

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Eileen Cline

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cline, Eileen
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline,
Dates:	April 20, 2006 and November 7, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2006 and 2008
Physical Description:	10 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:43:19).
Abstract:	Academic administrator Eileen Cline (1935 -) served as dean of the Peabody Conservatory of Music at the Johns Hopkins University, from 1983-1995. Cline was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 20, 2006 and November 7, 2008, in Louisville, Colorado. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_081
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Eileen Tate Cline was born June 25, 1935 in Chicago, Illinois. Education was very important in her family and music became Cline's tool to help make the world a better place. Her mother, Inez Duke, was a dedicated elementary school teacher who became one of the first to teach Negro History. Her father, Herman Tate, was an influential community leader, who worked for the U.S. Postal Service and was active in the international Coop Movement.

Cline's parents encouraged their children not to accept limitations. As a child, in addition to developing keen academic interests, Cline excelled in ballet, piano, and sports. She attended the University of Chicago Laboratory School and entered the College at age fifteen. Cline later earned two degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, a master's degree from the University of Colorado, and a Ph.D. "with highest distinction" as a Danforth Fellow at Indiana University. Her dissertation on piano competitions has become recognized as the most important single source of information on that subject and related issues. For three decades Cline held teaching and administrative positions in the university, public school, and community music school sectors in Indiana, Colorado, and Connecticut. While raising a family in Colorado, where her late husband was a linguist (passing away in 1978), she taught piano, directed the Boulder Children's Choir, was a church organist, and was active in numerous community and professional organizations. From 1983 to 1995, Cline served as Dean of the Conservatory of Music at the Johns Hopkins University, then Senior University Fellow in Arts Policy at the Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies. Bringing a wealth of experience as a college and pre-college teacher, administrator, scholar and community activist, she oversaw major developments in quality and quantity of students, faculty, and curriculum. Cline was also mentor to a long list of young African American musicians active on the national and international scene today. In 1999, her retirement from the university was marked by a gathering of distinguished panelists and musicians for a symposium entitled The Arts in America: Lifeblood of a Nation and its Citizens - past, present, and future. An award-winning author/educator active for nearly half a century in a broad range of professional and civic enterprises, Cline was a resource fellow at the Aspen Institute Executive Seminar, and served as Board

member and advisor to numerous organizations, including American Symphony Orchestra League, Marlboro Music Festival, Institute for Theology and the Arts, North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance; and was a juror for the 2001 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

Cline resides in Louisville, Colorado. She has two grown children and three grandchildren: son, Dr. Jonathan Cline, an information systems engineer at Mitre Corporation in McLean, Virginia, who has one son, William; daughter, Dr. Joy Cline Phinney, a Juilliard-trained pianist who lives with lawyer husband, A.W. Phinney, III and eight year old twins in Boston, Massachusetts. Her sister, Amy Tate Billingsley, is also a HistoryMaker.

Cline was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 20, 2006.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Eileen Cline was conducted by Denise Gines and Shawn Wilson on April 20, 2006 and November 7, 2008, in Louisville, Colorado, and was recorded on 10 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator Eileen Cline (1935 -) served as dean of the Peabody Conservatory of Music at the Johns Hopkins University, from 1983-1995.

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:

Cline, Eileen

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cline, Eileen--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Johns Hopkins University. Peabody Institute. Peabody Conservatory of Music

Occupations:

Academic Administrator

HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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 Eileen Cline, April 20, 2006 and November 7, 2008. 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 Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_001_001, TRT: 0:28:36 ?

Eileen Cline was born on June 25, 1935, in Chicago, Illinois, to Inez Duke Tate and Herman Tate. Cline's maternal grandfather, Charles Duke, was a civil engineer who built bridges. Born in Chicago in 1910, her mother was an elementary school teacher, among the first to teach black history in her classes. Cline's father, a postal worker, was born in Saltillo, Arkansas. He studied chemistry at the University of Chicago and started a chemical company with a friend, but did not pursue it after suffering a heart attack in the early 1940s. Cline was close to her paternal family, and her paternal grandmother, Salina Harris Vesey, lived in her household. Her family lived in Rosenwald Apartments on the South Side of Chicago, and later built a home in the Morgan Park neighborhood. A tomboy during her childhood, Cline was close to her father, but also respected her mother. She recalls her parents' personalities; her neighborhood in Chicago; and the life lessons and values she learned from her family and community.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_001_002, TRT: 0:30:44 ?

Eileen Cline grew up watching her hardworking parents, Inez Duke Tate and Herman Tate, and was influenced by them to not accept limitations on what she could achieve. Although her father was skeptical of organized religion, Cline was influenced by an experience of healing as a child when her mother joined the Christian Science church. She reflects upon her faith; her curiosity about the principles of the Christian Science church; and her perception that God lies in qualities and not in an image. Despite her uncertainty of religious institutions, Cline expresses her belief in religious healing. In school, Cline remembers defending her younger sister, Amy Tate Billingsley, who was often confronted by bullies. Cline's interest in music was sparked at a young age, and she describes singing songs in kindergarten and taking piano lessons at Rosenwald Apartments, where her family lived. She recalls her aspirations as a child; her extended family's encouragement; and being conscious of her purpose in life.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_001_003, TRT: 0:30:57 ?

Eileen Cline attended grade school in Chicago, where she skipped two grades and advanced to the eighth grade at the age of eleven. She recalls being overwhelmed while watching 'Bambi' and 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.' She enjoyed classes with her music teacher Kenneth Stewart, and listening to her father's records at home. Cline attended the University of Chicago Laboratory School from eighth to tenth grade, passed college entrance examinations and then enrolled at the University of Chicago in 1950, during Robert Maynard Hutchins' presidency. Although interested in ballet as well as music, Cline opted to pursue music in college. In 1952, soon after her father's death, she enrolled at Oberlin College to study piano and music education. Unable to find a suitable job after graduating in 1956, she sought solace in the biblical story of Job. Cline obtained her first job as a music teacher at Lincoln Elementary School in Gary, Indiana, where she modified the curriculum to include classical music and folk dance.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_001_004, TRT: 0:30:05 ?

Eileen Cline taught music at Lincoln School in Gary, Indiana, where she developed a rapport with her students, and taught them to folk dance. In 1958, she married William Cline, a fellow Oberlin College alumnus. Skilled in foreign languages, he received a fellowship to the University of Colorado in Boulder. By 1962, Cline had two children, worked as a music teacher, and opened an independent piano studio. She recalls her active lifestyle in Boulder; socializing around music; and race relations there. In 1969, her family moved briefly to Pennsylvania's Swarthmore College, where her husband served as the assistant dean of student affairs. Following a brief divorce in 1974, the couple remarried. Cline also enrolled in a doctoral program at Indiana University. Her family moved to Princeton, New Jersey in 1978. Her husband died a year later, and she describes adjusting to single parenthood. Following graduate school, Cline was appointed executive director of Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, Connecticut.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_001_005, TRT: 0:21:14 ?

Eileen Cline served as the executive director of the Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, Connecticut, where she advocated for black students and those with special needs. She then served as associate dean, and later dean at the Peabody Conservatory of Music at Johns Hopkins University. Under her leadership, the school attracted more black students than any other conservatory, and there was a significant increase in the number of African American musicians in the conservatory's orchestra. Cline reflects upon the influence of music on her life's purpose; how she would like to be remembered; her family; and her close relationship with her mother and sister, Amy Tate Billingsley. Cline retired in 1999, and continued to serve on the Marlboro music board and the American Symphony Orchestra League board. At the time of this interview, she planned to write four books, primarily focusing on her experiences in music and life. Cline also narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_002_006, TRT: 0:28:33 ?

Eileen Cline was raised in Chicago, Illinois, where her family lived in Rosenwald Apartments on the South Side. She recalls the neighborhood, the community within her apartment building and the businesses around it. Cline shared a close relationship with her father, Herman Tate, who encouraged her to defy limitations. He bought her skates for her third birthday, and taught her to skate the very same evening. Cline attended John D. Shoop Elementary School, University of Chicago High School, and Oberlin College, where she was very athletic and played on the basketball and volleyball teams. Although her upbringing exposed her to the black upper class, Cline did not conform to its norms. She credits her maternal grandparents; her paternal grandmother, Salina Vesey; and her father with developing her strength of character. Cline was also encouraged by her teachers, including her eighth grade teacher, Barbara Sizemore.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_002_007, TRT: 0:29:14 ?

Eileen Cline was introduced to music at a young age through her mother, who played the family piano at home; the music at her elementary school, John D. Shoop Elementary School; the records owned by her father and paternal aunt; and camp activities at Circle Pines Center in Michigan. She took group lessons with a teacher in the Rosenwald Apartments where she lived, and was later taught piano by Geneva Robinson. Cline attended the University of Chicago High School, where she was influenced by her music teacher, Mr. Vail. A student of ballet, she was also interested in dance, and studied alongside Frances

Taylor Davis and Louise Stubbs, who became professional ballet dancers. Cline attended Ohio's Oberlin College, where she majored in piano and music education, and sang with the choir. She discovered her passion for teaching while working as a camp counselor at Riseman Farm Camp in Michigan. Upon graduating from college in 1956, Cline accepted a job as a music teacher in Gary, Indiana.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_002_008, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Eileen Cline took piano lessons with Rudolph Ganz, joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra chorus, and learned square dancing at the Morgan Park community center in Chicago, Illinois, while teaching music in Gary, Indiana. A linguist by training, her husband, William Cline, received a fellowship to the University of Colorado in Boulder. In addition to learning mountaineering, she continued to teach music; established an independent studio; and founded the Boulder Children's Choir. When Cline and her husband briefly divorced in 1974, she enrolled in a doctoral program at Indiana University in Bloomington. The couple remarried and relocated to Princeton, New Jersey, shortly before her husband's death in 1978. Through her network of music administrators at premier conservatories, Cline obtained a position at the Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, Connecticut. She recalls the impact father's encouragement; a revelation she had while serving on the YWCA's board; and her children's education.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_002_009, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Eileen Cline applied for the position of executive director of Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, Connecticut, as she immediately needed to find work after her husband died in 1978. Once hired, she increased the school's diversity and facilitated a program that used the Orff Approach for children with cerebral palsy. Cline then returned to Indiana University in Bloomington, where she continued her Ph.D. dissertation research on international piano competitions. During this time, she met Joseph Polisi, the dean of the Manhattan School of Music, who encouraged her to apply for an administrative position at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore. Cline interviewed with Robert O. Pierce, dean of the conservatory, and was offered the position of associate dean of academic affairs. When Pierce became the director, Cline was appointed dean of academic affairs. During her tenure, she reorganized the liberal arts degree requirements, developing a strong core curriculum.

Video Oral History Interview with Eileen Cline, Section A2006_081_002_010, TRT: 0:25:56 ?

Eileen Cline served as the dean of academic affairs at the Peabody Conservatory of Music at Johns Hopkins University from 1983 to 1995, during which time she successfully worked on the department's relationship with its international students, and facilitated an increase in the enrollment of African American students to the conservatory. As dean, Cline encouraged students from diverse backgrounds to share their common experiences around music, rather than separating themselves into fragmented student groups. Cline's dissertation research became the standard in the field of international piano competitions, including for the renowned Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. Cline reflects upon the state of music and the arts in schools, federal policies that shape arts education as well as the music industry at the time of the interview. She concludes her interview by sharing a message for future generation regarding the importance of curiosity, courage, responsibility, care and love.