

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Daniel A. Collins

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## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Repository:</b>           | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616<br>info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com   |
| <b>Creator:</b>              | Collins, Daniel A., 1916-2007   |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Daniel A. Collins,   |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | March 28, 2005  |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2005  |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:17:17).   |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Dentist Dr. Daniel A. Collins (1916 - 2007 ) was the first African American dentist on the faculty of the School of Dental Science at the University of San Francisco; the founder of the Oral-Facial Consultative Service; and the co-publisher of the Reporter newspaper. Collins was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 28, 2005, in Mill Valley, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2005_082   |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.   |

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Dentist Daniel A. Collins was born on January 11, 1916, in Darlington, South Carolina. Collins attended elementary school and high school in Darling, South Carolina. Following high school graduation in 1932, Collins attended Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, from which he received his B.S. degree in science in 1936. Collins continued his studies at Meharry Medical College, where he earned his D.D.S. degree in 1941; he later obtained his master's degree in dental science from the University of San Francisco in 1944.

Prior to moving to California, Collins studied children's dentistry at the Guggenheim Clinic in New York City. Collins was offered a teaching position in California in 1942, where he became the first black dentist on the faculty of the School of Dental Science at the University of San Francisco; he continued teaching until 1968, when he opened a private practice that included several prominent people. Collins founded the Oral-Facial Consultative Service, which provided constructive surgery for those with facial deformities, and was a co-publisher of the newspaper Reporter. Collins later joined Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. as Director of the West Coast Division, where he was instrumental in hiring several black authors and staff members; two of his acquisitions were *The Black Child in White America*, by Andrew Billingsley in 1975, and *There is a River* by Vincent G. Harding, in 1981.

Throughout his career, Collins was involved in politics both locally and nationally; he helped to establish the National Urban League's San Francisco Bay Area office, the San Francisco Foundation for Aged Colored People, and the Northern California United Negro College Fund. Collins served on the governing boards of the National Committee for Citizens in Education; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; and the Golden Gate Regional Center. Collins was a member of Governor Pat Brown's Committee to Study Medical Aid and Health in California; the California State Board of Public Health; the California State Board of Public Education; and the National Advisory Council on Minorities in Engineering.

Collins continued to expand his professional knowledge by writing, lecturing, and instructing in a clinical setting at several universities, including Meharry Medical College, Howard University, Georgetown University, Stanford Medical College, and at conventions of the American Dental Association and the National Dental Association. Collins was a member of several professional groups, including the American Dental Association, the National Dental Association, the California State Dental Association, the American Academy of Oral Pathology, and the Royal Society of Health.

Collins passed away on September 13, 2007 at the age of 91.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Daniel A. Collins was conducted by Loretta Henry on March 28, 2005, in Mill Valley, California, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Dentist Dr. Daniel A. Collins (1916 - 2007 ) was the first African American dentist on the faculty of the School of Dental Science at the University of San Francisco; the founder of the Oral-Facial Consultative Service; and the co-publisher of the Reporter newspaper.

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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:

Collins, Daniel A., 1916-2007

Henry, Loretta (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Collins, Daniel A., 1916-2007--Interviews

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African American dentists--Interviews

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Oral surgeons--Interviews

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Medical consultants--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:

Dentist

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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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 Dr. Daniel A. Collins, March 28, 2005. 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 Dr. Daniel A. Collins, Section A2005\_082\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Dr. Daniel A. Collins was born on January 11, 1916 in Darlington, South Carolina to Lucy Miller Collins and Andrew Collins. Collins' mother was born and raised in Newberry, South Carolina. Her father was a Methodist pastor and her mother was a graduate of Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina and Wilberforce University in Ohio. Following in her mother's footsteps, Collins' mother attended Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina. She became a Jeanes teacher and principal for a Rosenwald school and a grocery store owner. Growing up in Marion, South Carolina, Collins' father was the son of a wealthy white farmer who was a member of the California Legislature and South Carolina Legislature. Collins' parents married in 1904. As a child, Collins visited his maternal aunt, a well-known midwife at Penn School in St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Collins' older brother from his father's first marriage, Waldo Collins, was a bootlegger in New York. Collins shares his earliest childhood memories.

African American dentists--Interviews.

Oral surgeons--Interviews.

Medical consultants--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Daniel A. Collins, Section A2005\_082\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Dr. Daniel A. Collins' father was a house mover and owned a drayage business. Collins' half-brother from his mother's first marriage, Elliott Turnage, graduated from Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina and Harvard Law School. Collins' sister, Andrena Collins Baumgartner, was a social worker who also had a pilot license. In his youth, Collins attended Bethel A.M.E. Church in Darlington, South Carolina. For most of his school years, Collins struggled academically. However, under the tutelage of his teacher, I.C. Wiley, Collins' grades improved and he began to excel at science and math at Mayo High School. After sending his older siblings to college, Collins' parents had little money for his education. So Collins' father borrowed from his life insurance policy to send Collins to Paine College in Augusta, Georgia. Collins describes his childhood neighborhood, his best friend, Archer J. Saunders, and their life-long friendship.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Daniel A. Collins, Section A2005\_082\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Dr. Daniel A. Collins recalls a confrontation with a classmate and how his high school principal was able to defuse the situation. Collins attended Paine College in Augusta, Georgia on a football scholarship. He also played the clarinet, sang in the Boys Glee Club and majored in chemistry, aspiring to be an engineer. After graduating, Collins worked with his father for a year clearing land for highways being built across South Carolina. Collins then attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee to study dentistry. In Nashville, Collins

was roommates with novelist Frank Yerby while Yerby attended Fisk University. In California, Collins studied classical guitar and his music teacher gave him Andres Segovia's concert guitar. Collins recalls the integration and diversity he encountered at Paine, praises HBCUS for providing quality education and describes notable Paine College alumni, like HistoryMaker Danny Glover's mother.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Daniel A. Collins, Section A2005\_082\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Dr. Daniel A. Collins completed a one-year fellowship in children's dentistry at Guggenheim Dental Clinic in New York City. When World War II started, he and other black dentists were denied a commission in the U.S. Army. Collins moved to California in 1942 for post-graduate training at the University of California, San Francisco. He obtained a teaching position at the university, which protected him from being drafted. When Collins and his friend, Dr. H. Henry Weisengreen, were denied tenure, Collins left to open a private practice that served patients like HistoryMakers Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. and Katherine Dunham. Collins was appointed to the California State Board of Health and State Board of Education. Collins campaigned for Adlai Stevenson and was a delegate to the 1960 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, California. Collins shares his opinion of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and recalls the impact of African American migration to California in the 1940s.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Daniel A. Collins, Section A2005\_082\_001\_005, TRT: 0:31:07 ?

Dr. Daniel A. Collins stayed at a boarding house in the Fillmore District when he first moved to San Francisco. To address the city's racial discrimination, Collins co-founded the San Francisco chapter of the National Urban League with Seaton Manning and his wife, Eugenia Manning. With the organization, Collins fought for fair treatment from local businesses, better jobs and training, and labor union memberships. When his family joined Collins in San Francisco, they moved to the Lower Pacific Heights neighborhood, where he was a member of the Elks Lodge, and his sons and wife were members of Jack and Jill of America. Collins recalls how he bought a house in Mill Valley, California after the owners first refused to sell to him. After Collins served on the California State Board of Education, William Jovanovich hired him to work for Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. Collins describes Dr. Howard Thurman and the founding of The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples, the first interracial church in the U.S.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Daniel A. Collins, Section A2005\_082\_001\_006, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Dr. Daniel A. Collins recruited minority employees and served as an acquisitions editor at Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. Collins travelled to Sweden and Denmark to research and study their health textbooks. Collins co-chaired HistoryMaker Willie L. Brown's first campaign for the California State Assembly. Collins was also friends with Dr. Ernest A. Bates of American Shared Hospital Services and publishing executive Kermit Boston. Through Synanon, Collins and his wife mentored young girls and offered free dental care. He describes Synanon founder, Charles Dederich, Sr. Collins talks about his sons, architect Daniel A. Collins, Jr. and urologist Edward J. Collins. Collins' third son, HistoryMaker Charles Collins, is a lawyer, city planner and president of the YMCA in Northern California. Collins' youngest son, Craig Collins, was born developmentally disabled, inspiring Collins' wife, DeReath Curtis James, to found Lifehouse, which advocated for special education services in the San

Francisco school system.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Daniel A. Collins, Section A2005\_082\_001\_007, TRT:  
0:15:30 ?

Dr. Daniel A. Collins narrates his photographs.