

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Eunice Trotter

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## 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>	Trotter, Eunice, 1953-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 7, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:48:58).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Newspaper editor Eunice Trotter (1953 - ) was the first African American woman to own the Indiana Recorder and the first African American woman to serve as an editor at the Indianapolis Star. Trotter was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 7, 2013, in Indianapolis, Indiana. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_117
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Newspaper owner and nonprofit chief executive Eunice Trotter received her A.S. degree in journalism from Indiana University-Southeast in 1976 and her B.S. degree in journalism in 1981. Trotter returned to school at Webster International University and graduated from there in 2002 with her M.B.A. degree.

Trotter was the first African American woman to serve as an editor for the *Indianapolis Star*, the largest daily paper in the State of Indiana. She purchased the *Indianapolis Recorder* in 1987 and served as editor-in-chief and publisher until 1991. Trotter also worked as a reporter for the *Stockton Record* and the *New York Post*. She has held several other editorial positions, including zones editor for *Florida Today*, associate editor at *The News-Sentinel*, and courts editor with *The Palm Beach Post*. In 2005, Trotter founded Mary Bateman Clark Enterprises, where she has worked to incorporate the history of African Americans in Indiana into mainstream U.S. history. She became a communications specialist for American Senior Communities in 2011.

Trotter served on the Board of the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame. In addition to numerous other awards, she was recognized for her professional accomplishments by the Indianapolis, Indiana Chapter of the Young Women's Christian Association with their Salute to Women of Achievement Award.

Trotter is working on publishing a book, *Mary Bateman Clark: A Woman of Color and Courage*.

Eunice Trotter was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 7, 2013.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Eunice Trotter was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 7, 2013, in

Indianapolis, Indiana, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Newspaper editor Eunice Trotter (1953 - ) was the first African American woman to own the Indiana Recorder and the first African American woman to serve as an editor at the Indianapolis Star.

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# 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®.

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# 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.

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# Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

## Persons:

Trotter, Eunice, 1953-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Trotter, Eunice, 1953- --Interviews

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# Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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# Occupations:

Newspaper Editor

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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## 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 Eunice Trotter, April 7, 2013. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter, Section A2013\_117\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:20 ?

Eunice Trotter was born on June 15, 1953 in Indianapolis, Indiana to Henrietta Ellington Brewer and Charles Brewer, Jr. Her paternal great-great-grandmother, Mary Bateman Clark, was enslaved in Kentucky, and was brought to Vincennes, Indiana as an indentured servant in 1815. Although slavery was illegal in the Indiana Territory, Clark was sold to General Washington Johnston. In 1821, Clark and her attorney, Amory Kinney, petitioned the Knox County Circuit Court to terminate her indenture. That year, she was released from bondage by the Indiana Supreme Court. She went on to marry Samuel Clark, who was a horse groom for William Henry Harrison. Together, they founded the Bethel A.M.E. Church of Vincennes. Trotter's father grew up in Vincennes, and later moved with his family to Indianapolis. Her maternal grandparents, Elmira Martin Ellington and Oliver Ellington, migrated from Sabetha, Kansas to

Indianapolis, where Trotter's parents met at the all-black Crispus Attucks High School.

Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter, Section A2013\_117\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:18 ?

Eunice Trotter's father, Charles Brewer, Jr., moved with his father, Charles Brewer, Sr., to the Westside of Indianapolis, Indiana at thirteen years old. Around that time, his parents divorced, and his mother, who was white, left the home. Later in life, Trotter's father espoused strict rules about black separatism. Trotter grew up on the predominantly black Eastside of Indianapolis, where her father owned and operated the Eastside Electric Company. Her family lived near Douglass Park, which was named for Frederick Douglass, and they shopped exclusively at black-owned businesses. There was also an industrial park with metal and chemical processing plants nearby. During Trotter's youth, her father bought several large, dilapidated houses in the neighborhood via land contract, as the banks denied mortgages to African Americans at the time. He also became dependent on alcohol, and was frequently unable to work. At fourteen years old, Trotter secured a job at a Burger Chef restaurant to help support the family.

Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter, Section A2013\_117\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:02 ?

Eunice Trotter attended the John Hope School 26 in Indianapolis, Indiana. She admired Principal Starling James, who served as an authority figure in the community and worked to build children's self-esteem. As a child, Trotter suffered from asthma, which prevented her from doing physical activities or chores that could aggravate the condition. As a result, she spent most of her time writing stories. At this point, Trotter talks about the writers in her family, including her paternal great uncle, Samuel Brewer, who was a journalist for the Indianapolis Recorder. At fourteen years old, Trotter began working at a Burger Chef restaurant while attending Shortridge High School. Her father struggled with alcoholism, and her family moved around frequently as a result. In 1967, she enrolled at the integrated Arsenal Technical High School. After the Klu Klux Klan held a recruitment rally there, the Black Panther Party established a presence on campus for the protection of the black students.

Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter, Section A2013\_117\_001\_004, TRT: 4:28:34 ?

Eunice Trotter attended Arsenal Technical High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, where she started a newsletter called 'Teen Talk.' Her column was picked up by the Indianapolis Recorder when she was sixteen years old. Trotter was also a member of the high school track team and the Soulettes, with whom she sang in clubs like Pearl's Lounge. She aspired to become a police officer because of her interest in criminology, but settled on a career in writing after being arrested for possession of a firearm. Trotter carried a gun from the age of fifteen years old, when she joined The Invaders, an all-black youth organization that focused on community protection. Shortly after graduating from high school, Trotter married her first husband. She briefly attended Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), before moving to Phoenix, Arizona with her newborn daughter to escape her husband's abuse. Upon returning to Indianapolis, Trotter resumed her studies and started reporting for the Indianapolis Recorder.

Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter, Section A2013\_117\_001\_005, TRT: 5:28:26 ?

Eunice Trotter worked as a crime reporter at the Indianapolis Recorder. Eventually, she was approached by reporter Reginald Bishop, who encouraged her to apply for a position at the Indianapolis Star. Trotter completed a two-year journalism degree in 1975, and began working at the Indianapolis Star in 1976. She initially wrote obituaries, and learned the fundamentals of grammar and style for newspaper publications. She was then assigned to the police beat,

where she investigated major crimes and accidents in the city. Trotter also became an early member of the National Association of Black Journalists. She enrolled at Martin Center College, and received a bachelor's degree in English in 1981. Four years later, Trotter left her position as a reporter and founded an African American media company called Syndicated Writers and Artists, Inc. She began serving as a management consultant at the Indianapolis Recorder, and became the newspaper's owner and editor in 1987.

Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter, Section A2013\_117\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:12 ?

Eunice Trotter served as the owner, editor and publisher of the Indianapolis Recorder from 1987 to 1991. During that time, she focused on improving distribution and operations. She implemented computerized reporting, and restructured the newspaper with regular columns and sections. Trotter revitalized the Indianapolis Recorder Midnight Show, which became the newspaper's Christmas fundraiser. She also established the Journalism and Writing Seminars, which offered training workshops for veteran journalists. In 1991, Trotter sold the Indianapolis Recorder to local businessman William G. Mays, who previously served on the newspaper's board. Trotter went on to work as a freelance journalist. She relocated to California, and began working for the Gannett Company, Inc., which owned publications throughout the United States. She later moved to New York City, where she covered the O.J. Simpson trial for the New York Post. In 1996, Trotter moved to Florida to join the staff of Florida Today, the precursor to USA Today.

Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter, Section A2013\_117\_001\_007, TRT: 7:29:26 ?

Eunice Trotter returned to Indiana in 1997, when she was offered a position at The News-Sentinel in Fort Wayne. There, she worked as an associate editor until 2002. At that time, she was recruited by the former editor of The News-Sentinel to become an editor of The Palm Beach Post in West Palm Beach, Florida. Shortly afterwards, Trotter returned to Indiana and became the editor of the Indianapolis Star. However, she clashed with the management, whom she considered to have too much authority over the newspaper's reporting. Trotter left the Indianapolis Star in 2011. That year, she started an oral history project with the American Senior Communities, in which she conducted interviews with elders and organized their stories into a book. She interviewed individuals like state senator Glenn Howard, who was a member of the Black Panther Party; musician Charles Wiley; and radio personality Sammy Terry. At this point in the interview, Trotter talks about the problems caused by the consolidation of the news industry.

Video Oral History Interview with Eunice Trotter, Section A2013\_117\_001\_008, TRT: 8:28:40 ?

Eunice Trotter began the Mary Bateman Clark Project as a small genealogy project about her paternal family in 2003. She initially focused on her paternal great-great-great-grandfather, Samuel Clark, who was a veteran of the Battle of Tippecanoe and served as a stableman for President William Henry Harrison. Through newspaper clippings and additional research, Trotter gleaned information on the life of his wife, Mary Bateman Clark, who was Trotter's paternal great-great-great-grandmother. A former slave, Mary Bateman Clark secured her freedom through the court case of Mary Clark, a woman of color v. G.W. Johnston. The project culminated with the installation of a commemorative plaque at the Knox County Circuit Court House, and the premiere of the PBS documentary 'Mary Bateman Clark: A Woman of Colour and Courage.' Trotter talks about her family and legacy, and her hopes and concerns for the African American community. She concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.