

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dorothy Height

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Height, Dorothy I. (Dorothy Irene), 1912-2010 |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Height, |
| Dates: | September 13, 2003 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2003 |
| Physical Description: | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:21:23). |
| Abstract: | Civic leader Dorothy Height (1912 - 2010) was the president of National Council of Negro Women for over forty years. Leaders of the United States regularly took her counsel, including First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and President Lyndon B. Johnson. Height was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 13, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2003_245 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civic leader Dorothy Height was born in Richmond, Virginia, on March 24, 1912. At an early age, she moved with her family to Rankin, Pennsylvania. While in high school, Height was awarded a scholarship to New York University for her oratory skills, where she studied and earned her master's degree.

Height began her career working as a caseworker with the New York City Welfare Department, but at the age of twenty-five, she began her career as a civil rights activist when she joined the National Council of Negro Women. She fought for equal rights for both African Americans and women, and in 1944 she joined the national staff of the YWCA. She remained active with the organization until 1977, and while there she developed leadership training programs and interracial and ecumenical education programs. In 1957, Height was named president of the National Council of Negro Women, a position she held until 1997. During the height of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Height organized "Wednesdays in Mississippi," which brought together black and white women from the north and South to create a dialogue of understanding. Leaders of the United States regularly took her counsel, including First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and Height also encouraged President Dwight D. Eisenhower to desegregate schools and President Lyndon B. Johnson to appoint African American women to positions in government.

Height has served on a number of committees, including as a consultant on African affairs to the secretary of state, the President's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped and the President's Committee on the Status of Women. Her tireless efforts for equal rights have earned her the praise and recognition of numerous organizations, as well. She has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Freedom From Want Award and the NAACP Spingarn Medal. She has also been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Height passed away on April 20, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dorothy Height was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 13, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civic leader Dorothy Height (1912 - 2010) was the president of National Council of Negro Women for over forty years. Leaders of the United States regularly took her counsel, including First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and President Lyndon B. Johnson.

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:

Height, Dorothy I. (Dorothy Irene), 1912-2010

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Height, Dorothy I. (Dorothy Irene), 1912-2010 --Interviews

African American women civic leaders--Interviews

African American women executives--Interviews

African American families--Pennsylvania

Rankin (Pa.)--Social life and customs

Education--Pennsylvania--Rankin

Racism--Pennsylvania--Rankin

New York University

Harlem (New York, N.Y.)--Intellectual life--20th century

National Black United Front

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Young Women's Christian Association

Bethune, Mary McLeod, 1875-1955

Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1884-1962

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, African American

Ku Klux Klan (1915)--North Carolina

African American women--Civil rights--History--20th century

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Washington, D.C., 1963

Mississippi Freedom Project

Presidents--United States--History

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civic Leader

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Dorothy Height, September 13, 2003. 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 Dorothy Height, Section A2003_245_001_001, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Women's leader and social activist Dorothy I. Height begins by recalling her family background and her youth in Rankin, Pennsylvania. She talks about her parents, describes her childhood personality, and recounts some of her favorite childhood activities. She also discusses her school years, including academics and extracurricular activities. Height explains how her parents' activism and early encounters with racism inspired her to become an activist.

African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

African American women executives--Interviews.

African American families--Pennsylvania.

Rankin (Pa.)--Social life and customs.

Education--Pennsylvania--Rankin.

Racism--Pennsylvania--Rankin.

New York University.

Harlem (New York, N.Y.)--Intellectual life--20th century.

National Black United Front.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Young Women's Christian Association.

Bethune, Mary McLeod, 1875-1955.

Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1884-1962.

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, African American.

Ku Klux Klan (1915-)--North Carolina.

African American women--Civil rights--History--20th century.

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Washington, D.C., 1963.

Mississippi Freedom Project.

Presidents--United States--History.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Height, Section A2003_245_001_002, TRT: 0:30:05 ?

Dorothy I. Height remembers her mentors from her school days discusses her early prowess as an orator. She explains why she chose to attend college at New York University and details her extracurricular activities and community service as a student. Height also details her time spent in Harlem while in college, describing the artistic community and her involvement in many community organizations.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Height, Section A2003_245_001_003, TRT: 0:31:15 ?

Dorothy I. Height details her work with the many social activist groups in which she participated in the 1930s and 1940s, including the National Black United Front, the Harlem Youth Council, the Harlem YWCA and the NAACP. She also recalls her relationships with Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt, and her efforts to desegregate the Army during World War II.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Height, Section A2003_245_001_004, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Dorothy I. Height recalls how she and the YWCA withstood a threat from the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina. She describes important events from the Civil Rights Movement, particularly the contribution of women to the struggle. She discusses her own involvement in the YWCA and the National Council of Negro Women during this period. After assessing the administrations of many U.S. Presidents, Height talks about her involvement with United Civil Rights Leadership during the 1960s.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Height, Section A2003_245_001_005, TRT: 0:20:33 ?

Dorothy I. Height recalls women's participation in the Civil Rights Movement and the March on Washington. She discusses her own involvement in the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964. Finally, Height reflects on her life and career, and discusses the legacy of the National Council of Negro Women.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Height, Section A2003_245_Height_Dorothy_06_MED_001, TRT: 0:27:47