

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert C. Hayden

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hayden, Robert C.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Robert C. Hayden,
Dates:	August 17, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:26:35).
Abstract:	Historian, author, and educator Robert C. Hayden (1937 - 2022) was the former project director for the Educational Development Center and served as the executive assistant to the superintendent of Boston Public Schools. Hayden also lectured at the University of Massachusetts-Boston and served as a scholar-in-residence at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York. Hayden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 17, 2004, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_130
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Robert C. Hayden, Jr., was a historian, author, and educator who contributed to African American historiography for over thirty-five years. He was the author, co-author, and editor of over nineteen books and special publications in the field. Alongside his historical research, writing, and teaching, Hayden served for thirty-two years in numerous educational positions, including as an ethnic studies curriculum developer and as a project administrator in urban school projects across the country. He was the founder and president of RCH Associates, a provider of African American history services and resources to educators and a range of public and private institutions, organizations, and community groups.

Born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on August 21, 1937, Hayden graduated from New Bedford High School in 1955. He attended Boston University, receiving his B.A. degree in 1959 and his master's degree in 1961. He completed two post-graduate fellowships – one at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education and another in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), between 1976 and 1977. Between 1994 and 1995, he was a Scholar-in-Residence at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City.

Between 1961 and 1965, Hayden worked as a middle school teacher. In 1966, he became an editor with the Xerox Education Division, serving in that capacity for three years. From 1970 to 1973, Hayden was the executive director of the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity in Boston. In 1974, he moved to the Education Development Center in Newton, Massachusetts, where he directed ethnic heritage studies projects for urban school districts. In 1980, he became the director of MIT's Secondary Technical Education Project. From 1982 to 1987, he served as an assistant superintendent in the Boston Public School System. Before retiring in 1992, Hayden served for five years as the executive director of the Massachusetts Pre-engineering Program.

Hayden was well-known for his three pioneering works in the 1970s on the history of African Americans in science, technology, and medicine. From 1974 to 1983, he wrote a weekly column, “Boston’s Black History,” for the *Bay State Banner* newspaper in Boston. He was a contributing writer for the *Dictionary of American Negro Biography* (1982), the *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History* (1995), and *American National Biography* (1999).

Notable, too, were his *African Americans in Boston: More Than 350 Years* (1991) and *African Americans and Cape Verdean Americans in New Bedford: A History of Community and Achievement* (1993). In 2003, his first definitive biography was published – *Mr. Harlem Hospital: Dr. Louis T. Wright*. He published *African Americans on Martha’s Vineyard: A History of People, Places and Events* in 2005.

Hayden became a lecturer in the College of Public and Community Service at the University of Massachusetts at Boston in 1992. From 1978 to 2001, he was a senior lecturer at Northeastern University and held the same position at Lesley University from 1992 to 2005.

A resident of Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, Hayden served on the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission from 1998 to 2000. He was the national secretary of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and the founding president of the Martha’s Vineyard Branch of ASALH.

Robert C. Hayden, Jr., was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 17, 2004.

Hayden passed away on January 23, 2022, at the age of 84.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Robert C. Hayden was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 17, 2004, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Historian, author, and educator Robert C. Hayden (1937 - 2022) was the former project director for the Educational Development Center and served as the executive assistant to the superintendent of Boston Public Schools. Hayden also lectured at the University of Massachusetts-Boston and served as a scholar-in-residence at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York.

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:

Hayden, Robert C.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hayden, Robert C.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

School Superintendent

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 Robert C. Hayden, August 17, 2004. 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 Robert C. Hayden, Section A2004_130_001_001, TRT: 0:29:31
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Robert C. Hayden was born August 21, 1937 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. His maternal grandfather was born to an enslaved woman and a congregational minister in Petersburg, Virginia and later, worked as a Pullman porter and owned a home in Boston, Massachusetts's Roxbury neighborhood with his wife in the early 1900s where they housed African American students. Hayden's mother, Josephine Hughes Hayden, graduated from Roxbury Memorial High School and enjoyed reading, cooking and collecting bottles. She was a homemaker during Hayden's youth but later attended Bridgewater State Teachers College and became a substitute teacher. His paternal great-grandfather fled Fredericksburg, Virginia during the Civil War when Confederates burned his home and resettled in New Bedford where he acquired a farm. Hayden's father, Robert C. Hayden, Sr., was born in 1906 in New Bedford and worked for the postal service until he retired. Hayden recalls early memories of growing up in New Bedford and his first family trip to the South.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert C. Hayden, Section A2004_130_001_002, TRT: 0:29:54
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Robert C. Hayden grew up in a commercial area of New Bedford, Massachusetts and attended Thomas R. Rodman Elementary School. Although he did not like to read, he had an aptitude for the sciences which he carried with him through high school. He took carpentry in seventh grade, which he enjoyed. An average student, Hayden played sports at New Bedford High School, had a paper route and a landscaping business. His math teacher, Mr. Felton, regularly questioned him about his college plans and encouraged Hayden to receive a liberal education. During his high school years, his mother regularly brought him to Boston, Massachusetts to acquaint him with a larger African American community than the one in his hometown. Hayden saw the Brooklyn Dodgers when they were in Boston and was able to get Jackie Robinson's autograph. Hayden's family were not active churchgoers even though their relatives had been very involved in local churches. He entered Boston University in 1955 while Howard Thurman was dean of Marsh Chapel.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert C. Hayden, Section A2004_130_001_003, TRT: 0:29:59
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Robert C. Hayden pledged Kappa Alpha Psi his second year at Boston University. Although he primarily studied life science, he also enjoyed

sociology. He graduated with a B.S. in biology in January 1959. He then worked in a lab at Lahey Clinic before entering Boston University School of Education to obtain his master's degree in science education. His mentor insisted Hayden complete his student teaching in the Newton, Massachusetts public schools, and he taught biology at Newton North High School before being hired at John Wingate Weeks Junior High School in 1961. After four years teaching, he was accepted in the National Science Foundation's Academic Year Institute at Harvard University where he refined his knowledge of science and technology. In 1966, he moved to Connecticut to become a science editor for Xerox Company's education division before transferring to Boston to work at Ginn & Company developing science curricula. A colleague encouraged him to publish his material on African American scientists.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert C. Hayden, Section A2004_130_001_004, TRT: 0:29:49
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Robert C. Hayden published three books on African American contributors to science. For a chapter on Dr. Charles Henry Turner, he contacted Turner's relatives, including a son in Chicago and HistoryMaker Charles "Chuck" Turner, and was able to include a letter exchanged between Turner and Booker T. Washington in his 1970 publication, 'Seven Black American Scientists.' In 1969, he was hired as director of the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity in Boston and diversified the school curricula in the metropolitan area. He joined the Association for the Study of African American Life & History and interacted frequently with historians, including HistoryMaker Robert Lee Harris, Jr. In 1974, he began writing a column on black history for the Bay State Banner, and in 1978, began teaching at various colleges in the Boston area. He recalls his experiences during his year as scholar-in-residence the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City, where he researched Dr. Louis T. Wright.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert C. Hayden, Section A2004_130_001_005, TRT: 0:30:26
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Robert C. Hayden was author-in-residence for Richmond Public Schools in Virginia, a consultant for the University of Oklahoma and directed an African art and culture program with Massachusetts's Education Development Center. HistoryMaker Frank Jones encouraged him to pursue the Community Fellows Program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he completed proposals on ethnic heritage studies. He worked as deputy superintendent of Boston Public Schools, directed the Massachusetts Pre-Engineering Program and, in the early 1990s, completed a scholar-in-residence program at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City. While apartment-hunting, he met the owners of the former home of Louis T. Wright, his research subject. He spent time with Booker T. Washington III and Dr. John Henrik Clarke, whom he met through the Association for the Study of African American Life & History. He talks about his research on Martha's Vineyard and books about Dr. Samuel P. Massie and W. E. B. Du Bois.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert C. Hayden, Section A2004_130_001_006, TRT: 0:30:54
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Robert C. Hayden wrote an oral history publication for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for its national convention in Boston, Massachusetts in 1982, and served as the Boston NAACP branch president from 1986 to 1988. He published 'The African Meeting House in Boston: A Celebration of History' in 1987 and 'Singing for All People: A Biography of Roland Hayes' in 1989. His 1991 publication, 'African-Americans in Boston:

More Than 350 Years,' was supported by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and the office of cultural affairs. He reflects upon his career in education administration and its intersection with Boston's changing demographics and history of racial segregation and civil rights. He shares his recent research on William Monroe Trotter and on his own family history, which informed his research on African Americans in New Bedford. He also describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflects upon his legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert C. Hayden, Section A2004_130_001_007, TRT: 0:26:02
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Robert C. Hayden has often been confused with the poet Robert Hayden. He shares amusing anecdotes of people mistaking the two of them and describes his eventual correspondence and interactions with Robert Hayden. Hayden reflects upon the importance of having a well-rounded education and taking chances in life and talks about his move to Martha's Vineyard and his children's educational and career achievements. Hayden describes how he would like to be remembered and concludes the tape by narrating his photographs.