Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Florida Yeldell

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator: Yeldell, Florida
Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell,
Dates: December 5, 2003
Bulk Dates: 2003
Physical Description: 4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:57:15).
Abstract: History professor Florida Yeldell (1915 - 2006) has taught history at a number of colleges throughout Texas, including Prairie View A&M University, Jarvis Christian College, and Texas College. Yeldell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 5, 2003, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification: A2002_221
Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator Florida Jackson Yeldell lived out her father's dream in her life and career. Born in Georgetown, South Carolina, on January 2, 1915, Yeldell grew up in the town until she went to boarding school at Morris College at age fifteen. Yeldell remained until she earned her A.B. in English from the school in 1936 before moving to Andrews, South Carolina, where she taught fifth- and sixth-graders for two years.

Yeldell's father, a mail carrier, told his daughter of dreaming about returning to school to study history, which fascinated him because their Georgetown neighborhood was particularly rich in it. During the Great Depression, Yeldell did just that, receiving a scholarship from the National Youth Administration to study history at Howard University, where she earned an M.A. in 1941. She worked for the government during World War II and then embarked on a long career teaching at colleges in Texas. She first taught social studies at Butler College and taught U.S. history at Jarvis Christian College and Texas College. Yeldell finally settled down at Prairie View A&M, where she taught courses in Western civilization, U.S. history and social studies until retiring in 1979. Even after retiring, she continued to teach, working at Houston Community College, and lived in Texas for ten years before returning to her childhood home of South Carolina.

In retirement, Yeldell keeps active by volunteering to teach history. She gave guided tours at Brook Green Garden and worked with the Friends of the Library. Under the aegis of the Senior Scholars, Yeldell and David Drayton, principal of the last black-only school in Georgetown County, began teaching a course on the history of blacks in Georgetown County. For her work in teaching the history her father loved, Yeldell has been honored by Coastal Carolina University.
Yeldell passed away on May 25, 2006, with one son, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

**Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Florida Yeldell was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 5, 2003, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. History professor Florida Yeldell (1915 - 2006) has taught history at a number of colleges throughout Texas, including Prairie View A&M University, Jarvis Christian College, and Texas College.

**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:**

Yeldell, Florida

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

**Subjects:**
African Americans--Interviews
Yeldell, Florida--Interviews

African American women educators--Interviews.

African American historians--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/6/2013 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, December 5, 2003
Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell, Section A2002_221_001_001, TRT: 0:28:20 2003/12/05

Educator, Florida Yeldell was born on January 2, 1915 in Georgetown, South Carolina. Her father, Robert James Jackson was also born in Georgetown, where he worked as a letter carrier. Her mother was Janie Alizabeth Anderson Jackson; she died during childbirth in 1925 at the age of thirty, when Yeldell was very young. Yeldell’s mother and father had four children together--all girls--and tried very hard to instill a sense of independence and self-reliance in them. Her paternal great grandfather, Alanza Jackson and his son, Yeldell’s paternal grandfather, were slaves on the Hagley Plantation in Georgetown County where they raised rice. However, her grandfather was not a fieldworker; he drove the carriage and tended to the horses. Similarly, her mother’s grandfather was a driver on the Friendfield Plantation in Georgetown County, where he was responsible for supervising slaves in their daily tasks.

Slavery--South Carolina.
Plantation life--South Carolina--Georgetown County--History.
Slave-driver.
Childbirth--Complications.
Blacksmithing--South Carolina--Salters.

Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell, Section A2002_221_001_002, TRT: 0:29:40 2003/12/05

Florida Yeldell talks about the neighborhood she grew up in. Blacks and whites lived in the same neighborhood but she would hardly call their living situation integrated. Yeldell grew up during a time when blacks did not have the right to vote or hold public office. Yeldell talks about her schooling and her interests as a young girl. She loved school and loved to learn. She also enjoyed befriending other children at school. Yeldell attended the Howard School, which was named after Oliver Otis Howard. Yeldell remembers that the school was excellent with and equally excellent and dedicated principal, whose name was J.B. Beck. She attended the Howard School until she was in the tenth grade, when her father sent her to boarding school at Morris College in Sumter, South Carolina.

African American letter carriers.
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877).
Howard, O. O. (Oliver Otis), 1830-1909.
Morris College (Sumter, S.C.)
Boarding school students--South Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell, Section A2002_221_001_003, TRT: 0:29:15 2003/12/05
Florida Yeldell graduated from Morris College in 1936. She received a scholarship from the National Youth Administration to study history at Howard University, where she earned an M.A. in 1941. Yeldell attended Howard University when the likes of Dr. Wayford Logan of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and Dr. Charles H. Wesley were there. Professor William Leo Hansberry was also teaching at Howard at the time of Yeldell’s attendance. During her teaching career, Yeldell and David Drayton, principal of the last black-only school in Georgetown County, taught a course together on the history of blacks in Georgetown County—which was her father's dream. Yeldell shares some highlights of the history of black people in Georgetown County, detailing the important contribution enslaved blacks made to the area by introducing their knowledge of rice growing to whites.

Howard University. Graduate School.
France History Revolution, 1789-1799.
Library of Congress.
Howard University--Faculty.
Rice--Planting.

Video Oral History Interview with Florida Yeldell, Section A2002_221_001_004, TRT: 0:30:00 2003/12/05

Florida Yeldell discusses the highlights of her teaching career. She is grateful that she did as her father suggested and became a teacher, instead of a foreign correspondent for the “New York Times,” because she does not think it would have been as exciting as teaching. When she taught English and History at Prairie View A&M University in Texas, she went back to school at the age of fifty-eight and earned a Master’s degree in Geography from California State University. She loved Geography because she always felt that it was critical to teaching history. However, the course she enjoyed teaching the most was World History; what’s more, she thinks that it should be a required course in the general education of all students. Yeldell also talks about some of her favorite historical figures, which include Thomas Jefferson and Woodrow Wilson.

Teaching and learning in higher education.
History--Study and teaching (Higher)--United States.
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826--Influence.
Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Views on international relations.
Slave trade--Arab countries--History.