

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ollie Taylor

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Taylor, Ollie, 1937-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ollie Taylor,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 13, 2012
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2012
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:01:30).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Elementary school teacher Ollie Taylor (1937 - ) taught elementary school students for twenty-eight years. Taylor was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 13, 2012, in Bryan, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2012_189
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Elementary school teacher, Ollie M. Taylor was born on September 14, 1937 Tallahassee, Florida to Major and Mary Thompson. She is the oldest of four children: Albert, Douglas and Major, Jr. Taylor attended Bond Jr. High School and graduated from Florida A & M University High School in Tallahassee, Florida in 1956. In 1957, she married Willie J. Taylor and relocated to Chicago, Illinois. Taylor and her husband had their first, Anthony Taylor, in 1958. Their second child Angela Taylor was born three years later, and their youngest, Valerie Taylor, was born in 1963. In 1970, Taylor attended Kennedy King College in Chicago, Illinois where she completed her A.A. degree in 1972. She then transferred to National Louis University in Evanston, Illinois and earned her B.S. degree in education in 1975, and her M.S. degree in education in 1989.

From 1964 to 1969, Taylor began working in clerical positions for Spiegel Inc. in Chicago, Illinois. Then, in 1970, she began her career as an educator at the Chicago Urban Day School in Chicago, where she implemented the Montessori curriculum. In 1975, she joined the Chicago Board of Education and began teaching Head Start early developmental classes for children at Goldblatt Elementary School Chicago. Beginning in 1982, Taylor accepted a position at Melody Elementary School Chicago, where she taught kindergarten for several years. Taylor transferred to Ray Graham Training Center in Chicago.

Taylor received many awards for her outstanding work with students and parents throughout her teaching career. She retired from teaching after more than three decades of service at the age of sixty-six. Taylor resides with her husband, daughter and two of her four grandchildren in Bryan, Texas.

Ollie Taylor was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on 08/13/2012.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ollie Taylor was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 13, 2012, in Bryan, Texas, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Elementary school teacher Ollie Taylor (1937 - ) taught elementary school students for twenty-eight years.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

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

### Persons:

Taylor, Ollie, 1937-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Taylor, Ollie, 1937- --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Elementary School Teacher

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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## 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 Ollie Taylor, August 13, 2012. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Ollie Taylor, Section A2012\_189\_001\_001, TRT: 1:30:40 ?

Ollie Taylor was born on September 14, 1937 in Tallahassee, Florida to Mary Davis Thompson and Major Thompson, Sr. Her maternal grandfather, Samuel Davis II, was a streets worker in Tallahassee, and his wife, Emma Barnes Davis, was a homemaker. Taylor's mother worked as a laundress in the children's wing of Tallahassee's W.T. Edwards Tuberculosis Hospital. Taylor's paternal grandfather, Hinton Thompson, was a property developer in the Bond subdivision, which was located in a rural area three miles outside of Tallahassee. After his unwed daughter gave birth to a mixed-race child, he raised the child as his son for several years. Eventually, Taylor's aunt returned the child, who was very fair, to his white relatives, and he was never reconnected with the family. Taylor grew up in Bond, a close-knit community that was eventually annexed by the City of Tallahassee. She attended the local Bond Junior High School from

kindergarten through the eighth grade.

Video Oral History Interview with Ollie Taylor, Section A2012\_189\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:44 ?

Ollie Taylor grew up in the rural Bond community near the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes in Tallahassee, Florida. She admired the school's Marching 100 band, and attended concerts by jazz musicians Cannonball Adderley and Nat Adderley at the school's monthly vesper services. During the Civil Rights Movement, Taylor's father, Major Thompson, Sr., participated in the bus boycotts in Tallahassee. He helped provide alternative transportation for the boycotters through the Greater Mount Zion Primitive Baptist Church, where Taylor's family belonged to the congregation. Her father also required the children to stay home on Emancipation Day, although the white school board refused to recognize the holiday. During this time, Taylor's father worked as a heating and cooling professional at an ice cream refrigerator repair company and the college heating plant. He later secured employment at a U.S. naval shipyard in order to avoid the draft during World War II.

Video Oral History Interview with Ollie Taylor, Section A2012\_189\_001\_003, TRT: 3:30:21 ?

Ollie Taylor grew up in a community that was centered around the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes in Tallahassee, Florida. Throughout her childhood, she was exposed to the many authors, speakers and musicians who visited the campus. She attended one year of preschool at the university's Nathan B. Young Hall, and then began kindergarten at Bond Junior High School, where she sung in the a capella choir. Taylor was an elementary school student during World War II, and several of her uncles served in the U.S. military. After the eighth grade, Taylor enrolled at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University High School, where she played sports. Her teachers were highly educated African Americans, many of whom had master's degrees from the North. They discriminated against Taylor because of her dark complexion, and she chose not to compete in the Ms. FAMU High competition due to their negative comments.

Video Oral History Interview with Ollie Taylor, Section A2012\_189\_001\_004, TRT: 4:31:32 ?

Ollie Taylor attended the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University High School in Tallahassee, Florida. She belonged to the home economics club, cheerleading squad, band and sports teams. Her parents, Mary Davis Thompson and Major Thompson, Sr., separated during that time, and Taylor took on several part-time jobs to gain financial independence. After graduation, she moved to live with family members in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and then to New York City. There, she met her husband, Willie Taylor, who was her cousin's friend from the U.S. military. They married after meeting only a few times, and Taylor moved to his home in Chicago, Illinois. There, Taylor initially worked as a secretary, and then joined the staff of The Fair Store, which was later acquired by Montgomery Ward. After the birth of her third child, Taylor took a short break from working, and then secured a position from Ora Higgins in the filing department of Spiegel Inc., which was located in the majority-white Bridgeport neighborhood.

Video Oral History Interview with Ollie Taylor, Section A2012\_189\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:08 ?

Ollie Taylor left the Spiegel Inc. mail order company to attend Kennedy-King College in Chicago, Illinois, where she earned an associate's degree in child development. Taylor then completed a bachelor's degree at National Louis University in Chicago. After a successful teaching internship, she was offered a permanent position at William B. Ogden Elementary School; but, because of her experiences of discrimination from the white students there, she decided to join the staff of the Abraham Lincoln Center on 39th Street instead. Dissatisfied with

the school's practices, Taylor became a substitute teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. She worked at Genevieve Melody Elementary School, Nathan R. Goldblatt Elementary School and James N. Thorp Elementary School. She eventually retired from Ray Graham Training Center High School, where she taught vocational special education courses and advised the school newspaper staff. After moving to Texas, Taylor returned to substitute teaching at the local schools.

Video Oral History Interview with Ollie Taylor, Section A2012\_189\_001\_006, TRT: 6:30:05 ?

Ollie Taylor and her husband, Willie Taylor, raised their family in Chicago, Illinois, where they supported both of Mayor Harold Washington's campaigns. Mayor Washington became the first African American mayor of Chicago and created institutional support for black businesses. In addition to her political activities, Taylor volunteered at Chicago's eta Creative Arts Foundation. She also supported her children's schools and was instrumental in their fundraising efforts. Taylor describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community. She also reflects upon her life, legacy and how she wants to be remembered, and concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.