

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Andrew Heidelberg

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Heidelberg, Andrew I.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg,
Dates:	May 10, 2010 and May 13, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2010
Physical Description:	15 uncompressed MOV digital video files (7:01:31).
Abstract:	Banker, civic leader, and cultural heritage lecturer Andrew Heidelberg (1943 - 2015) was a member of The Norfolk 17 who strove for desegregation in the South in the late 1950s. He lectured at events about the impact of segregation and civil rights. Heidelberg was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 10, 2010 and May 13, 2010, in Hampton, Virginia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2010_015
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Norfolk 17 member Andrew Heidelberg was born on November 6, 1943 in Norfolk, Virginia to Lena and Colonal Heidelberg. After desegregation rulings by federal judges in 1957 and 1959 against a fight led by Governor J. Lindsay Almond, Heidelberg began his education at Norview High School, five years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling *Brown v. Board of Education*. At the age of fourteen, Heidelberg joined sixteen other African Americans selected out of the 151 who had applied to attend all-white schools. Split between three junior high and three high schools, The Norfolk 17 started Norfolk's schools' integration efforts in Virginia. In 1961 during his senior year, Heidelberg made the school football team and was the first African American to play varsity football at an all-white public school in Virginia and in the South. That same year, his team won the Eastern District championship for the State of Virginia and brought together black and white families alike.

In 1967, Heidelberg entered the banking industry and worked at Industrial National Bank of Providence, Rhode Island. He became the bank's first African American Branch Manager, Credit Officer, and Commercial Loan Officer before he left in 1976 to found Heidelberg, Clary & Associates, Inc. After the firm closed, Heidelberg worked at Barclays Bank of New York and Banco de Ponce-New York as a Vice President and Corporate Manager. In 2001, Heidelberg graduated from Norfolk State University with his B.S. degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. He went on to serve as Assistant Treasurer and Chief Deputy Treasurer for the City of Hampton in 2003. He returned to Norview High School in 2009 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of "Massive Resistance" in Virginia.

Heidelberg was selected by Governor Mark Warner in 2005 to serve a two-year term as a member of the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Awards Committee. He was appointed to serve two additional consecutive two-year terms (through 2011) by Governor Tim Kaine. In 2006 he published his story in the book *The Norfolk 17: A Personal Narrative on Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia in 1958-1962*. Heidelberg also finished writing a

screenplay in 2009 based on the book *The Colored Halfback* scheduled for publication in 2010.

Heidelberg passed away on July 6, 2015 at the age of 71.

Andrew Heidelberg was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 10, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Andrew Heidelberg was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 10, 2010 and May 13, 2010, in Hampton, Virginia, and was recorded on 15 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Banker, civic leader, and cultural heritage lecturer Andrew Heidelberg (1943 - 2015) was a member of The Norfolk 17 who strove for desegregation in the South in the late 1950s. He lectured at events about the impact of segregation and civil rights.

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:

Heidelberg, Andrew I.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Heidelberg, Andrew I.--Interviews

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 Andrew Heidelberg, May 10, 2010 and May 13, 2010. 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 Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_001_001, TRT:

0:29:17 ?

Andrew Heidelberg was born on November 6, 1943 in Norfolk, Virginia to Lena King Heidelberg and Colonal M. Heidelberg. His paternal grandfather, Colonal N. Heidelberg, was the son of an Ethiopian man and German woman. He took his mother's surname and migrated to the United States with his four brothers while working on an international ship. Upon arrival, the captain attempted to sell them into slavery. They fled the ship and Heidelberg's grandfather settled in New York City, where he met Heidelberg's paternal grandmother, Laura Heidelberg, who lived there with her half-white half-brother and her four sisters. Heidelberg's maternal grandmother, Georgia King, was of Native American ancestry. She married Clarence King, who worked as a janitor in a bank in Norfolk. Heidelberg's mother grew up there, and later worked for a Jewish man who owned several movie theaters in the African American community. She married Heidelberg's father, who was raised in Newport News, Virginia; and together, they settled in Norfolk.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_001_002, TRT: 0:31:44 ?

Andrew Heidelberg's paternal grandfather, Colonal N. Heidelberg, spent twenty years in Attica Correctional Facility after he was falsely convicted of killing Heidelberg's grandmother, Laura Heidelberg. Heidelberg's father moved to Norfolk, Virginia, where he met and married Heidelberg's mother, and the family settled in the Oakleaf Park housing projects. There, his father found work as a stevedore at the Naval Station Norfolk. When Heidelberg was an infant, he became gravely ill, but his mother was reluctant to seek treatment due to the limited medical facilities for African Americans in Norfolk. However, as his condition worsened, Heidelberg's mother rushed him to Norfolk General Hospital, where he recuperated. At five years old, Heidelberg began selling coal and wood with a neighbor, and began his education in the basement of the nearby Bank Street Baptist Church, where he developed an interest in math. Heidelberg and his family later moved to the middle-class Chesapeake Manor housing development.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_001_003, TRT: 0:30:50 ?

Andrew Heidelberg entered the third grade at Oakwood Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia, where he excelled academically. In the eighth grade, Heidelberg arrived home late one day to find his parents speaking with NAACP representatives. They asked if he would be willing to help desegregate Norview High School, and Heidelberg, hoping to avoid punishment for his tardiness, agreed. The following year, Evelyn T. Butts of the local NAACP administered qualifying enrollment exams for students who volunteered. At first, all 151 African American applicants were rejected, including Heidelberg. After rebuff from the U.S. Supreme Court, Heidelberg and sixteen other students, including Patricia Turner, were admitted to attend Norview High School. The majority of the accepted students had fair-complexion and non-traditional African American names. Prior to high school, Heidelberg had endured harassment from white children, who called him names and threw rocks at him when they passed through his neighborhood.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_001_004, TRT: 0:27:04 ?

Andrew Heidelberg was one of the seventeen African American students to integrate Norview High School in Norfolk, Virginia. The day before the start of school, Virginia Governor J. Lindsay Almond closed the city's six public high

schools and junior high schools. The NAACP quickly set up a temporary school at First Baptist Church to educate the Norfolk 17, and urged them not to enroll in the African American high school, Booker T. Washington High School, since it would derail integration. While white families of means sent their children to private schools, the closings left ten thousand children without access to public education. Norfolk's large military and business communities pressured President Dwight David "Ike" Eisenhower to act, forcing Almond to reopen the schools in February of 1959. Heidelberg was greeted with hostility when he entered the Norview High School that year. He also remembers Emmett Till, who was murdered in 1955 in Money, Mississippi.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_001_005, TRT: 0:33:14 ?

Andrew Heidelberg attended the NAACP's temporary school at First Baptist Church while Norview High School was closed in Norfolk, Virginia. After Journalist Edward R. Murrow's CBS special, 'The Lost Class of '59,' brought national attention to the school closings, President Dwight David "Ike" Eisenhower convinced Norfolk Mayor W. Fred Duckworth to reopen the schools. On February 2, 1959, Heidelberg began his freshman year at Norview High School, and encountered a mass of white police officers, journalists and students. Heidelberg endured taunting from his white peers and indifference from his teachers. As a safety precaution, he chose seats close to teachers or exits. When Heidel showed interest in joining the football team, he was discouraged from trying out. He had little interaction with the other sixteen African American students, but was comforted by African American cafeteria workers who were proud of his bravery. Although most students were hostile, one white girl was sympathetic to his plight.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_001_006, TRT: 0:25:34 ?

Andrew Heidelberg endured hostility from his peers with little protection from the teachers at Norview High School in Norfolk, Virginia. The school had a stellar football team, and Heidelberg aspired to earn a varsity letter in football, but was limited to the intramural individual sports like horseshoes, table tennis and track and field during his freshman and sophomore year. He won sports competitions at Norview High School, but was not invited to represent the school in the citywide championships. Heidelberg belonged to the Church of God and Saints of Christ, a Jewish church in Norfolk which prohibited Heidelberg from practicing sports on the Sabbath; but nevertheless he hoped to join the football team. He performed exceptionally in tryouts during his junior year, but the coach allowed the team to vote on his admission. Some players feared that other schools would refuse to compete with an African American player, and Heidelberg was rejected from the team.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_001_007, TRT: 0:41:18 ?

Andrew Heidelberg joined the football team at Norview High School during his senior year. Heidelberg's admission to the team improved interactions between the races in Norfolk, Virginia since African Americans and whites began attending football games together. Heidelberg was treated with less hostility at school, and was celebrated in the white press. Occasionally at away games, however, the National Guard was called to keep the peace. On one occasion, Heidelberg was told by the owners of a restaurant in Prince Edward County, Virginia that he would have to eat in the kitchen instead of with the team. The African American cooks treated him kindly, and two of his teammates joined

him. Later at the game, he received discriminatory calls from the referee. While in high school, Heidelberg talked very little with the other members of the Norfolk 17, and even during a fifty-year reunion organized by the city, Heidelberg and his peers struggled to discuss the emotional trauma they experienced.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_001_008, TRT: 0:18:09 ?

Andrew Heidelberg's attendance at the NAACP tutoring school prepared him for the academic rigor of Norview High School, and he excelled all four years. However, during his senior year, Heidelberg struggled in chemistry, and passed the class with his teacher's encouragement. Upon graduating in 1962, he aspired to become a doctor, and was offered fifty-one athletic scholarships to universities across the country; but instead contemplated joining the U.S. Marine Corps to avoid the Vietnam War draft. Due to his age, he needed his mother's signature in order to join the U.S. Marine Corps, and after she refused, Heidelberg reconsidered college. He received an athletic scholarship to attend Norfolk State College in his hometown of Norfolk, Virginia, where he majored in chemistry. At this point in the interview, Heidelberg talks about the history of Virginia, including the confederacy and longstanding universities; and erasure of Virginia's desegregation history, which led him to write his book, 'The Norfolk 17.'

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_002_009, TRT: 0:28:35 ?

Andrew Heidelberg attended Norfolk State College in Norfolk, Virginia in 1962 on a football scholarship, where he was coached by the recently hired William Archer. Heidelberg played against top football players such as Paul Warfield, Bob Ferguson, Leroy Kelly and Willie Lanier. Although Heidelberg was selected for the school's honor program, he often prioritized football over his academics, much to the disappointment of his professor, Marian Palmer Capps. Over the following four years, Heidelberg's grade point average dropped, and his playing time was reduced after a knee injury. In 1966, Heidelberg received a call from sportscaster George Patrick Duffy, who asked him to join the Rhode Island Steelers, a semi-professional football team who was affiliated with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Heidelberg accepted and was offered a salary of six hundred dollars a week. After Heidelberg's noteworthy season under coach Ray Matthews, Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Bill Austin recruited him for the team.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_002_010, TRT: 0:31:06 ?

Andrew Heidelberg was one of ninety-two recruits to attend the Pittsburgh Steelers' summer training camp. Although most veteran players kept their distance from the new recruits, Heidelberg became friends with Big John Baker and Ray May. He only played once that season during a scrimmage game against the Cleveland Browns, and was cut from the team the week prior to their game in Norfolk, Virginia. Heidelberg returned to Providence, Rhode Island, where his notoriety as a professional athlete gained him a bank teller position at Industrial National Bank. During his first year, the bank began a credit card advertising campaign with very limited representations of African Americans. After foiling a robbery attempt, Heidelberg was able to speak to the bank president, John Cummings, Jr., and successfully convinced him to improve the diversity in the advertising campaign. Heidelberg also inquired about the bank's managerial training program, even though he lacked the required college degree.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_002_011, TRT:

0:29:23 ?

Andrew Heidelberg was accepted into Industrial National Bank's managerial training program after the Unity Bank and Trust Company, a black-owned bank in Boston, Massachusetts, attempted to recruit him as a head teller. He spent nine months in the training program, and was mentored by executive vice president Henry F. Tingley, Jr. Heidelberg expressed his interest in working in the credit department, and Tingley promised him the opportunity to do so in the future. In 1971, Heidelberg became the bank's first African American branch manager when he headed a branch in Cranston, Rhode Island. He led an all-white staff for two years before moving into the credit department. There, Heidelberg was mentored by a Jewish man named Arthur Lowenthal, who had also experienced prejudice in the bank. In 1975, Heidelberg was promoted to lending officer, and managed a portfolio of \$19 million, which he grew to \$75 million in one year. Heidelberg considered starting his own business after a client encouraged him to do so.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_002_012, TRT: 0:30:39 ?

Andrew Heidelberg partnered with Anderson W. Clary, Jr. in 1976 to found Heidelberg, Clary and Associates, Inc., which specialized in environmental impact reports. Heidelberg wrote frequently to President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr., and argued that as the only minority-owned business capable of handling larger contracts, they deserved more government support. With President Carter's help, Heidelberg Clary and Associates, Inc. secured a \$240,000 contract from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. They also were hired for the expansion of T.F. Green Airport in Warwick, Rhode Island. Heidelberg closed the business in 1980, and was hired at Barclays Bank of New York as an assistant vice president and corporate loan officer. He also served as vice president and corporate manager of his branch in New York City and held accounts with companies like Ralph Lauren and Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. In 1985, Heidelberg left Barclays Bank of New York, and became a regional vice president at Banco de Ponce.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_002_013, TRT: 0:28:52 ?

Andrew Heidelberg worked at Banco de Ponce, where he represented the first doctor to purchase a laser machine for medical treatments. In 1989, Heidelberg left the company to work as a commercial loan review analyst at a small bank in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. When that bank closed in 1994, Heidelberg returned to Virginia. He completed his bachelor's degree at Norfolk State University, and began managing a social service agency called Beacon at the Crossroads in Hampton, Virginia, which was founded by his former business partner, Anderson W. Clary, Jr. Then, Heidelberg worked for the Treasurer's Office in Hampton for three years. In 2006, he self-published his book, 'The Norfolk 17: A Personal Narrative on Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia in 1958 - 1962,' which he began writing in 1967. He also wrote a fictionalized account of his experience as a young athlete. Heidelberg describes his hopes for his books and his concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_002_014, TRT: 0:19:07 ?

Andrew Heidelberg was saved from drowning when he was thirteen, but lost his older brother, Melvin Heidelberg, in the incident. Shortly after, Heidelberg was chosen as one of the seventeen African American students to integrate Norview High School in Norfolk, Virginia. He describes his hopes for the African

American community, and his family, which includes his wife, Luressa Heidelberg; two daughters, Angela Heidelberg Roldan and Kirsten Heidelberg; and granddaughter. He also reflects upon the role of his faith in his life, and his own legacy as well as the legacy of the Norfolk 17. He concludes this part of the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Andrew Heidelberg, Section A2010_015_002_015, TRT: 0:16:39 ?

Andrew Heidelberg narrates his photographs.