

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Elizabeth Eckford

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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>	Eckford, Elizabeth, 1941-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Eckford,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 19, 2017
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2017
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:37:39).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Civil rights activist Elizabeth Eckford (1941- ) was a member of the Little Rock Nine, the group of African American students who desegregated Little Rock Central High School in 1957. Eckford was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 19, 2017, in Little Rock, Arkansas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2017_172
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civil rights activist Elizabeth Eckford was born on October 4, 1941 in Little Rock, Arkansas to Oscar Eckford, Jr. and Birdie Eckford. She attended Horace Mann High School and transferred to Little Rock Central High School in 1957 as one of the Little Rock Nine. Eckford took correspondence and night classes during the 1958 school year to earn enough credits to receive her high school diploma. Eckford attended Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, then later earned her B.A. degree in history from Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio in 1962. Eckford moved to St. Louis, Missouri in 1959 and became the first African American to work in a bank in a non-janitorial position in the City of St. Louis. In 1967, Eckford joined the U.S. Army and worked as a payroll clerk and information specialist. She worked for the U.S. Army for five years and was stationed in Indiana, Georgia, Washington, and Alabama. Eckford also wrote for the Fort McClellan, Alabama and Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana newspapers. In 1973, Eckford returned to Little Rock and worked at the state welfare agency. Eckford also worked as a history teacher and as a probation officer for Judge Marion Humphrey of the Pulaski County Circuit Court in Arkansas in 1999.

A photograph of Eckford integrating Little Rock Central High School, taken by Will Count of the *Arkansas Democrat*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1958. Eckford, along with the rest of the Little Rock Nine, were the recipients of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Spingarn Medal in 1958. She was awarded the Joseph Blitz Award in 1997. In 1999, President Bill Clinton presented all the members of the Little Rock Nine with the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award in the United States.

In 2018, Eckford was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Knox College. The same year, Eckford released a book for young readers, *The Worst First Day: Bullied while Desegregating Central High*, co-authored with Dr. Eurydice Stanley and Grace Stanley and featuring artwork by Rachel Gibson. Later that year, the Elizabeth Eckford Commemorative Bench was dedicated at the corner of Park and 16th streets, and she received the Community Truth Teller Award from the Arkansas Community Institute.

Elizabeth Eckford was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 10, 2017.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Elizabeth Eckford was conducted by Randall Pinkston on September 19, 2017, in Little Rock, Arkansas, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Civil rights activist Elizabeth Eckford (1941- ) was a member of the Little Rock Nine, the group of African American students who desegregated Little Rock Central High School in 1957.

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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:

Eckford, Elizabeth, 1941-

Pinkston, Randall (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Eckford, Elizabeth, 1941- --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:

Civil Rights Activist

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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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 Elizabeth Eckford, September 19, 2017. 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 Elizabeth Eckford, Section A2017\_172\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:22  
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Video Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Eckford, Section A2017\_172\_001\_002, TRT: 2:39:32  
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Video Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Eckford, Section A2017\_172\_001\_003, TRT: 3:19:56  
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Video Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Eckford, Section A2017\_172\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:43  
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Video Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Eckford, Section A2017\_172\_001\_005, TRT: 5:28:07  
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Video Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Eckford, Section A2017\_172\_001\_006, TRT: 6:07:45  
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Video Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Eckford, Section A2017\_172\_001\_007, TRT: 7:03:14  
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