

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Daphne Maxwell Reid

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Reid, Daphne Maxwell
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid,
Dates:	July 21, 2004 and October 12, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	20 Betacame SP videocassettes (9:27:33).
Abstract:	Actress Daphne Maxwell Reid (1948 -) was the first black homecoming queen at Northwestern University, as well as the first African American pictured on the cover of Glamour magazine. Among her television rolls, Reid has made guest appearances on The A-Team, Simon & Simon, and played the role of Aunt Viv on The Fresh Prince of Bel Air, along with co-founding New Millennium Studios in Virginia. Reid was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 21, 2004 and October 12, 2004, in Petersburg, Virginia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_103
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Born Daphne Maxwell, actress Daphne Reid was born on July 13, 1948. Growing up on Manhattan's West Side, Reid was influenced early on by her teachers to enroll in a challenging high school. Despite her initial desire to attend the Fashion Industries High School, she was swayed to attend the Bronx High School of Science. While attending Bronx Science, Reid was highly involved, serving as senior class president and joining the Group Theater Workshop. After her graduation, she received a scholarship to attend Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. While there, she was named homecoming queen, becoming the first black woman at the school to attain the title. She went on to earn her B.A. in 1970.

While still a student at Northwestern, one of Reid's teachers from Bronx Science submitted a photograph of her to a modeling agency, and her modeling career took off. In 1969, Reid became the first African American woman to grace the cover of *Glamour*. While in Chicago in the 1970s, Reid met comedian Tim Reid and the two became fast friends, and they would go on to marry in 1982. Reid made her television debut in 1979 on the short-lived series, *The Duke*, and made the move to Los Angeles. There, she appeared on several episodes of the popular show *WKRP in Cincinnati* opposite her future husband. Throughout the 1980s, she would appear on numerous hit television shows, including *T.J. Hooker*, *The A-Team*, *Murder, She Wrote* and *Simon & Simon*, where she again worked with her husband. In 1987, her husband co-produced the critically acclaimed but short-lived series *Frank's Place*, and featured Tim and Daphne opposite one another. The two went on to work together on *Snoops* before hosting a talk show, *The Tim and Daphne Show*. In 1993, Reid made her biggest move yet, when she joined the cast of the hit series, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* in the role of Aunt Viv, and she remained there until the show's end in 1996.

In 1997, Reid, her husband Tim Reid, Mark Warner (then governor of Virginia) and Dan Hoffler founded New Millennium Studios in Petersburg, Virginia. The studio was the first African American production operation since

scar Micheaux's to handle a project from start to finish. A number of documentaries and films have since been filmed there, including *The Contender* and *Hearts in Atlantis*. They have also re-released *The Spook Who Sat By the Door*, by Sam Greenlee, as a part of their Obsidian Gold Series, and are working on a series entitled *American Legacy* highlighting historical contributions of African Americans. Currently, Reid is working on the sitcom *Eve* on UPN.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson and Racine Tucker Hamilton on July 21, 2004 and October 12, 2004, in Petersburg, Virginia, and was recorded on 20 Betacame SP videocassettes. Actress Daphne Maxwell Reid (1948 -) was the first black homecoming queen at Northwestern University, as well as the first African American pictured on the cover of *Glamour* magazine. Among her television rolls, Reid has made guest appearances on *The A-Team*, *Simon & Simon*, and played the role of Aunt Viv on *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, along with co-founding New Millennium Studios in Virginia.

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:

Reid, Daphne Maxwell

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Reid, Daphne Maxwell--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Actress

HistoryMakers® Category:

EntertainmentMakers

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 Daphne Maxwell Reid, July 21, 2004 and October 12, 2004. 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 Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section A2004_103_002_001, TRT: 0:31:05 ?

Daphne Maxwell Reid was born July 13, 1948 in the Bronx, New York. Her mother, Rosalee Harris Maxwell, was born July 13, 1924 in Abbeville, South Carolina. Rosalee Maxwell was one of eight siblings. Her father abandoned the family to move to Evanston, Illinois. Reid describes her mother as welcoming and fun-loving. Reid's father, Green Maxwell, was born near Andersonville, South Carolina where his parents were farmers. Maxwell studied photography at Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina before serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. He enjoyed telling jokes and although he could have, he chose not to pass as white. Maxwell met Reid's mother in Greenville. Reid and her two brothers were raised in the Amsterdam housing projects, an interracial neighborhood in Midtown Manhattan, New York City. As a child, she enjoyed crafts, skating, jumping rope and playing in Central Park. Reid remembers the special birthday cakes her mother made and the matching dresses she sewed for Reid and her dolls.

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section A2004_103_002_002, TRT: 0:30:28 ?

Daphne Maxwell Reid attended P.S. 94 and P.S. 191 elementary schools in New York City. In the fourth grade, she was admitted to the Special Progress Enrichment (SPE) program at P.S. 87 and in seventh grade, continued on an accelerated academic track at Junior High School 17 where there was only one other student from her neighborhood, and she was mentored by her teachers and Gwendolyn Johnson Acsadi, who worked for the United Nations. As a child, Reid was obedient and curious, and dreamed of traveling the world. She was active in Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian, sang in the all-city youth choir, loved fabric and sewed her own clothes. On Saturdays, she acted in the Group Theater Workshop founded by HistoryMakers Robert Hooks, Barbara Ann Teer and Douglas Turner Ward. Reid tested into The Bronx High School of Science and upon graduation, received a scholarship to Northwestern University, in Evanston, Illinois, where she was one of eighteen African American students and encountered a racist freshman roommate.

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section A2004_103_002_003, TRT: 0:30:48 ?

Daphne Maxwell Reid earned a scholarship to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois where she a part of the small community of black students. Reid was hired by Ford Agency as an editorial model, after her photo ran in the January 1967 issue of Seventeen magazine which featured black undergraduates. The same year, she appeared in a nationally broadcast Kleenex commercial. Reid submitted her portfolio to Northwestern's homecoming committee on a whim. To her surprise, she was crowned homecoming queen in the fall of 1967, but received little recognition from the administration and her name was omitted from the yearbook coverage of homecoming. Reid got married in 1968 and lived off-campus with her husband her senior year. In 1969, she became Glamour magazine's first black cover girl. After graduating from college in 1970, she was an interim disc jockey and continued her modeling and commercial career, but as a light-skinned African American had trouble landing jobs with either white or black agencies.

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section A2004_103_002_004, TRT: 0:31:13 ?

Daphne Maxwell Reid had a career doing voice-over narration in Chicago, Illinois. In 1979, she divorced her husband and pursued an acting career in Los Angeles, California where she supported herself with residuals from her work on a Cheer commercial. In L.A. she reconnected with HistoryMaker Tim Reid, who was starring in 'WKRP in Cincinnati,' and the two became a couple. They acted in the dramedy 'Frank's Place,' which featured non-stereotypical portrayals of African Americans. The show was cancelled in 1988 because CBS would not allow Tim Reid to be the sole executive producer. The couple then acted in 'Snoops' and hosted a talk show 'The Tim and Daphne Show.' Reid took a break from acting and created a sewing instructional video and pattern line for McCall Pattern Company, which she sold on QVC. In 1992, she guest starred on 'The Cosby Show' and in 1993, she replaced Janet Hubert as Aunt Viv on the on 'Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.' Reid explains TV ratings and taping sitcoms in front of a live studio audience.

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section A2004_103_002_005, TRT: 0:23:22 ?

Daphne Maxwell Reid's husband, HistoryMaker Tim Reid, made his directorial debut directing 'Once Upon a Time... When We Were Colored.' The Reids were forced to work with deteriorating equipment while filming the movie in North Carolina. Reid and her husband established New Millennium Studios in Petersburg, Virginia which opened in 1997. Feature-length films and television programming, such as Showtime's 'Linc's,' TV One's 'Gospel Challenge' and 'American Legacy Television,' which features stories of influential African Americans, have been filmed at the studio. Reid explains how New Millennium Studios has evolved from a rental facility to a production company, with product distribution is its primary revenue source, and explains the studio's financial goals. Reid describes herself as a meander. She reflects upon her acting career, her favorite roles, her legacy and how she would like be remembered. Reid has one adult son.

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_001, TRT: 0:31:12 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_001E, TRT: 0:31:12 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_002, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_002E, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_003, TRT: 0:31:08 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_003E, TRT: 0:31:08 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_004E, TRT: 0:31:09 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_005, TRT: 0:28:08 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_005E, TRT: 0:28:08 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_006, TRT: 0:31:11 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_006E, TRT: 0:31:11 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_007, TRT: 0:31:11 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_007E, TRT: 0:31:11 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_008, TRT: 0:12:47 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Daphne Maxwell Reid, Section B2004_103_001_008E, TRT: 0:12:47 ?