

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Della Hardman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hardman, Della Taylor, 1922-2005
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Della Hardman,
Dates:	August 19, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:00:51).
Abstract:	Art professor Della Hardman (1922 - 2005) was an associate professor of art at West Virginia State College for thirty years, and a frequent guest lecturer at a long list of universities and art museums. Hardman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 19, 2004, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_134
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Arts educator Della Hardman was born on May 20, 1922, in Charleston, West Virginia; her mother, Captolia Brown, was a teacher, and her father, Anderson Hunt Brown, owned a meat market in Charleston and later worked as a realtor for fifty years. Following the death of her mother, Hardman was raised by her aunt Della Brown, a teacher who always encouraged her young niece to pay attention in school, especially in history. After graduating from Garnet High School in 1940, Hardman enrolled in West Virginia State College, where she earned her B.S. degree in education in 1943. From there, Hardman continued her education at the

Massachusetts College of Art, and earned her M.A. degree from Boston University in 1945. Hardman continued on with her education throughout her lifetime, earning her Ph.D. from Kent State University in 1994; she also attended numerous educational institutes both in the United States and abroad.

While attending college, Hardman worked throughout the summers at her father's real estate office, where she was a licensed real estate broker in West Virginia until 1986. In 1952, Hardman took a position with the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, where she remained for two years; from there, she began teaching art in the Boston Public Schools. In 1956, Hardman became an associate professor of art at West Virginia State College; she continued in that post for the next thirty years. During her tenure at West Virginia State College, Hardman also lectured at a number of other universities and art galleries. Concurrently, Hardman hosted *The Black Experience* on WKAZ in Charleston between 1978 and 1988.

Throughout the course of her life, Hardman served actively with a number of groups, including acting as a chairperson of the board of trustees of the Charleston Art Gallery, and being a member of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and the National Association of Art Administrators. Hardman was recognized as an Alumna of the Year by her alma mater, West Virginia State College; as the Outstanding Art Educator by the NAEA; and was named commissioner of the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council by Governor John D. Rockefeller.

Hardman traveled extensively around the globe, and was the proud mother of three, including HistoryMaker Andrea Taylor and grandmother of seven; she passed away on December 13, 2005, at the age of eighty-three.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Della Hardman was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 19, 2004, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Art professor Della Hardman (1922 - 2005) was an associate professor of art at West Virginia State College for thirty years, and a frequent guest lecturer at a long list of universities and art museums.

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:

Hardman, Della Taylor, 1922-2005

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hardman, Della Taylor, 1922-2005--Interviews

African American women college teachers--Interviews

African American women educators--Interviews

Art teachers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

West Virginia State College (Institute, W. Va.)

Occupations:

Art Professor

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

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Della Hardman, August 19, 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 Della Hardman, Section
A2004_134_001_001, TRT: 0:30:03 2004/08/19

Della Hardman was born on May 20, 1922. Her mother, Captolia Casey Brown, was from Gallipolis, Ohio. She earned a teaching degree from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio before moving to Charleston, West Virginia, where she taught grade school and married Hardman's father. Hardman's mother painted watercolors as a young woman, several of which hung in Hardman's maternal grandmother's home in Gallipolis. These paintings inspired Hardman's interest in art. Hardman's mother died in childbirth when Hardman was twenty months old. Although Hardman never knew her mother directly, she learned about her through others' memories. Hardman's father, Anderson Brown, was from Dunbar, West Virginia. He was a realtor and owned a meat market in Charleston. Brown had a keen business sense and was able to both build and buy several properties in Charleston and other areas, which he did through his eighties. He married three times; each wife died in childbirth. Hardman has one older half-brother, Willard L. Brown.

African American women college teachers--Interviews.

African American women educators--Interviews.

Art teachers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Della Hardman, Section
A2004_134_001_002, TRT: 0:30:20 2004/08/19

Della Hardman grew up in Charleston, West Virginia where she was raised by her father, Anderson Brown, and paternal aunt, Della Brown. Her aunt attended West Virginia State College and was a teacher. She had been engaged when Hardman's mother died, and she broke the engagement to move in with Hardman's father and help raise Hardman. Hardman's father wanted her to become a doctor but her aunt convinced him to let her pursue art. Hardman's brother, Willard L. Brown, was a lawyer, president of the local NAACP and active in the Civil Rights Movement with their father. Hardman like to bake bread every Saturday night even though her father's nearby restaurant nearby meant she did not often cook. In high school, Hardman dated Opportunities Industrialization Centers' founder Leon H. Sullivan. She attended First Baptist Church, which was pastored by Mordecai Johnson and later, Vernon Johns. She remembers James Produce Company, the oldest continuously operating black business in the U.S., and traveling to Ghana.

Video Oral History Interview with Della Hardman, Section
A2004_134_001_003, TRT: 0:30:00 2004/08/19

Della Hardman grew up in a close-knit black community in Charleston, West Virginia. She learned about black history from her family and went on trips to Washington, D.C. with her aunt's fifth grade class. Her father and brother integrated the local library; however, Hardman was sheltered from many negative aspects of segregation during her childhood. Hardman attended Garnet School and Boyd School during her elementary years, then Garnet High School in Charleston. At the latter, she was a member of the B Square Club and learned art from an influential art teacher with an M.A. degree from Columbia University. Her father insisted that she remain in-state to attend West Virginia State College in Institute, West Virginia, which she did alongside HistoryMaker Damon J.

Keith and George Farmer, the father of HistoryMaker Sharon Farmer. In 1963, Hardman attended the March on Washington. In 1978, Hardman began her own radio show, 'The Black Experience,' for which she interviewed Gwendolyn Brooks and others.

Video Oral History Interview with Della Hardman, Section A2004_134_001_004, TRT: 0:31:10 2004/08/19

Della Hardman worked at her father's real estate office during her summers in college. She graduated with a B.A. in art from West Virginia State College in 1943. She moved to Boston and attended Massachusetts School of Art for a year. She then enrolled in Boston University's M.F.A. program and earned her degree in 1945. She married a high school sweetheart, Francis Taylor, who worked as a jazz musician. As a married woman, she was not allowed to teach in the Boston school system so her father built a pottery workshop where she taught classes. She was hired at the Fogg Museum at Harvard University but left after a year to teach art at West Virginia State College. An interaction with one of her students inspired her to travel and she visited Europe. Later, she traveled with Friendship Force International to South Korea. . Hardman attended the World Festival of Black Arts in Dakar, Senegal, and its second iteration in 1977 in Festac, Nigeria. She remembers Hoyt Fuller and the death of her first husband in 1978.

Video Oral History Interview with Della Hardman, Section A2004_134_001_005, TRT: 0:30:42 2004/08/19

Della Hardman became a professor of art at West Virginia State College in Institute, West Virginia in 1956. While on sabbatical, she studied pottery with ceramicist Henry Lin, father of noted memorial designer Maya Lin, at Ohio University. He later helped her begin a pottery program at West Virginia State. Hardman also traveled with her students to Europe. Hardman began her doctoral research at the University of Minnesota, then continued at Kent State University, where she earned her Ph.D. in 1994. After retiring from teaching and pottery making, Hardman hosted a radio show, 'The Black Experience' where she interviewed Scatman Crothers, Gwendolyn Brooks and others. Hardman bought a home on Martha's Vineyard due

to her fond childhood memories of trips there and her love of the island and its community. In 1985, a high school sweetheart, Leon Hartman, escorted her to her fortieth class reunion at Boston University. They later married. Since the late 1990s, Hardman has written for the Vineyard Gazette.

Video Oral History Interview with Della Hardman, Section
A2004_134_001_006, TRT: 0:28:36 2004/08/19

Della Hardman's second marriage to her high school sweetheart, Leon Hardman, lasted for seven and a half years before his death of pancreatic cancer. During that time, the couple lived on Martha's Vineyard despite Leon's initial reticence, and traveled to Bermuda. Hardman remembers their last trip, which was to a dinner in West Virginia hosted by the governor, with HistoryMaker Henry Louis "Skip" Gates, Jr. in attendance. Hardman talks about her children, including her daughter, HistoryMaker Andrea Taylor, and her grandchildren. She describes their surprise visits and her father and aunt's support for her. Hardman fondly remembers notable former students, including Doughtry "Doc" Long, Adrienne Belafonte Biesemeyer, and Jo-Anne Bates. Hardman reflects upon her life and legacy, and describes how she would like to be remembered. She concludes by narrating photographs.