

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Margaret Peters

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Peters, Margaret, 1936- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Margaret Peters, |
| Dates: | March 20, 2006 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2006 |
| Physical Description: | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:29:26). |
| Abstract: | High school teacher and historian Margaret Peters (1936 - 2022) was appointed as the Black History Resource Teacher for Dayton Public Schools. In 1970, Johnson Publishing released Peters' book entitled, <i>Ebony Book of Black Achievement</i> and later the Donning Company published Dayton's, <i>African American Heritage</i> . Peters was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 20, 2006, in Dayton, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2006_043 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator and African American history specialist Margaret Peters was born March 12, 1936 in Dayton, Ohio. Her parents, Mary Margaret Smith Peters, and building contactor Joseph Andrew Peters, were stalwarts of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Attending Irving School, Peters graduated from Dayton Roosevelt High School in 1954. At the University of Dayton, she earned a B.A. degree in 1959 and a B.S. degree in 1963. Peters also received her M.A. degree in 1972 and a supervisors certificate from the University of Dayton in 1974.

Peters began her teaching career at Roth High School in 1963. In 1968, as the black community continued agitated for African American history, Peters was appointed Black History Resource Teacher for the Dayton Public Schools. In 1969, she produced *Striving to Overcome: Negro Achievers*, which was published by Dayton Public Schools. Johnson Publishing released Peters' *Ebony Book of Black Achievement* in 1970. She co-authored with her encyclopedic brother, Wendell Peters, the article "Blacks in Ohio History" in 1980. Her writing also included numerous articles for the *Dayton Weekly News*, an African American newspaper, and a column, "From The Root," for the *Dayton Weekly News*, culminating in a 1995 column called "From The Roots." Also in 1995, the Donning Company published her treasury of African American history called *Dayton's African American Heritage*, which went into an expanded edition. She was also co-editor of *A History of Race Relations in the Miami Valley* in 2001. Peters also served as instructor at Sinclair Community College and at Central State University West. After retiring from Colonel White High School in 1993, she served as coordinator of the free after-school tutorial program at Zion Baptist Church.

Peters was the recipient of the 1991 Excellence in Teaching Award for the Midwest Region from the National Conference of Negro Women; the National Education Association's 1993 Dr. Carter G. Woodson Award; the 1993 Meritorious Award from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and was their 2005 Education Breakfast

speaker. From 1993 to 1995, she was elected to the National Executive Council of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). Peters was the recipient of many local awards including Dayton Public Schools' Teacher of the Year in 1982 and the 2003 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Dayton Chapter of the National Forum for Black Administrators. Cited as one of Dayton's Top Ten Women, Peters was a board member of the Dayton African American Legacy Institute, Inc. (DAALI) and earned a block on Dayton's Wright-Dunbar Walk of Fame.

Margaret Peters was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 20, 2006.

Peters passed away on April 1, 2022, at the age of 86.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Margaret Peters was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 20, 2006, in Dayton, Ohio, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. High school teacher and historian Margaret Peters (1936 - 2022) was appointed as the Black History Resource Teacher for Dayton Public Schools. In 1970, Johnson Publishing released Peters' book entitled, *Ebony Book of Black Achievement* and later the Donning Company published Dayton's, *African American Heritage*.

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:

Peters, Margaret, 1936-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Peters, Margaret, 1936---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

High School Teacher

Historian

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 Margaret Peters, March 20, 2006. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 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 Margaret Peters, Section A2006_043_001_001, TRT: 0:29:15 ?

Margaret Peters was born on March 12, 1936 in Dayton, Ohio. Peters' mother, Mary Margaret Smith Peters, grew up in rural Virginia and moved to Dayton in 1926 to attend Roosevelt High School. Though, Roosevelt was an integrated school it had segregated swimming pools. Peters' father, Joseph Andrew Peters, was raised in West Virginia and attended West Virginia State University in Institute, West Virginia. He was a contractor that designed and built homes in the Dayton area. He also wrote the architectural history of Zion Baptist Church in Dayton and served as the president of the local chapter of the NAACP. During his presidency, the NAACP challenged the de facto segregation of Dayton's public schools. Peters' uncle, Guy Peters, was one of the carpenters who built the Classic Theater in Dayton. Peters describes her earliest childhood memories, the sights, sounds, and smells of her childhood and narrates her photographs. She also talks about the legacy of Paul Robeson.

Video Oral History Interview with Margaret Peters, Section A2006_043_001_002, TRT: 0:29:18 ?

Margaret Peters developed her interest in local African American history while growing up in the historically-black West Side of Dayton, Ohio. The construction of an interstate highway in the 1950s cut off the black business district along West 5th Street from the rest of Dayton. She has chronicled the area's history as well as the contributions of residents such as HistoryMaker Dr. William Manning Marable. During the 1940s and early 1950s, she attended Irving Elementary School and Roosevelt High School, where she became aware of the lack of African American history in the curriculum. After graduating in 1954, she attended the University of Dayton, and in 1959, she earned her B.A. degree in education. She went to work for Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton before returning to high school teaching. In response to the call for more African American history education, she was appointed as Negro History Resource Teacher for the Dayton Public Schools in 1968. Peters' narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Margaret Peters, Section A2006_043_001_003, TRT: 0:29:48 ?

Margaret Peters was influenced by the writings of J.A. Rogers, whose column, 'Know Your History,' she had read as a child. As an adult, her interest in black history continued. She became Negro History Resource Teacher for the Dayton, Ohio Public Schools in 1968 and developed a curriculum, which was met with some resistance. She talks about models for black history education and promoting her curriculum in churches. Peters earned her M.A. degree in 1972 from the University of Dayton, where she wrote about a large slave revolt in Brazil. Through this, she became interested in global black history. In 1974, the Negro History Resource Office in Dayton was dissolved. A Dayton branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History began in 1984, through which she brought students into contact with the likes of Mae Jemison. She describes the organization and 1994 revisions to Ohio's curriculum, which included African history in world history courses. Peters also narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Margaret Peters, Section A2006_043_001_004, TRT: 0:29:55 ?

Margaret Peters became involved with the Dayton Stories Project in the 1990s,

which grew into the Wallpaper Project. Peters recorded oral histories from Dayton residents for a statewide collection and a play, 'From Here: Stories from Ohio,' which played at the International Oral History Festival in 2004. Peters continued the work of preserving Dayton's lesser-known histories by founding the Dayton African American Legacy Institute. The Institute records the contributions of notable Dayton residents, families, and community organizations. Peters' shares one of her favorite stories from Dayton's history about the Dayton Marcos, a Negro League Baseball team, and the Great Dayton Flood of 1913. Peters believes churches must take control of black history education, and she describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community. She concludes by sharing her view on the role of religion in public school education and narrating her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Margaret Peters, Section A2006_043_001_005, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Margaret Peters wrote 'Dayton's African American Heritage' to mark the city's bicentennial in 1995. The book included business figures, educators, athletes, and more. After selling out, the book's publisher, Donning Publishing Company, commissioned a second edition that added the years 1995 to 2004 to the original materials. Peters views the book as an extension of her efforts to preserve black history for future generations. She worries that students will never learn about events such as segregated travel or the Freeman Field Mutiny. After retiring from teaching, Peters continued working with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History and the Dayton African American Legacy Institute. She hopes her legacy will live on through her students and to be remembered as someone who worked tirelessly to better the lives of others. Peters believes that families must instill values in youth. Peters reunited with her extended family in 2000. She concludes by narrating her photographs.