

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Enid C. Pinkney

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Pinkney, Enid C., 1931-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Enid C. Pinkney,
Dates:	April 16, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:29:50).
Abstract:	Community activist Enid C. Pinkney (1931 -) served as the first black president of the Dade Heritage Trust historic preservation organization and is the founder of the African American Committee, which focuses on the contributions of blacks to the community. She has successfully led numerous committees to save landmark historical sites. Pinkney was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 16, 2002, in Miami, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_064
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Preservation leader Enid C. Pinkney has worked aggressively over the years to ensure that the role of African Americans in Miami's history is acknowledged and preserved.

Pinkney was born the third of four children on October 15, 1931 in Miami-Dade County, Florida to Lenora and Henry Curtis. She graduated from the all-black

Booker T. Washington High School in Miami in 1949, receiving a B.A. from Talladega College in 1953 and an M.S. from Barry University in 1967. Pinkney worked as a social worker from 1953 to 1955, after which she worked in the Dade County Public School System until she retired as Assistant Principal at South Miami Middle School in 1991.

She joined the Dade Heritage Trust historic preservation organization in the mid-1980s while Assistant Principal at South Miami Middle School. She was elected the first black president of the Trust in 1998. Pinkney is the founder of the African American Committee, which focuses on the contributions of blacks to the community. She has worked to preserve such historical sites as the landmark Brownsville Hotel, once the social and cultural epicenter of black Miami during segregation. Pinkney successfully led a group to form the Historic Hampton House Community Trust, working to save the hotel, which was declared a historical landmark in April 2002.

She is also an unofficial historian for Brown Sub, or Brownsville, the North Central Dade community where she lives. She has written a book and produced several videos on its history. The Miami Talladega College Alumni Association holds an Annual Enid C. Pinkney Humanitarian Awards Luncheon in which people are honored for their community contributions. Pinkney is married to Frank Pinkney, who is also involved with the Trust.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Enid C. Pinkney was conducted by Samuel Adams on April 16, 2002, in Miami, Florida, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Community activist Enid C. Pinkney (1931 -) served as the first black president of the Dade Heritage Trust historic preservation organization and is the founder of the African American Committee, which focuses on the contributions of blacks to the community. She has successfully led numerous committees to save landmark historical sites.

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:

Pinkney, Enid C., 1931-

Adams, Samuel (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Pinkney, Enid C., 1931---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

Occupations:

Community Activist

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Enid C. Pinkney, April 16, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Enid C. Pinkney, Section
A2002_064_001_001, TRT: 0:31:06 2002/04/16

Enid Pinkney describes her family background. She was born to Henry and Lenora Curtis in Miami, Florida on October 15, 1931. Henry Curtis was born in Cat Island, Bahamas and immigrated to Miami, Florida in 1910. Lenora Clarke Curtis was born in Exuma, Bahamas, and immigrated to Miami in 1920. Henry Curtis worked as a gardener and a minister, while his wife worked as a maid on Miami Beach. Lenora Clarke Curtis was very active in the church and always presented herself well, with matching shoes and purses and custom-made dresses. A prideful man, Henry Curtis' faith in God allowed him to confront discrimination in Jim Crow Florida. The Curtis' raised their children in a household strong in Bahamian tradition, where they ate pigeon peas, rice, and conch dishes, and listened to Bahamian Calypso music. The sights, smells, and sounds of Pinkney's childhood include the smell of fried fish, the sights of Miami's Overtown neighborhood, and the music of her childhood church.

Video Oral History Interview with Enid C. Pinkney, Section
A2002_064_001_002, TRT: 0:29:58 2002/04/16

Enid Pinkney describes her schooling experiences. She attended Dunbar Elementary School and Booker T. Washington High School in Miami, Florida. Pinkney was president of Booker T. Washington High School's Student Council, and a member of the Girls' Senate and Honor Society. As Student Council President, she even had the opportunity to collect a \$200 donation from boxer Joe Lewis when he paid a visit to her high school. Pinkney describes some of her most influential teachers, as well as how they shaped her spirit of activism. Outside of school, the church played a central role in Pinkney's youth, providing her with learning opportunities and self-

confidence. This self-confidence gave her the strength to face discrimination in Jim Crow-era Miami, Florida, as well. After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School in 1949, Pinkney went on to attend Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama, where she majored in social studies.

Video Oral History Interview with Enid C. Pinkney, Section A2002_064_001_003, TRT: 0:29:21 2002/04/16

Enid Pinkney began attending Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama in 1949. A social studies major, Pinkney was also active in her community. She served as President of the Talladega YWCA, and traveled to engage in integrated YWCA meetings across the state of Alabama. After graduating in 1953, Pinkney moved to Chicago, Illinois to provide social services to families and children in settlement homes. Expecting racial tensions in the North to be less severe than those in the South, Pinkney was blind-sighted by the discrimination she faced in Chicago. As a result, she moved back to Miami, Florida in the mid-1950s. Pinkney taught English at Dorsey Junior High School for many years before becoming a counselor at Edison Senior High School in the 1960s. In the late 1960s, Pinkney helped her students write and produce a controversial, yet well-received, play that expressed their frustrations with integration. Pinkney closes by describing the challenges she faced as a teacher during the integration era.

Video Oral History Interview with Enid C. Pinkney, Section A2002_064_001_004, TRT: 0:28:34 2002/04/16

In the 1980s, Enid Pinkney became Assistant Principal of South Miami Middle School in Miami, Florida. She introduced various programs to encourage her students to embrace black heritage, including black history assemblies and an annual Soul Food Luncheon. In the early 1990s, Pinkney was asked to serve on the Dade Heritage Trust's Board of Directors. Initially a hesitant participant, Pinkney ramped up her involvement after realizing the organization failed to recognize Miami's black heritage adequately. She organized the organization's African American Committee, and led a three year research project documenting the blacks buried in Miami's City Cemetery.

The project was featured in a television series entitled “Resurrection: Stories of Black History from the Miami City Cemetery.” Pinkney was elected as the Dade Heritage Trust’s first African American president in 1998, where she led successful battles to preserve The Miami Circle Native American grounds and Virginia Key Beach in Miami, Florida.

Video Oral History Interview with Enid C. Pinkney, Section
A2002_064_001_005, TRT: 0:30:51 2002/04/16

In 1998, Enid Pinkney was elected as the first African American President of the Dade Heritage Trust. In the early 2000s, Pinkney helped form the Trust’s Save the Hampton House Committee to preserve Miami, Florida’s Historic Hampton House Formerly a gathering place for the nation’s African American leaders and elite, including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jackie Robinson, the Hampton House was slated to be demolished in the early 2000s. Due to the efforts of the ‘Save The Hampton House Committee,’ Miami Mayor Alexander Penellas was granted a stay of demolition for the Hampton House. By 2002, Dade County officials were working to prepare a proposal for the Hampton House to receive historical designation in Florida. Despite her critics, Pinkney works to preserve spaces significant to African American heritage to educate black youth. Pinkney talks about her philosophy on service, hopes and concerns for the African American community, and her legacy. She closes the interview by narrating her photographs.