

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Walter Theodore Hayden

---

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Hayden, Walter Theodore, 1926-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Walter Theodore Hayden,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 23, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:13:52).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Leisure entrepreneur and printing entrepreneur Walter Theodore Hayden (1926 - ) was once owner of the Star Bowl, which served as a meeting place in Birmingham, Alabama, for civil rights workers during the Civil Rights Movement. After moving to Fort Wayne, Indiana, Hayden founded Diamond Printing; created his own line of African American greeting cards; and began publishing the Fort Wayne Black Pages Business Directory. Hayden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 23, 2005, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_122
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Entrepreneur Walter Theodore Hayden was born June 24, 1926, in Tuskegee, Alabama, where his father, Rev. Charles Hayden of Greenwood, Mississippi, was chaplain of Tuskegee University. Hayden attended Hudson Elementary School in Birmingham, Alabama, and graduated from Birmingham's Parker High School in 1944; he was a pre-med student at Indiana University from 1944 to 1947.

In the mid-1950s, Hayden was a driver and broker for PR & R Trucking Company in Birmingham. From 1961 to 1964, Hayden was the owner and operator of Birmingham's Star Bowl bowling lanes. Star Bowl became a meeting place and a secret sheltering place for civil rights workers during the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham. In 1964, Hayden moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he started Diamond Printing; soon thereafter, he began printing and distributing his own line of African American oriented greeting cards. In 1995, Hayden founded Fort Wayne Black Pages Business Directory.

A lifetime member of the NAACP, Hayden was also a member of the Urban League for twenty years, and for over sixty years was a member of the A.M.E. church. Hayden and his wife, Ernestine, remained in Fort Wayne where they raised nine children.

---

## **Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Walter Theodore Hayden was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 23, 2005, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Leisure entrepreneur and printing entrepreneur Walter Theodore Hayden (1926 - ) was once owner of the Star Bowl, which served as a meeting place in Birmingham, Alabama, for civil rights workers during the Civil Rights Movement. After moving to Fort Wayne, Indiana, Hayden founded Diamond Printing; created his own line of African American greeting cards; and began publishing the Fort Wayne Black Pages Business Directory.

---

## **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:

Hayden, Walter Theodore, 1926-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hayden, Walter Theodore, 1926---Interviews

---

African American businesspeople--Interviews

---

African American civil rights workers--Interviews

---

Publishers and publishing--Interviews

---

## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

## **Occupations:**

Printing Entrepreneur

---

## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

MediaMakers

---

## **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 Walter Theodore Hayden, May 23, 2005. 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 Walter Theodore Hayden, Section A2005\_122\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:50 2005/05/23

Walter Theodore Hayden was born on June 24, 1926 in Tuskegee, Alabama to Maude McCloud Hayden and Charles Hayden. His father is descended from a line of African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) ministers, all of whom were named Charles Hayden and preached in the Deep South. Hayden's grandfather traveled to rural areas to preach, and pastored the A.M.E. church in Greenwood, Mississippi, where Hayden's father was born in 1895. His mother, born in 1893 in Yazoo City, Mississippi, was descended from slaves freed during the Civil War. She attended Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, became a schoolteacher, and later obtained her master's degree from Alabama State University in Birmingham. Hayden's father also attended Alcorn. He joined the ministry and wrote frequently for *The Christian Recorder*. Hayden's father had five children in a previous marriage, then married his mother and had five more, of which Hayden was the second youngest. He began school in Demopolis, Alabama, where he was not allowed on the bus.

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

African American civil rights workers--Interviews.

Publishers and publishing--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter Theodore Hayden, Section A2005\_122\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:20 2005/05/23

Walter Theodore Hayden was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, where his father, Charles Hayden, was chaplain at Tuskegee Institute. He lived there until he was about four years old. His father, a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal church, was often assigned to troubled parishes, so the family moved to multiple cities in Alabama, including Mobile, Troy, and Bessemer. Eventually,

Hayden's father was assigned to St. Luke A.M.E. Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and they settled there. He recalls playing games and sports on the church playground, having friends frequently sleep over on his family's back porch, and seeing Piper Davis, a member of his father's church, play baseball for the Birmingham Black Barons. Hayden attended Bertram A. Hudson Negro Elementary School in Birmingham, where he was mentored by the school's namesake, Principal Hudson, and then A.H. Parker High School, where he was the starting quarterback on the school football team and was mentored in chemistry by his teacher, Professor Sheehy.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter Theodore Hayden, Section A2005\_122\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:00 2005/05/23

Walter Theodore Hayden attended A.H. Parker High School in Birmingham, Alabama, where he enjoyed chemistry and was introduced to printing. As a starting quarterback, he was coached by A.D. Yak Collins and Major Brown. They went undefeated against teams from around the South, including Nashville's Pearl High School. In Hayden's senior year, he considered transferring to Fort Wayne Central High School in Indiana to play for Murray Mendenhall, but found the team not serious enough. He graduated in 1944, and although his father wanted him to attend Miles College to study for ministry, he enrolled as a pre-medical student at Fort Wayne's Indiana University Extension Center. There, Hayden met his wife, Ernestine Thomas Hayden. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in April 1945 and, due to his typing ability, was assigned as a clerk in Fort Ellis, Washington. Rejected from Officer Candidate School due to his race, Hayden was instead stationed in Sendai, Japan. He was discharged from the Army prior to the Korean War.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter Theodore Hayden, Section A2005\_122\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:30 2005/05/23

Walter Theodore Hayden recalls how African American soldiers in the U.S. Army were kept past their original terms of service during World War II. After his discharge, Hayden attended Fort Wayne's Indiana University Extension Center as a pre-medical student. Before

finishing his degree, he dropped out to work and support his family, finding work with General Electric, in plumbing, and as a partner to Charles Wallace, a local black entrepreneur. In 1960, he moved to Birmingham, Alabama, to manage Star Bowling Lanes, where he allowed local civil rights leaders to use the bowling alley to teach nonviolent resistance. He recalls meeting national leaders, such as Ralph Abernathy, Sr., Julian Bond, James Forman, Fred Shuttlesworth, and Angela Davis. Hayden reflects upon bombings in Birmingham, including at the house of civil rights attorney Arthur Shores and at the 16th Street Baptist Church. He also recalls the participation of Fort Wayne's civil rights leaders in the Selma to Montgomery marches.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter Theodore Hayden, Section A2005\_122\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:00 2005/05/23

Walter Theodore Hayden convinced community leaders in Birmingham, Alabama to integrate the city's bowling alleys, but this resulted in his own formerly all-black Star Bowling Lanes closing for lack of patrons. He returned to Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1964, where he worked for General Telephone and Electric Corporation, and also founded his own company, Diamond Point Printing, which became Express Print and Copy when his children took over the business. Hayden also started Unique Greeting Cards, a greeting card company for the African American community, which was launched with the support of Charles Redd of the Urban League of Fort Wayne and publicized by traveling to black business expositions. His cards were sold in dozens of local Kmart stores, but production stopped in 1971 under the pressure of larger brands like Hallmark and American Greetings. Hayden was the publisher of the Fort Wayne Black Pages, a directory of local black-owned businesses, which he developed with the aid of Rae Pearson.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter Theodore Hayden, Section A2005\_122\_001\_006, TRT: 0:29:21 2005/05/23

Walter Theodore Hayden talks about the shortage of African American entrepreneurs in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He outlines the challenges faced by black entrepreneurs who seek to sell their products to superstores like

Walmart, and the lack of progress that has been made in securing bank loans in the African American business community. Offering advice to prospective African American entrepreneurs, Hayden stresses careful financial planning and forming partnerships with investors for new ventures. He talks about the continuing relevance of the Willie Lynch speech, a possibly fictitious event during the eighteenth century in which a native of the West Indies gave southern planters advice on slaveholding. Hayden reflects upon his life, legacy, and his hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter Theodore Hayden, Section A2005\_122\_001\_007, TRT: 0:17:51 2005/05/23

Walter Theodore Hayden volunteered at a local elementary school in Fort Wayne, Indiana, visiting monthly to demonstrate printing techniques to students. He recalls his parents, Maude Hayden and Charles Hayden, and how they supported his career despite his father's regret that none of his sons joined the ministry. Hayden had nine children with his wife, Ernestine Thomas Hayden, including Michael, a Toyota dealer in Charlotte, North Carolina; Ronald, a plant manager for The Andersons, Inc.; Donald, a phlebotomist; Steven, a longtime employee of Verizon Communications, Inc.; Anita, who works at Fort Wayne Air National Guard Station; and Tracey, who followed Hayden into the printing business and works for Craftline Graphics. He was the grandfather of almost fifty and the great-grandfather of several dozen descendants. Hayden describes how he would like to be remembered, and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.