

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Earl Calloway

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Calloway, Earl
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Earl Calloway,
Dates:	June 26, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:46:03).
Abstract:	Newspaper columnist and newspaper fine arts editor Earl Calloway (1926 - 2014) wrote for the Chicago Defender for nearly fifty years. Calloway was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 26, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_071
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Earl Calloway had been a fixture in the world of journalism for over four decades. Calloway was born on October 4, 1926 in Birmingham, Alabama. He graduated from Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University and pursued special studies at Chicago State University and Governors State University.

Calloway was best known as both the Fine Arts Editor and a columnist for the *Chicago Daily Defender*, the nation's last black daily newspaper. Calloway joined the staff of the *Defender* in September 1963, after working as a writer for the Associated Negro Press, *Chicago Courier* and Negro Press International. Calloway, a talented singer, performed in operatic productions of "Die Fledermaus," "Carmen," "Aida," "The Ordering of Moses," and Operas of Puccini in cities across the United States.

His contributions to the arts in Chicago were innumerable. Calloway organized the annual Black Esthetic Festival (now called Black Creativity) held at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. He founded the Philharmonic Youth Choir and Oratorio Society of Shiloh Seventh Day Adventist Church and served as a soloist with the Umbrian Glee Club and The Artist Circle. Calloway was a co-founder of the Fine Arts Academy and was also influential in helping to establish a musical program for the Children and Adolescent Forum. He received numerous awards, including Kuumba Workshop Media Award, Charles P. Browning Journalism Award and the Cultural Citizens Foundation for the Performing Arts Lifetime Achievement Award.

Calloway passed away on August 20, 2014 at age 87.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Earl Calloway was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 26, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Newspaper columnist and newspaper fine arts editor

Earl Calloway (1926 - 2014) wrote for the Chicago Defender for nearly fifty years.

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:

Calloway, Earl

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Calloway, Earl--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Newspaper Columnist

Newspaper Fine Arts Editor

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Earl Calloway, June 26, 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 Earl Calloway, Section A2002_071_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Earl Calloway talks about his family history. His mother, Mary Magdalene Calloway, was born in Brooksville, Mississippi. His maternal great-great grandmother was a slave who had been brought from Virginia to Macon, Mississippi where she married a Native American. His father, James Calloway, grew up in Pensacola, Florida. Calloway's father worked at Hillman Hospital and the Alabama mines before dying when Calloway was young. Calloway's mother did domestic work. Calloway talks about his experiences growing up in Birmingham, Alabama and remembers going to barbeques and fish fries. Calloway attended private elementary schools and worked odd jobs in order to attend high school at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama.

Video Oral History Interview with Earl Calloway, Section A2002_071_001_002, TRT: 0:28:36 ?

Earl Calloway recalls the survival tactics his family used during the Great Depression. Calloway fondly remembers playing games with the children in the neighborhood. Calloway attended high school and college at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. While at college, Calloway decided to pursue his musical talent instead of becoming a preacher. Calloway and his mother moved to Chicago, Illinois in 1943. While in Chicago, Illinois, Calloway met his famous Jazz musician cousins, Cab and Blanche Calloway. Calloway took music lessons and performed at churches and community events. Calloway then served in the military during the Korean War and became a Sergeant First Class.

Video Oral History Interview with Earl Calloway, Section A2002_071_001_003, TRT: 0:31:15 ?

Earl Calloway discusses his approach to singing and his military service. While serving in the Korean War, Calloway sang with the army chaplain and organized a Christmas program. Greatly inspired by African American spirituals and his teachers, Calloway believes that singers must express the poetic meaning behind songs rather than merely entertain. Calloway's favorite singers included Roland Hayes, Marian Anderson, Paul Robeson, and Dorothy Maynor. While Calloway did not recall instances of prejudice while serving in the U.S. Army, witnessing others suffering traumatic loss left a lasting impact. When Calloway returned to Chicago in 1952, he enrolled in the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University. Following graduation, he formed his own company and performed concerts across the United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Earl Calloway, Section A2002_071_001_004, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Earl Calloway talks about his transition from singing to writing about the arts for newspapers. While recovering from a kidney stone that interrupted his singing tour, Calloway wrote for the Pittsburgh Courier. After a few years, Calloway worked for the Charles Levy Circulating Company in addition to teaching and ushering at Orchestra Hall in Chicago, Illinois. Calloway joined the staff of The Chicago Defender in 1963 and became heavily involved in the city's African American cultural scene. In 1970, Calloway organized the Black Esthetic festival using space in Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry to showcase black artistic talent. Calloway contrasts the unique creative traditions of African artistic traditions to those of African Americans.

Video Oral History Interview with Earl Calloway, Section A2002_071_001_005, TRT: 0:28:45 ?

Earl Calloway reflects on his role as a cultural critic. Calloway talks about the late 1960s when black artists gained access to major cultural institutions. Calloway reflects on his role as a cultural critic who is both objective and encouraging. Calloway credits his education for his versatile knowledge of the arts, and he chose to use a verbose writing style to lift the aspirations of his African American readers. Calloway traces the roots of Hip Hop music to artists of the 1930s to 1950s. Calloway wants his legacy to endeavor to give African Americans the same artful consideration as anyone else. Calloway also hopes that African Americans will support their own community's art.

Video Oral History Interview with Earl Calloway, Section A2002_071_001_006, TRT: 0:19:17 ?

Earl Calloway shares his views on black celebrities who do not support the black community. Calloway remembers his mother's personality and her pride in his accomplishments. Calloway wishes to be remembered as a friend. Calloway concludes by narrating his photographs.