

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Joe Hendricks

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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>	Hendricks, Joe, 1927-2012
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Joe Hendricks,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 22, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:05:16).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Community activist and mill worker Joe Hendricks (1927 - 2012 ) was the guard for Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth. Joe Hendricks was present at the bombing of Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth's house in 1956. He was the target of many attacks on civil rights protestors led by Alabama police chief Bull Connor. Hendricks was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 22, 2007, in Birmingham, Alabama. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_105
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Community activist, mill worker and personal guard Joe Hendricks was born on March 22, 1927 in Boligee, Alabama to Louis Hendricks, a deacon, and Betty Hendricks, a former slave and housewife. Actively involved in the church from a young age, Hendricks would later utilize church grounds as a clandestine meeting place for civil rights discussions.

In 1941, after finishing the eighth grade at Jane Woods Elementary School, Hendricks began working at Jim Dandy, a mill that produced dog food, grits and corn meal. Eventually, Hendricks became a pack operator for the mill and joined the Workers' Union. After Hendricks joined the union, he lost his job at the mill and was forced into unemployment for ten months. During Hendricks' period of unemployment, he became the guard for civil rights activist and religious leader Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth. In addition to being Shuttlesworth's guard, Hendricks frequently participated in Monday night meetings at his local church, where African Americans in the community would discuss upcoming civil rights activities, including organizational strategies for protests and sit-ins. Hendricks was often subjected to dog attacks and dangerous water hose sprayings during protests. Hendricks was on duty guarding Rev. Shuttlesworth's house when it was bombed by several unnamed persons in 1956.

Hendricks eventually regained his position at the Jim Dandy mill, and retired after thirty-eight years of service. He still remains active in his community, and is involved in his local church choir at the New Pilgrim Baptist Church.

Joe Hendricks was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 22, 2007.

Joe Hendricks passed away on August 23, 2012.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Joe Hendricks was conducted by Denise Gines on March 22, 2007, in Birmingham, Alabama, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Community activist and mill worker Joe Hendricks (1927 - 2012 ) was the guard for Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth. Joe Hendricks was present at the bombing of Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth's house in 1956. He was the target of many attacks on civil rights protestors led by Alabama police chief Bull Connor.

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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:

Hendricks, Joe, 1927-2012

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hendricks, Joe, 1927-2012 --Interviews

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Civil rights activists--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:

Labor Activist

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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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 Joe Hendricks, March 22, 2007. 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 Joe Hendricks, Section A2007\_105\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Joe Hendricks was born on March 22, 1927 in Boligee, Alabama to Bettie Perry Hendricks and Louis Hendricks, Sr. His paternal grandparents, Jim Hendricks and Martha Hendricks, were both born as slaves, and his paternal grandmother told him about her parents' sale to different plantations in Virginia and Georgia.

Hendricks' paternal grandfather drove their slaveholder's carriage, and gained his favor by singing during rides. During Hendricks' childhood, both his paternal and maternal grandparents were sharecroppers in Boligee. His parents were also sharecroppers, and had little formal education. Because there was no hospital nearby, Hendricks was not officially named until he was old enough to begin his studies at Jones Wood School in Tishabee, Alabama. He chose the name Joe after his maternal grandfather, Joe Perry. Hendricks and his twelve siblings grew up during the Great Depression. At the church where his father was a deacon, Hendricks sang in the choir, and followed a prohibition on dancing and drinking.

Education, Elementary--Alabama.

African Americans—Religion.

African American families.

Farm life--Alabama.

Video Oral History Interview with Joe Hendricks, Section A2007\_105\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Joe Hendricks attended the Jones Wood School in Tishabee, Alabama, where there were few resources, and upper grade students often taught the younger classes. After graduating from the eighth grade in 1941, Hendricks moved to Birmingham, Alabama, where he lived with his aunt, Telia Hendricks, and worked for the Western Grain Company. Hendricks joined the union, and mediated disputes between the African American workers and white foremen. His union activities made him an enemy of the white supervisors, and he was nearly fired after being framed for theft at the company. Hendricks was also intimidated by the police due to his civil rights involvement as a guard at the home of civil rights leader Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth. After the forcible arrest of Guy Carawan, a white man who broke Alabama law by attending Hendricks' church, the congregants marched to the jail and were met by Bull Connor and his fire hoses. However, the hoses malfunctioned, and the congregation paid bail for Carawan's release.

Racism--Alabama.

Connor, Bull, 1897-1973.

Civil rights workers--Mississippi--Hattiesburg.

African Americans--Employment.

Labor unions.

Police brutality.

Video Oral History Interview with Joe Hendricks, Section A2007\_105\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Joe Hendricks served as a driver for civil rights activists from outside Birmingham, Alabama. When the Freedom Riders' Greyhound bus was attacked in Anniston, Alabama in 1961, Hendricks and the other drivers sought to safely deliver the occupants to Birmingham. Hendricks himself diverted the Ku Klux Klan, and later met the carpoolers in Anniston. He convinced the police sergeant to release the Freedom Riders, but was warned that they would not have police protection. In Birmingham, Hendricks and his wife, Lola Haynes Hendricks, who was a secretary for the movement, welcomed the Freedom Riders into their home. Their guests included several white women, which was highly taboo. Later, in 1963, Hendricks was jailed and temporarily fired for integrating public buses on the movement's D-Day. That same year, Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church, where Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth hosted meetings of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, was bombed in retaliation. Shuttlesworth, Fred L., 1922-2011.

African Americans--Crimes against.

Ku Klux Klan (1915-).

Integration--Alabama.

Civil rights movements--Alabama--Birmingham--History--20th century.

16th Street Baptist Church Bombing, Birmingham, Ala., 1963.

Video Oral History Interview with Joe Hendricks, Section A2007\_105\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Joe Hendricks helped plan demonstrations, and sang freedom songs in the choir at weekly meetings of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. He sings an excerpt that he arranged for the meetings. He also guarded the home of James Armstrong, whose children enrolled at a white school in Birmingham, Alabama. Hendricks recalls how children were arrested at demonstrations, and held on city fairgrounds instead of in jail with their parents. He describes the nonviolent protest tactics that demonstrators used. Hendricks' supervisors at the Western Grain Company disapproved of his role in the Civil Rights Movement, and made it difficult for Hendricks to attend marches and demonstrations outside Birmingham. Hendricks retired after thirty-eight years at the Western Grain Company; and, from that time, did landscaping work for widows in the community. He also attended New Pilgrim Baptist Church. Hendricks reflects upon his life; his advice to future generations; and how he would like to be remembered.

Civil rights demonstrations.

Civil rights protests--Alabama--Birmingham.

African Americans--Alabama.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.

School integration--Alabama--History--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Joe Hendricks, Section A2007\_105\_001\_005, TRT: 0:07:36 ?

Joe Hendricks narrates his photographs.