

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Leatrice Branch Madison

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Madison, Leatrice Branch, 1922-2012
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Leatrice Branch Madison,
Dates:	June 14, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:58:42).
Abstract:	Community activist Leatrice Branch Madison (1922 - 2012) is a co-founder of and one of the original board members for HARAMBEE: Services to Black Families, an agency designed to provide parenting skills to teenage parents and to recruit permanent adoptive homes for African American children. Madison was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 14, 2004, in Shaker Heights, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_074
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civic leader, retired educator, and community activist Leatrice Branch Madison, was born September 5, 1922 in Washington, D.C. to Julia Bailey Branch and Hayes Branch. She was the oldest of three daughters. She attended the racially segregated public schools of Washington, D.C., graduating from Dunbar Senior High in 1939. Madison went on to earn a bachelor's of science degree (cum laude) from Miner Teachers College in Washington, D.C. in 1943 and a master's of arts degree in guidance and personnel from the University of Chicago in 1947.

Madison taught in the public schools of Washington, D.C. from 1943 to 1949 and Cleveland, Ohio between 1949-1951 and again later from 1954-1960, before becoming a fulltime wife, mother, homemaker and community volunteer in 1960. During this time, she also worked as an assistant librarian at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (1951-1952). Madison has served on the boards of numerous educational and human services organizations, including the Bingham Day Nursery, United Way Services, the Federation for Community Planning, Case Western Reserve University Board of Overseers, and Blue Cross of Northeast Ohio. Madison was a founding member of Heights Citizens for Human Rights— forerunner of Heights Community Congress--an organization established to ensure equal rights and fair housing for minorities moving into Cleveland Heights. She was also a founder of and one of the original board members for HARAMBEE: Services to Black Families, an agency designed to provide parenting skills to teenage parents and to recruit permanent adoptive homes for Black youngsters.

Madison's devotion to community service also inspired committee work with the Urban League of Greater Cleveland, Friends of Karamu, the NAACP Fund Dinner, Case Western Reserve University's Visiting Committee on the Humanities, the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra Advisory Council, the Planned Parenthood Long Range Planning Committee, and the Juvenile Court Youth Services Advisory Board, among others. In 1963, she helped launch the Cleveland Heights / University Heights Summer School Project, recruiting participants from the Cleveland Public Schools and raising funds to offer financial assistance to those in need. The project, which ended in 1969, helped pave the way for the integration of the Cleveland Heights / University Heights Schools.

Madison is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the NAACP's Distinguished Service Plaque, the Federation for Community Planning's President's Award, Who's Who Among Black Americans, and the University of Chicago Alumni Association's Public Service Award. In 1999, Mrs. Madison and her husband Robert P. Madison received the Cleveland Opera Award for their visionary support of the arts in Cleveland. In 2004, she was honored by the Golden Age Centers for her many years of community service. Madison is an alumna member and former president of the Links, Incorporated, Cleveland Chapter.

Madison and her husband, Robert, reside in Shaker Heights, Ohio. They are the parents of two adult daughters.

Madison was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 14, 2004.\

Leatrice Madison passed away on March 30, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Leatrice Branch Madison was conducted by Regennia Williams on June 14, 2004, in Shaker Heights, Ohio, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Community activist Leatrice Branch Madison (1922 - 2012) is a co-founder of and one of the original board members for HARAMBEE: Services to Black Families, an agency designed to provide parenting skills to teenage parents and to recruit permanent adoptive homes for African American children.

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:

Madison, Leatrice Branch, 1922-2012

Williams, Regennia (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Madison, Leatrice Branch, 1922-2012--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American 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 Leatrice Branch Madison, June 14, 2004. 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 Leatrice Branch Madison, Section A2004_074_001_001, TRT: 0:29:33 2004/06/14

Leatrice Branch Madison was born on September 5, 1922 in Washington, D.C. Her parents, Julia Bailey Branch and Hayes Branch, were from Petersburg, Virginia and Marion, Virginia, respectively. They bought a house in Washington D.C. but discovered it had a restrictive covenant, barring African Americans from buying it. They fought the covenant in court and lost, but were able to move into a house across the street in 1927. Madison attended racially segregated schools in D.C. including Mott School, Shaw Junior High and Dunbar High School where Mordecai Johnson, whose father was president of

Howard University, was her classmate. Mott matriculated at Miner Teachers College in D.C. in 1939 and graduated in 1943. World War II began while she was in college and many of her male classmates were drafted. She talks about her husband, HistoryMaker Robert Madison, and his experience in the 92nd Infantry; as well as her grandmother's death; and the political affiliation of D.C.'s African American community in the 1940s.

Video Oral History Interview with Leatrice Branch Madison, Section A2004_074_001_002, TRT: 0:28:34 2004/06/14

Leatrice Branch Madison pledged Delta Sigma Theta Sorority as an undergraduate; she describes how she found the sorority useful upon moving to Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1951, where her husband HistoryMaker Robert Madison was studying at Harvard University. In Cambridge, she worked in a Harvard University library. Madison moved to Paris, France in 1952 when her husband earned a Fulbright Award; there, she befriended sociologist E. Franklin Frazier and his wife. Upon returning to the U.S. in 1953, the Madisons moved back to Washington, D.C., before moving to Cleveland, Ohio in 1954. Madison had a certificate in elementary education and counseling, but had difficulty finding work as a counselor. In 1960, the family moved to the predominantly white Cleveland Heights where they frequently received racially threatening letters and learned of African American neighbors whose houses were bombed. She also talks about Karamu House, voting rights in Washington, D.C., and her parents' home.

Video Oral History Interview with Leatrice Branch Madison, Section A2004_074_001_003, TRT: 0:29:19 2004/06/14

Leatrice Branch Madison and her husband, HistoryMaker Robert P. Madison, were among the first black families to move to Cleveland Heights, Ohio. She was active in the Heights Citizens for Human Rights which fought for open housing starting in the 1960s, though it took almost a decade to make progress. She was also a neighborhood chairman for the Girl Scouts and in 1963, launched a program to integrate a local summer school by securing funding and renting a bus to bring students from Cleveland to Fairfax Elementary School in Cleveland

Heights. Madison joined the PTA when her daughter started school in Cleveland Heights in the third grade, and became its first black president. She recalls her interactions with the school's principal and racial slurs her daughter endured. Madison founded HARAMBEE, an adoption program aimed at finding families for black children; and, was a member of the Women's Committee of the Cleveland Orchestra, Jack and Jill of America and The Links, Incorporated.

Video Oral History Interview with Leatrice Branch Madison, Section A2004_074_001_004, TRT: 0:31:16 2004/06/14

Leatrice Branch Madison worked with Project Discovery, which helped underemployed and unemployed women develop their skillsets; was involved in United Way Services and was the first black woman to serve as chairperson of its fundraising campaign; and served on the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board. During her life, Madison was active in more than thirty organizations and at the time of the interview, continued to fundraise and volunteer. She talks about the self-segregation of predominantly black organizations The Links, Incorporated and Jack and Jill of America and the importance of education reform and attention to students' individual abilities. She shares her concerns for the 21st century and reflects upon her life and her success. Madison has received numerous awards, including the Golden Age Centers Award. She talks about her granddaughter and remembers moving to Paris, France with her husband HistoryMaker Robert P. Madison. She concludes by narrating her photographs.