

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Theodore C. Landsmark

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Landsmark, Theodore C.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Theodore C. Landsmark,
Dates:	April 10, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:16:05).
Abstract:	University president Theodore C. Landsmark (1946 -) is the subject of a famous 1977 Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph that showed him being attacked by a man with an American flag on the steps of Boston's Government Center. Landsmark is now the CEO of the Boston Architectural Center. Landsmark was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 10, 2003, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_073
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

The subject of a famous 1977 Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph that showed him being attacked by a man with an American flag on the steps of Boston's Government Center, Ted Landsmark was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on May 17, 1946. His family moved to East Harlem in New York by the time he started school. After attending Stuyvesant High School and St. Paul's Preparatory, Landsmark went on to Yale University, where he earned a B.A. in political science in 1969. He then earned professional degrees from Yale Law School and Yale School of Architecture. Years later, Landsmark completed his Ph.D. at Boston University.

Landsmark has worked as the dean of graduate and continuing education at the Massachusetts College of Art. He also served as the director of Boston's Office of Community Partnerships. From 1997 to 2014, Landsmark served as the president and CEO of the Boston Architectural Center, a school offering degrees in architecture and interior design and one of the only schools in the country fully staffed by individuals practicing in the areas they teach.

A passionate student of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century African American art, Landsmark has spoken extensively on the subject. He has received fellowships from the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts and the National Science Foundation, and he serves on the editorial board for *Architecture Boston*. Landsmark also serves as a trustee to numerous arts related foundations including Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Theodore C. Landsmark was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 10, 2003, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. University president Theodore C.

Landsmark (1946 -) is the subject of a famous 1977 Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph that showed him being attacked by a man with an American flag on the steps of Boston's Government Center. Landsmark is now the CEO of the Boston Architectural Center.

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:

Landsmark, Theodore C.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Landsmark, Theodore C.--Interviews

Boston Architectural Center--Presidents--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Boston Architectural Center

Occupations:

University President

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 Theodore C. Landsmark, April 10, 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 Theodore C. Landsmark, Section A2003_073_001_001, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Theodore Landsmark was born Theodore Augustus Burrell on May 17, 1946 to Rubye Landsmark and James Burrell. His mother was a nurse and later a teacher; his father was a subway conductor. Landsmark's parents divorced when he was a young child and he changed his name to Theodore Carlisle Landsmark after graduating from Yale Law School in honor of his mother and grandmother,

who raised him. His maternal grandfather, William Landsmark was a Dutch citizen who immigrated to the United States around 1914 from Sint Eustatius. Before settling in New York City's Harlem neighborhood where he became a coal yard worker, he worked on building the Panama Canal. Landsmark's maternal grandmother worked as a seamstress, domestic, and evangelist after immigrating to New York City from Saint Kitts in 1917. Her parents were well-educated teachers in Saint Kitts. The Landsmarks belonged to the Moravian church and William Landsmark was also an active Garveyite. Landsmark's paternal grandparents are of Pennsylvania Native American ancestry. As a child, Landsmark had polio. His sister is author Janus Adams.

Boston Architectural Center--Presidents--Interviews

Video Oral History Interview with Theodore C. Landsmark, Section A2003_073_001_002, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Theodore Landsmark was raised in a housing project in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, a vibrant cultural community. After Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, Landsmark was bused from P.S. 133 to a predominantly white school as part of the city's efforts to identify educational outcomes of integrated schooling. He attended P.S. 98 and J.H.S. 52 in Upper Manhattan where his classmates were largely Jewish and his favorite subjects were English and social studies. Landsmark developed an appreciation for his bus driver and the city's civil servants as well as his teachers who integrated art and culture into the classroom. Landsmark then became one of the few black students at Stuyvesant High School, a resource-rich examination school in the city. Although polio left Landsmark with a weak leg, he was active as a gymnast and became captain of the cheerleading team which taught him about political organizing. After graduating in 1963, he was recruited by St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire to become the preparatory school's first black graduate.

Video Oral History Interview with Theodore C. Landsmark, Section A2003_073_001_003, TRT: 0:29:45 ?

Theodore Landsmark attended St. Paul School in Concord, New Hampshire from 1963 to 1964 where he was the first post-graduate student and the first acknowledged African American graduate before enrolling at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. As the president of the Yale Civil Rights Council, Landsmark led fundraising efforts for SNCC and played a behind-the-scenes role during the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965 and in the funeral preparations of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. He spent a year away from his studies at Yale to work for Job Corps in New York City's Harlem neighborhood where he saw the area's rapid decline. After graduating from Yale in 1969, Landsmark entered Yale Law School and Yale School of Architecture, graduating with a J.D. degree and a master's degree in environmental design. He then moved to Boston, Massachusetts with his wife to work at the prestigious Hill & Barlow law firm. His in-laws disapproved of their daughter's interracial marriage and this led to divorce. Landsmark stopped practicing law and joined the Contractors Association of Boston.

Video Oral History Interview with Theodore C. Landsmark, Section A2003_073_001_004, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Theodore Landsmark worked to increase minority contracts in Boston, Massachusetts as the director of the Contractors Association of Boston. In 1976, two years after Judge W. Arthur Garrity's order to desegregate Boston Public Schools, Landsmark was attacked outside of Boston City Hall by white students protesting busing and integration in the city. The incident was captured by

photographer Stanley Forman who won the 1977 Pulitzer Prize for Spot Photography. Forman's award-winning photograph "The Soiling of Old Glory" depicts a white student on the verge of attacking Landsmark with the American flag. Landsmark shares his own memories from the event. His broken nose was treated at Massachusetts General Hospital where his doctor exaggerated Landsmark's injury in order to emphasize the gravity of the event to local media. Using the U.S. Bicentennial, Landsmark and other community activists like Mel King leveraged his attack against Massachusetts legislators by demanding the redress of racist institutions and practices in Boston. Landsmark describes his attackers; one was collectively disciplined by the community of dock workers in South Boston.

Video Oral History Interview with Theodore C. Landsmark, Section A2003_073_001_005, TRT: 0:17:30 ?

Theodore Landsmark describes his career. He served as the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, Massachusetts. He was also active in public service under the Raymond Flynn and Thomas Menino administrations at the Mayor's Office in Boston, Massachusetts as part of the Boston Gun Project, also known as Operation Ceasefire. Landsmark taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Massachusetts Boston. After he was appointed to the position of President of Boston Architectural College, Landsmark worked to improve the field's accessibility to minorities. He reflects upon his legacy, how he would like to be remembered, and his hopes and concerns for the African American community.