



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Floyd Norman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Floyd Norman
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Norman,
Dates:	November 5, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:22:46).
Abstract:	Animator and scriptwriter Floyd Norman (1935 -) has worked for Walt Disney Studios on Sleeping Beauty, The Hunchback of Notre Dame and Mulan. He also worked for Hanna-Barbera Productions as an animator on the Scooby Doo and Smurfs Programs. Norman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 5, 2007, in Pasadena, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_321
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Animator and script writer Floyd Norman was born on June 22, 1935 in Santa Barbara, California. He began producing animated films while he was still in high school. Early in his career, Norman worked with Bill Woggon and Katy Keen on the animated comic book series, "Archie." In the 1960s, Norman attended the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, majoring in illustration. After graduating, Norman was hired at Walt Disney Studios, where he served as an apprentice for ten years. He started working as an animator on the film, "Sleeping Beauty" and was promoted to the story department. Under Walt Disney's personal supervision, Norman worked on the story sequence for a scene entitled, "The Waltz," in the animated film, "The Jungle Book."

Norman met fellow African American animation artist Leo Sullivan right after Sullivan graduated from college and began searching for employment. The two animators realized that they had similar interests and started working with each other on various animated films. Sullivan wrote and directed a short cartoon on the story of Christopher Columbus and later, the two produced an elaborate animated fantasy tale. Norman's and Sullivan's films helped Sullivan earn his first professional job in the animation industry. In the mid-1960s, Norman left Walt Disney Studios, and alongside Sullivan, founded Vignette Films, Inc. where they produced six animated films on the subject of black history. In the 1970s, Norman wrote and produced animated segments for "Sesame Street," "Villa Alegre" and dozens of other educational films. In addition, Norman supervised the animation layout at Hanna-Barbera Productions and storyboarded several shows including "The Flintstones," "The Smurfs" and "Scooby Doo." In the 1980s, Norman returned to Disney and wrote the syndicated Mickey Mouse comic strip. Norman also worked on feature length animated films such as "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," "Mulan" and "Toy Story 2."

In 1999, Norman and Leo Sullivan created a multicultural internet site, www.Afrokids.com, designed to present a

variety of African American images to children. At the Annie Awards in 2003, Norman won the Winsor McKay Lifetime Achievement Award.

Floyd Norman was interviewed by "The HistoryMakers" on November 5, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Floyd Norman was conducted by Jacques Lesure on November 5, 2007, in Pasadena, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Animator and scriptwriter Floyd Norman (1935 -) has worked for Walt Disney Studios on Sleeping Beauty, The Hunchback of Notre Dame and Mulan. He also worked for Hanna-Barbera Productions as an animator on the Scooby Doo and Smurfs Programs.

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:

Norman, Floyd

Lesure, Jacques (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Norman, Floyd--Interviews

African American animators

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Vignette Films, Inc.

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

EntertainmentMakers

EntertainmentMakers

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 Floyd Norman, November 5, 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 8/9/2011 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, November 5, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Norman, Section A2007_321_001_001, TRT: 0:29:08
2007/11/05

Floyd Norman begins the interview by discussing his family history. His mother, Evelyn Davis, and his father, James Norman, were born in Natchez, Mississippi. As a child Norman recalls being excited to visit his grandparent's home in Santa Barbara, California. He recalls first being introduced to Walt Disney's drawings via a book his grandparent's gave him while visiting. In his childhood neighborhood of Santa Barbara, California, there was a diverse array of ethnic groups. Norman does not remember any racial tension while growing up in this neighborhood during the 1940s and 1950s. As a child, Norman was interested in art. He recalls being talented at drawing at a very early age. His passion for music was developed through watching family members play instruments. While attending Santa Barbara Junior High, Norman was mentored by his Caucasian bandleader, Irvine McGuire.

African American families--California--Santa Barbara.

African American grandparents.

Race relations--California--Santa Barbara.

African American children--Elementary (Secondary).

Art--Study and teaching.

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Norman, Section A2007_321_001_002, TRT: 0:29:01
2007/11/05

Floyd Norman discusses how he received a job assisting Bill Wagan, a cartoonist for Archie comics, while he was in the eleventh grade. When Norman first began working for Wagan he did menial animation tasks, such as drawing borders and text bubbles. Eventually Wagan became a mentor to him and he suggested that Norman should go to college at The Arts Center College of Design specializing in illustration. In college, he had great respect for upper classmen such as Guy Deal, Don Putman and Roth McCory. Norman does not recall any racial tensions in Los Angeles, California until the 1960s. In 1955, during his third year at The Arts Center College of Design, he was scouted by Ken Ceiling to take an apprenticeship that Walt Disney had begun. After the one month apprenticeship, he was hired by Disney as an animator. Norman discusses the hierarchy of Disney workers and artists.

African American animators--California.

African American college students--California--Pasadena.

Race relations--California--Los Angeles.

Apprenticeship programs--California.

Walt Disney Company--Employees.

Art Center College of Design (Pasadena, Calif.).

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Norman, Section A2007_321_001_003, TRT: 0:29:18
2007/11/05

Floyd Norman discusses the first time he saw Walt Disney. Norman was the only African American in the Walt Disney apprenticeship program. Norman provides his opinion on Disney's anti-Semitic and racist cartoons. He was the only African American working at Walt Disney studios during the 1960s. Norman remembers being asked by his Caucasian co-workers in the 1960s why the African American people were rioting in Los Angeles. The Californian media had an inherent fear of shooting footage in Watts, California. Walt

Disney studios shot footage of the Watts riots, some of which they sold to NBC. Norman recalls an inherent lack of diversity in the media. He believes that Walt Disney was a visionary who knew exactly what he wanted from life. He discusses the origins of the Disneyland concept and the problems that occurred on the day the theme park opened.

Disney, Walt, 1901-1966.

Apprenticeship programs--California.

Racism in cartoons--United States.

Riots--California--Los Angeles

Diversity in the workplace--United States

Disneyland (Calif.)--Planning.

Antisemitism

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Norman, Section A2007_321_001_004, TRT: 0:28:43
2007/11/05

Floyd Norman recalls being drafted into the Armed Forces during a truce period in the Korean conflict. This call to duty came during a period when Norman was working on "101 Dalmatians." Norman was shocked by Walt Disney's death in 1966. When Walt Disney died, Norman left Disney Inc. and opened Vignette Films Inc. with the help of his friends Leo Sullivan, Dick Allen and Norman Edmond. The men faced adversity from Caucasian-owned banks that refused to lend money to a group of African American men attempting to build a business. Vignette Films, Inc. eventually closed in the 1970s, at this time Norman went to work for Hanna-Barbera. He compares vintage to modern cartoons and extrapolates some of their differences. Norman was honored by The Black Film Makers Hall of Fame for films he produced about African American history.

African american soldiers--Korea.

Disney, Walt, 1901-1966

African Americans in the motion picture industry--California.

Banks and Banking--Race relations.

Hanna-Barbera Productions

Animation (Cinematography).

Entrepreneurs--California.

Draft--United States

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Norman, Section A2007_321_001_005, TRT: 0:26:36
2007/11/05

Floyd Norman discusses his role as a story artist on various Disney films including; "The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin," and "The Lion King." When he returned to work at Disney after a hiatus, he believed his ideas did not fit into the new company policies. Norman discusses why so few African Americans go into the animation field. Disney loaned Norman to Pixar where he worked on "Toy Story II" and "Monsters, Inc." Norman's website, www.afrokids.com, introduces children to African American history. In 2000, Norman retired from Disney. He recalls receiving both The Annie Award and the Disney Legend Award. Ward Kimball's philosophy on work ethics in animation influenced Norman, and he believes these ethics should influence young animators. Norman discusses the importance of putting family before career. The interview closes with Norman discussing his values, his legacy and the importance of knowing one's own history.

Disney-MGM Studios--Employees.
African American animators--California.
African Americans--History--Study and Teaching
Animation (Cinematography)--Awards
Kimball, Ward
African American families--California
Pixar (Firm)