

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Katie Booth

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Booth, Katie, 1907-2006
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Katie Booth,
Dates:	November 13, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:35:42).
Abstract:	Civic leader Katie Booth (1907 - 2006) actively participated in the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago, registering voters and fighting for housing rights. As a chemist, she researched and fought for the rights of children with sickle cell anemia. Booth was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 13, 2002, in Gulfport, Mississippi. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_204
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civic leader Katie Booth was born on May 23, 1907 in Gulfport, Mississippi to Joseph Patterson and Ida Coffye. Booth attended school up to the eighth grade in one room at her church. She was able to experience school with classrooms and sports teams for the first time at 33rd Street High School in Gulfport, Mississippi. In 1929, Booth graduated from high school and the Presbyterian Board of Education sent her as a work student to be trained in education at Arkadelphia Academy in Arkansas for ten years. She next attended Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas, where she studied general chemistry and graduated in 1940.

At the outbreak of World War II, Booth moved north to Chicago to work in the war industry. She took a job as a chemist at a Doehler-Jarvis Company die casting plant. Booth started classes at the Illinois Institute of Technology while she was working. Despite being the only African American in her classes, she received her industrial chemistry degree and worked as an assistant chemist in the Department of Pharmacology at the Chicago Medical School, researching preventative health measures. She was keenly interested in children's health and prenatal care, and also worked on treatments for sickle cell anemia.

As a chemist and community activist, she fought for the rights of children with sickle cell anemia. Few women worked in chemistry at the time, making Booth a trailblazer in her field.

Outside of work, Booth was active civic leader on Chicago's West Side. Since the 1940s, she served as chairperson of the West Side YWCA, and held the position until after her professional retirement. Booth was also one of the first members of the Chicago Housing Board's West Side District, and served as chairperson of the board of Sears Roebuck for the West Side area. During the Civil Rights Movement, Booth worked with many notable people and organizations such as Albert Raby, Martin Luther King Jr., Jesse Jackson and Operation PUSH. She cautioned civil rights leaders against fragmenting following Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death. She worked at several voter registration drives starting in the 1960s. During the 1980s, Booth helped in a voter registration drive that led to the

election of Harold Washington, Chicago's first black mayor.

She left Chicago in 1990 to move back to Gulfport, Mississippi to be with her ill sister. Booth lived in Magnolia Grove, the subdivision of Gulfport where she had been an original resident. She continued being a community activist in Mississippi. Staying active into her nineties, Booth worked to expand the Magnolia Grove Community Center and its children's programming. In recognition of her work, the facility was renamed the Katie Patterson Booth Community Center in May 2003.

Katie Booth was married during World War II to Robert Booth. Eight years later he died from his war injuries. They had no children.

Booth passed away on August 26, 2006 at age 99.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Katie Booth was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 13, 2002, in Gulfport, Mississippi, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civic leader Katie Booth (1907 - 2006) actively participated in the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago, registering voters and fighting for housing rights. As a chemist, she researched and fought for the rights of children with sickle cell anemia.

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:

Booth, Katie, 1907-2006

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Booth, Katie, 1907-2006--Interviews

African American women chemists--Interviews.

African American chemists--Interviews.

African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civic Leader

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 Katie Booth, November 13, 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 Katie Booth, Section A2002_204_001_001, TRT: 0:29:45 ?

Katie Booth talks about her parents' backgrounds in Gulfport, Mississippi, and her family history. She then details her father's rural customs and superstitions, and her mother's role in raising a family in the early 1900s. Booth also explains the economy of Gulfport, which revolved around shipping, fishing, and farming. Booth finally discusses farm life and the values her parents instilled in her at an early age.

African American families--Mississippi--Gulfport.

African American parents.

Farm life--Mississippi--Gulfport.

African Americans--Mississippi--Gulfport--Social life and customs.

African Americans--Mississippi--Gulfport--Economic conditions.

Video Oral History Interview with Katie Booth, Section A2002_204_001_002, TRT: 0:29:25 ?

Katie Booth talks more about her strict upbringing in rural Gulfport, Mississippi. She recalls vividly a time when the Ku Klux Klan threatened a raid in the area and her parents' reactions to the threat. She explains how the black community of Gulfport empowered itself to end the threat of the raid. Booth then talks about her formal education and her interest in chemistry at the Arkadelphia Academy in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago.

Ku Klux Klan (1915)--Mississippi--Gulfport.

African Americans--Education (Secondary).

African Americans--Education (Elementary).

Chemistry--Study and teaching (Higher).

African Americans--Education (Higher).

Gulfport (Miss.)--Race relations.

Illinois Institute of Technology.

Video Oral History Interview with Katie Booth, Section A2002_204_001_003, TRT: 0:29:12 ?

Katie Booth talks about instructing the children in Gulfport, Mississippi, on the traditional harvesting of oysters by hand. She then talks about her move to Chicago in the late 1940s, and her various jobs she took prior to her career as an industrial chemist at Doehler-Jarvis Die Casting Company. Booth then talks about her civic involvement and her activities on Harold Washington's campaign for Mayor of Chicago. Booth finally discusses her move back to Gulfport and her civic involvement in her hometown.

Oysters--Mississippi.

Washington, Harold, 1922-1987.

Mayors--Election.

Chicago (Ill.)--Politics and government.

National Lead Company. Doehler-Jarvis Division.

Industrial chemists.

Political participation--Mississippi--Gulfport.

African American chemists.

African American women chemists.

Political participation--Illinois--Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Katie Booth, Section A2002_204_001_004, TRT: 0:07:20 ?

Katie Booth talks about her participation in civic activities after she returned to Gulfport, Mississippi. She then discusses the importance of family in a child's well being. Lastly, Booth discusses her parents, her special bond with her father throughout her life, and how she continues to abide by her family's values from long ago.

African American parents.

African American fathers.

Political participation--Mississippi--Gulfport.

Social values.