

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Narvie Harris

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Harris, Narvie, 1916-2009
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Narvie Harris,
Dates:	January 24, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:32:24).
Abstract:	Elementary school teacher Narvie Harris (1916 - 2009) worked for the DeKalb County School System in Georgia for forty years. As an educator, she has traveled the world and risen to administrative positions within DeKalb County public schools. Harris was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 24, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_005
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Narvie Jordan Harris began her career as an educator in a one-room schoolhouse in rural Georgia. Her father, James Jordan, was a prominent Atlanta photographer and tailor. Harris chose education as her field and rose through the educational system to become an administrator of schools in the Georgia Public School System through the Jeannes Supervisors Program.

Harris attended Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia, after she turned down a scholarship from Tuskegee Institute because she wanted to remain near her Atlanta family. She graduated with an A.B. degree. Harris received a M.Ed. degree from Atlanta University and additional training in education at Tennessee State University, Tuskegee Institute, Wayne State University, Georgia State University, Grambling University and the University of Georgia.

Harris was appointed by former Georgia Governor George Busbee to travel to West Africa for educational study for Northwestern University. During her lifetime, Harris traveled to every continent except Australia. Harris retired from the DeKalb County Georgia School System in 1983 after thirty-nine years of teaching. In 1985, Harris was named an honorary Associate Superintendent by the DeKalb County Board of Education. Narvie J. Harris Traditional Theme School, an elementary school in the DeKalb County Schools System, was named in her honor in 1999. Harris is the author of African-American Education in DeKalb County, a personal collection of her tenure as an educator/administrator.

Harris was active in numerous religious, civic and social organizations including Wheat Street Baptist Church, the Atlanta Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Nancy Bridge Club, Fulton County Arts Council and Decatur-DeKalb, Rockdale Retired Teachers and Georgia Retired Teachers Associations of which she was a past president. Her honors and awards include the Bronze Woman of the Year in Education by the Schools of DeKalb County, the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award from Clark College and Atlanta University, and trees were planted in her honor at Carver High School in Columbus, Georgia and C.L. Harper High School in

Atlanta, Georgia.

Harris married the late Joseph L. Harris and is the mother of Daryll Harris Griffin and the grandmother of Michael Joseph Griffin.

Harris passed away on October 30, 2009.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Narvie Harris was conducted by Evelyn Pounds on January 24, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Elementary school teacher Narvie Harris (1916 - 2009) worked for the DeKalb County School System in Georgia for forty years. As an educator, she has traveled the world and risen to administrative positions within DeKalb County public schools.

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:

Harris, Narvie, 1916-2009

Pounds, Evelyn (Interviewer)

Jackson, Adrian (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Harris, Narvie, 1916-2009 --Interviews

African American women teachers--Georgia--DeKalb County--Interviews

African American school administrators--Georgia--DeKalb County--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

DeKalb County School System.

Occupations:

Elementary School Teacher

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 Narvie Harris, January 24, 2006. 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 Narvie Harris, Section A2006_005_001_001, TRT: 0:31:12 ?

Narvie Harris was born on December 19 in Wrightsville, Georgia to Anna Burnett Hobbs Jordan and James Jordan. Her mother was well known and respected in their neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia, and she worked hard at home. Her father was educated at Mitchell Tailor Academy in New York City, and worked as a tailor in Atlanta. Harris' parents were strict and required her to keep an eleven o'clock curfew, although Harris still went to dances at Atlanta's agnolia all and Top at. Her parents also insisted she and her siblings attend church. While her family were members of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Harris attended Liberty Baptist Church. She also saw Dr. Peter James Bryant preach at Wheat Street Baptist Church in Atlanta. Harris attended Booker T. Washington High School, then continued her education at Clark College in Atlanta. Harris recalls seeing President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a college student and living abroad in Moscow, Russia through the Friendship Force International exchange program.

African American women teachers--Georgia--DeKalb County--Interviews.

African American school administrators--Georgia--DeKalb County--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Narvie Harris, Section A2006_005_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Narvie Harris was born in Wrightsville, Georgia, but moved to Atlanta, Georgia as a young child. She recalls always wanting to be a teacher. Once a year, Harris' maternal grandfather sent the family a hog, which Harris' mother butchered, making souse meat and other dishes. Her younger sister, Anna Jordan, inherited many of her mother's domestic skills, while her brother, Edward "Honey" Jordan, did not enjoy school and distanced himself from the rest of the family. Harris and her brother Harvey were often mistaken for twins. Their father, James Jordan, owned a successful tailoring business in Atlanta. Although he was not very affectionate, Harris knew her father cared for his children. He encouraged education and taught his children to have pride and to resist segregation, which Harris passed on to her students in DeKalb County, Georgia when she encouraged them to vote. Harris describes Reverend William Borders' civil rights leadership and his protest against the Confederate monument at Stone Mountain.

Video Oral History Interview with Narvie Harris, Section A2006_005_001_003, TRT: 0:31:12 ?

Narvie Harris was placed in accelerated classes at Yonge Street Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia, where Cora B. Finley, who founded the ParentTeacher Association with Selena Sloan Butler, was principal. Harris rarely played with the other children, whom she found cruel. Although she was fond of her teachers, Miss Senior and Rebecca Dixon, she disliked the annual visit to the school doctor, who mocked her weight. Halfway through sixth grade, Harris' family moved to the Westside of Atlanta. She attended Ashby Street School. She moved on to Booker T. Washington High School, which, despite its name, was a small junior high school when Harris attended, prior to 1934. There, she saw singer Roland Hayes perform and met teacher and accordionist Graham Jackson, who taught Harris to play piano. During her teaching career, Harris assisted in the desegregation of DeKalb County Schools following the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision in 1954. The process was not completed until

1969.