the principal was J. B. Beck and her teachers were Janie Ward, Lily Frazier, Jamie Brockington, and Inez Anderson. After giving a presentation on John Smith and Pocahontas, Yeldell realized that she wanted to study history. After her father remarried, Yeldell and her sister Garna were sent to boarding school at Morris College in Sumter, South Carolina, where she studied literature with Bertha Sawyer, who taught writers like Paul Laurence Dunbar. She also studied the literature of the Haitian revolution by Alexandre Petion, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Henri Christophe, and Toussaint L'Ouverture. When she graduated from Morris College in 1936, Yeldell wanted to become the foreign correspondent for the New York Times, but her father persuaded her to get a job as a teacher instead.

African American letter carriers.

Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877).

Howard, O. O. (Oliver Otis), 1830-1909.

Morris College (Sumter, S.C.)

Boarding school students--South Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell, Section A2002_221_001_003, TRT: 0:29:15 ?

Florida Yeldell graduated from Morris College in Sumter, South Carolina in 1936 and then taught in Andrews, South Carolina. In 1938, she received a National Youth Administration scholarship to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she studied history with William Leo Hansberry, Charles Wesley and Rayford Logan. At Howard, Yeldell met her husband, John Yeldell and also received her M.A. in history. In 1941, she worked at the Office of Dependency Benefits in Newark, New Jersey and she stayed there through World War II. Yeldell taught at Morris College in Sumter, South Carolina before working at the Bursar's Collection Office and studying at New York University. Yeldell taught history at Butler College in Tyler, Texas from 1952 to 1954; Howard High School in Georgetown, South Carolina from 1954 to 1955; Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas from 1955 to 1958; Texas College in Tyler from 1958 to 1963; and Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College in Prairie View, Texas from 1963 to 1979.

Howard University. Graduate School.

France History Revolution, 1789-1799.

Library of Congress.

Howard University--Faculty.

Rice--Planting.

Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell, Section A2002_221_001_004, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Florida Yeldell reflects on the highlights of her teaching career and her philosophy of teaching history from an objective standpoint. She lists some of her favorite figures in American history like Presidents Thomas Jefferson, Woodrow Wilson, and Lyndon Johnson. She also defends President Woodrow Wilson's vision for the League of Nations against accusations that he segregated White House bathrooms and saw the Ku Klux Klan at the height of its power. Yeldell also debates the role of African Muslims in the slave trade and the need for historians to follow the example of William Leo Hansberry and examine the history of Africa through Arabic texts from the tenth through the nineteenth centuries to understand the history of slavery. Yeldell stresses the importance of teaching history objectively, with the position of each group included. She ends the interview by reflecting on her legacy and her father, and by narrating her photographs.

Teaching and learning in higher education.

History--Study and teaching (Higher)--United States.

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826--Influence.

Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Views on international relations.

Slave trade--Arab countries--History.