

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Wilfred D. Samuels

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Samuels, Wilfred D.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Wilfred D. Samuels,
Dates:	March 17, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:26:18).
Abstract:	Nonprofit chief executive and african american studies professor Wilfred D. Samuels (1947 - 2020) founded the African American Literature and Culture Society (AALCS). Samuels was Associate Professor and Director of the African American Studies Program at the University of Utah. He lectured in England, Africa, Japan and throughout Southeast Asia. Samuels was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 17, 2008, in Sandy, Utah. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_055
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Distinguished professor Wilfred D. Samuels was born in 1947 in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, to Lena and Noel Samuels. Samuels earned his B.A. degree in English and Black Studies at the University of California, Riverside. In 1974, he went on to earn his M.A. degree in American Studies and African American Studies from the University of Iowa. He continued his education by receiving his Ph.D. in American Studies and African American Studies.

In 1978, Samuels was hired at the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado, where he served until 1985. Then, in 1985, Samuels served as an assistant professor at the University of Colorado and the Benjamin Banneker Honors College at Prairie View A&M in Texas. In 1987, Samuels joined the faculty of the University of Utah, where he is Associate Professor of English and Ethnic Studies, Director of the African American Studies Program, and Acting Coordinator of the Ethnic Studies Program.

In 1993, during the annual conference of the American Literature Association (ALA), Samuels founded the African American Literature and Culture Society (AALCS) in order to encourage the contextual research of African American Studies. The AALCS has presented several conferences including showcases introducing new poets and writers. Samuels has lectured in England, Africa, Japan and throughout Southeast Asia and has received many awards and recognitions including: the Ramona Cannon Award; the Students Choice Award and the University of Utah's Distinguished Teaching Award.

Samuels passed away on February 3, 2020.

Wilfred D. Samuels was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 17, 2008.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Wilfred D. Samuels was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 17, 2008, in Sandy, Utah, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit chief executive and african american studies professor Wilfred D. Samuels (1947 - 2020) founded the African American Literature and Culture Society (AALCS). Samuels was Associate Professor and Director of the African American Studies Program at the University of Utah. He lectured in England, Africa, Japan and throughout Southeast Asia.

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:

Samuels, Wilfred D.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Samuels, Wilfred D.--Interviews

African American scholars--Interviews

Universities and colleges--Faculty--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

University of Utah

Occupations:

African American Studies Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Wilfred D. Samuels, March 17, 2008. 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 Wilfred D. Samuels, Section B2008_055_001_001, TRT: 0:29:33 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Wilfred D. Samuels, Section B2008_055_001_002, TRT: 0:29:15 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Wilfred D. Samuels, Section B2008_055_001_003, TRT: 0:29:53 ?

Wilfred D. Samuels attended Abraham Lincoln Elementary School in Pasadena, California where he was bullied for being an immigrant. As Samuels entered George Washington Junior High School, he was no longer seen as an outsider and became a popular student. He then attended John Muir High School in Pasadena, where he was involved in gymnastics, soccer and cheerleading. During high school, Samuels was told by a teacher that he would never be able to attend college. To prove her wrong, Samuels matriculated to Pasadena City College and University of California, Riverside in Riverside, California, where he was taught by Jacquelyn Slaughter Haywood and George Knox, and obtained bachelor's degrees in both English and African American studies. While in Riverside, Samuels learned about the Black Power movement through speeches given by civil rights leaders such as Maulana Karenga and Angela Davis. Samuels then pursued his master's degree at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa under English professor Darwin Turner.

Video Oral History Interview with Wilfred D. Samuels, Section B2008_055_001_004, TRT: 0:29:16 ?

Wilfred D. Samuels earned bachelor's degrees in English and African American studies at the University of California, Riverside in Riverside, California. While there, Samuels became involved with the Black Arts Movement through his reading of African American publications such as Black World, and as a member of California's branch of the Congress of Afrikan People. Upon graduation, Samuels matriculated to the University of Iowa in Iowa City, where he studied under historian Wilson Jeremiah Moses. Upon his graduation in 1977, Samuels' dissertation was published as the book, 'Five Afro-Caribbean Voices in American Culture,' which focused on the influence of Afro-Caribbean writers on the Harlem Renaissance. After earning his Ph.D., Samuels taught at several universities in Iowa and Texas. He also accepted a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship in 1984 to study with Houston A. Baker, Jr. at the University of Pennsylvania. Samuels also talks about Claude McKay's poem, 'If We Must Die.'

Video Oral History Interview with Wilfred D. Samuels, Section B2008_055_001_005, TRT: 0:28:21 ?

Wilfred D. Samuels attended the University of Pennsylvania as a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in 1984. He then moved to Prairie View, Texas to teach at Prairie View A&M University. After two years, Samuels was recruited to the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah by Professor Ronald Gerald Coleman, where he taught both English and ethnic studies, and focused on his research. During this time, Samuels' wife, Barbara Fikes Samuels, lived in Colorado with their two sons, Detavio Samuels and Michael A. Samuels. Eventually the long distance resulted in their divorce. At the University of Utah, Samuels also hosted Looking Back with Pleasure II: A Celebration in Salt Lake City, which was a conference dedicated to the works of Wallace Thurman. Samuels talks about Thurman's early life and his critique of the Harlem Renaissance. He reflects upon his legacy; and concludes the interview by describing his hopes and concerns for the African American Community as well as how he would like to be remembered.

