

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Frances T. Matlock

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Matlock, Frances, 1907-2002
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Frances T. Matlock,
Dates:	June 3, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:12:38).
Abstract:	Elementary school teacher Frances T. Matlock (1907 - 2002) taught in Chicago Public Schools for three decades, and served as an adviser to the NAACP's Youth Leadership Council. She served as a public relations and publicity assistant for the 1932 March on Washington, and from 1953 to 1993 acted as publicity chairman and archivist for the Chicago Chapter of The Links, Inc. Matlock was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 3, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_083
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Honored teacher and advisor, Frances Matlock was born in Chicago on January 6, 1907. She attended Proviso East High School, where she was the only black student in her 1924 graduating class. While a student, several exceptional teachers inspired Matlock to pursue a career in education. She earned an associate's degree from Chicago Normal College (now Chicago State University) and a bachelor's degree in Education from Northwestern University in 1928.

Matlock's prolific career has included work in elementary education as well as civic and community activism. She taught Social Studies for the Chicago Public School system at Hayes Elementary School and Forestville Elementary School from 1933-1972, and served on the Chicago Public School's Board of Education. She acted as an advisor to the NAACP's Youth Leadership Council from 1935-1941, overseeing the early efforts of such notables as Dr. Margaret Burroughs, founder of the African American Museum of Black History; Gwendolyn Brooks, Pulitzer Prize winning poet; and John Johnson, publisher of Ebony and Jet magazines. The council fostered the growth of these future leaders by participating in marches and demonstrations in protest of lynching. Shortly thereafter, Matlock put her public relations talents to work to help raise the funds to establish the Southside Community Art Center, which was dedicated by Eleanor Roosevelt in 1941. Matlock worked on a national level as a public relations and publicity assistant for the original March-On-Washington, in which demonstrators demanded that President Roosevelt provide jobs for Blacks in the World War II defense plants. From 1953-1993 she served as publicity chairman and archivist for the Chicago Chapter of The Links, Inc., an organization that provides financial support to college-bound youth.

Her interests and activities are international in scope. For her years of support and dedication to the Jamaican community, Matlock received Special Recognition from the Consul of Jamaica. In addition, Matlock was granted a

Golden Alumnus Award from Chicago State University in 1999. The following year, Operation Uplift honored her with their Golden Heritage Award. In acknowledgment of her role as a teacher and mentor, and her unyielding work for her community, Matlock has been inducted into the Chicago Senior Citizen's Hall of Fame.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Frances T. Matlock was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 3, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Elementary school teacher Frances T. Matlock (1907 - 2002) taught in Chicago Public Schools for three decades, and served as an adviser to the NAACP's Youth Leadership Council. She served as a public relations and publicity assistant for the 1932 March on Washington, and from 1953 to 1993 acted as publicity chairman and archivist for the Chicago Chapter of The Links, Inc.

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:

Matlock, Frances, 1907-2002

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Matlock, Frances, 1907-2002--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Community Activist

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Frances T. Matlock, June 3, 2002. 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 Frances T. Matlock, Section A2002_083_001_001, TRT: 0:30:31 ?

Frances T. Matlock was born on January 6, 1907 in Chicago, Illinois to Ednah Victoria Bundy Taylor and Creed Anderson Taylor. Creed Taylor was born in Pleasant Hill, Missouri and Ednah Taylor was born in Chicago, Illinois. Matlock's maternal grandmother, Lydia Baird Bundy, was a midwife who was on the board that founded Provident Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. Matlock lived on the West Side of Chicago and attended Emerson Elementary School. When she was around five years old, Matlock was approached on a streetcar by a doctor who wanted to take care of her bowleggedness, and she was operated on at Mary Thompson Hospital. In 1912, her family moved to the suburb of Maywood, Illinois, which she described as peaceful. Matlock's mother was active as a secretary in civic organizations and was one of the founders of the Maywood and Oak Park Women's Improvement Club. Matlock remembers visiting the wreckage of the SS Eastland in the Chicago River in 1915 as well as attending the Decoration Day parade every year.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances T. Matlock, Section A2002_083_001_002, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Frances T. Matlock underwent surgery to heal her legs at Mary Thompson Hospital in Chicago, Illinois in 1912. She remembers seeing bandleader James Reece Europe marching in a parade in Chicago when she was young. Matlock's father worked at a barbershop and encouraged his children to get an education. Matlock attended Proviso High School (now Proviso East High School), where she was one of nine black students. She remembers a teacher who mentored her, Ms. Florence Scott, and a student named Caroline Smith who danced with her when she was the only black student and nobody asked her to dance. She also remembers Caroline Smith's brother making a racist comment to Matlock's classmate Ruth Wilson, and the racist jokes that visiting speakers would make. Matlock's mother regularly confronted the school about racism. Matlock graduated from high school in 1924, after which she attended teacher's college at Chicago Normal School (now Chicago State University) and worked for Dr. Guy Park Conger in Oak Park, Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances T. Matlock, Section A2002_083_001_003, TRT: 0:29:58 ?

Frances T. Matlock attended Proviso High School in Maywood, Illinois, where she was one of nine black students. As the only African American in her class, she was forced to sit in the balcony of her senior prom because there were no black men for her to date. After graduating from high school in 1924, Matlock attended Chicago Normal School (now Chicago State University), where she received her associates degree in teaching in 1926. She received her B.A. degree from Northwestern University in 1928. In 1933, Matlock began teaching with Chicago Public Schools at Hayes Elementary School on the West Side. In 1937, she transferred to Forestville Elementary School on the South Side, where she taught until 1972. From 1936 until 1941, Matlock took over for Jeanette Triplett Jones as the advisor for the NAACP Youth Council, under A.C. McNeal. With the NAACP Youth Council, Matlock led "training treks" and oversaw the efforts of young Gwendolyn Brooks and young HistoryMakers John H. Johnson and Dr. Margaret Burroughs.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances T. Matlock, Section A2002_083_001_004, TRT: 0:29:41 ?

Frances T. Matlock taught social studies at Forestville Elementary School from 1937 until 1972 and an advisor for the NAACP Youth Council from 1936 until 1941. With the NAACP, Matlock led "training treks" to establish future leaders like Gwendolyn Brooks and HistoryMakers John H. Johnson and Dr. Margaret

Burroughs. She also took students to Sikeston, Missouri to protest lynching. There, Matlock met NAACP leaders Roy Wilkins and Walter Francis White. As a teacher, Matlock served on the committee that supervised social studies textbooks, and regularly criticized publishers for their inaccurate treatment of African Americans in history. Matlock remembers buying books from African American historian Frederick H. Hammurabi Robb and publicizing civic events with Gloria Wailes. Matlock also led the Children's Theatre Group of Chicago, where she worked with HistoryMaker Katherine Dunham.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances T. Matlock, Section A2002_083_001_005, TRT: 0:31:06 ?

Frances T. Matlock handled publicity for Chicago's South Side Community Arts Center when they raised money for the building and renovation in 1940 and when it was dedicated by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt on May 7, 1941. Matlock also trained hostesses at the Servicemen's Center Number Three in Chicago, Illinois during World War II. Her students visited military bases in Illinois and Missouri to serve dinner to and dance with U.S. soldiers. From 1950 until 1990, Matlock served in the American West Indian Association and as a publicist for diplomats like Sir John Carter and Lady Sarah Lou Carter from Guyana, Lady Edris Allan from Jamaica, and Lady Hanna of Trinidad. Matlock describes her first marriage to Addison Moseley from 1938 until 1939, her second marriage to Charles Frank Matlock, and her engagement to a Jamaican plantation owner named Billy who died in 1956. From 1953 until 1993, Matlock served as publicity chairman and archivist for the Chicago Chapter of the Links. She also reflects upon her legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances T. Matlock, Section A2002_083_001_006, TRT: 0:31:27 ?

Frances T. Matlock reflects upon how she would like to be remembered and the compliments of her former students. She describes her parents' personalities and the younger people in her life who treat her like a mother. She shares her concerns about the problem of addiction among African American youth, and her hopes for The HistoryMakers project. She ends the interview by narrating her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances T. Matlock, Section A2002_083_001_007, TRT: 0:11:15 ?

Frances T. Matlock continues to narrate her photographs.