Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers ® Video Oral History with Henry Presswood

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com

Creator: Presswood, Henry

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Henry Presswood,

Dates: November 6, 2003

Bulk Dates: 2003

Physical Description: 3 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:27:50).

Abstract: Baseball player Henry Presswood (1921 - ) was a shortstop and third baseman for the Negro Leagues. Presswood was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 6, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2001_059

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Henry Presswood was born on October 7, 1921, in Electric Mills, Mississippi. From 1948-52 Presswood played shortstop and third baseman in the Negro Leagues. During his time in the Leagues, Presswood starred for both the Cleveland Buckeyes and the Kansas City Monarchs.

After leaving professional baseball, Presswood went to work at Inland Steel, where he played fast-pitch softball. He won several trophies and also a good sportsmanship award. Presswood retired from Inland Steel after more than thirty years of employment.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Henry Presswood was conducted by Ray Parr Moore on November 6, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 3 Betacam SP videocassettes. Baseball player Henry Presswood (1921 - ) was a shortstop and third baseman for the Negro Leagues.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use
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:

Presswood, Henry
Moore, Ray Parr (Interviewer)
Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Henry Presswood--Interviews

African American baseball players.
Negro leagues.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)
The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection
Kansas City Monarchs (Baseball team)

HistoryMakers® Category:

SportsMakers

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


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 7/3/2012 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 6, 2003

Video Oral History Interview with Henry Presswood, Section A2001_059_001_001, TRT: 0:28:05 2003/11/06

Henry Presswood describes his upbringing in Electric Mills, Mississippi, the home of the first electric sawmill in the United States. His mother, Josephine Mathews Presswood, was a homemaker; and his father, Dee Presswood, was a church deacon who also worked at the sawmill. Presswood first encountered baseball through Jimmy Faison, who played first base for the Mill City Jitterbugs, the sawmill company team. Faison taught Presswood how to catch a ball and recommended that he play shortstop. Presswood enjoyed math and history at school and was inspired by his teacher Ms. L.R. Powell. He continued his studies up until the tenth grade, when he married one of his classmates. Soon after, he worked at the sawmill with his father.

Electric Mills (Miss.)
Sawmills--Mississippi--Electric Mills.
Baseball--Mississippi--Electric Mills--1930-1940.
African American families--Religious life.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry Presswood, Section A2001_059_001_002, TRT: 0:29:55 2003/11/06

Henry Presswood played baseball for the Mill City Jitterbugs and was the only kid in the game with older players like his mentor, Jimmy Faison. Presswood described his town, Electric Mills, Mississippi, and the area near his home
which was called "the uppercut." When Presswood was caught by his father, Dee Presswood, with the Cole brothers rolling a cigarette, he vowed never to smoke or drink. As a teenager, he lived with his aunt [Ida Nelson] in Birmingham, Alabama and played baseball for the City League against Willie Mays. When he was drafted after WWII, Presswood played for the army team. Later he worked at a sawmill in Canton, Mississippi, and was recruited to play for the Cleveland Buckeyes by outfielder and pitcher, William "Willie" Grace. Presswood played for the Negro Leagues from 1948-1950 and the Kansas City Monarchs from 1950-1952.

Electric Mills (Miss.)
United States. Army--Sports.
Cleveland Buckeyes (Baseball team)
Negro leagues--1940-1950.

Video Oral History Interview with Henry Presswood, Section A2001_059_001_003, TRT: 0:29:50 2003/11/06

In 1950, Henry Presswood played for the Kansas City Monarchs after speaking to John "Buck" O'Neil. O'Neil became a mentor to Presswood, teaching him baseball fundamentals. Presswood was impressed by pitcher, "Satchel" Paige and was surprised when his own batting average dropped from 287 to 194 after playing with him. Presswood listed players he felt should have been in the major leagues like Big Joe Greene and Luke Easter. He discussed his admiration for Jackie Robinson and how it adversely affected the Negro Leagues when he went to the majors. When Presswood noticed he had slowed down as a player, he retired from the Monarchs and worked for Inland Steel to support his family. During that time, he played fast-pitch softball for the Local 1010 League and for the company team, winning numerous awards. Presswood expressed his hopes for the black community.

Kansas City Monarchs (Baseball team)
Robinson, Jackie, 1919-1972
Inland Steel Company.