

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Sprinkle-Hamlin, Sylvia, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin,
Dates:	February 23, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:05:45).
Abstract:	Librarian and arts administrator Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin (1945 - 2022) was executive producer of the National Black Theatre Festival and board president of the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. She also directed the Forsyth County Public Library in North Carolina. Sprinkle-Hamlin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 23, 2012, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_037
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Librarian and arts administrator Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin was born on April 25, 1945, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to Thelma N. Holtzclaw, a custodian, and Arthur William Henry Sprinkle, Jr., a factory worker. She received her B.S. degree in education from Winston-Salem State University in 1967 and her M.S. degree in library science from Clark Atlanta University in 1968.

After completing her studies, Sprinkle-Hamlin joined the staff of the Free Library of Philadelphia as a children's librarian. In 1970, she became an information specialist at the Benjamin Banneker Urban Center, and in 1973, she became the instructional media center director for the Philadelphia Public Schools while taking education administration classes at Cheyney State University. Sprinkle-Hamlin returned to Winston-Salem State University in 1978, where she served as a public services librarian and assistant director of the university library. In 1979, she joined the Forsyth County Public Library system as department head for children's outreach. Also in 1979, Sprinkle-Hamlin met her future husband, Larry Leon Hamlin, who was the founder of the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. They married in 1981 and Sprinkle-Hamlin became secretary of the National Black Repertory Company in 1983. Hamlin would go on to found the National Black Theatre Festival in 1989, with the fundraising support of Maya Angelou. Sprinkle-Hamlin joined the board of directors for the National Black Theatre Festival in 1991. The Festival grew from thirty performances and 10,000 in attendance in 1989 to over 100 performances and 50,000 in attendance in 2005. In 2007, Hamlin died after an extended illness and Sprinkle-Hamlin carried on her husband's work, becoming executive producer for the National Black Theatre Festival. In 2010, she became president of the board of directors for the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. During this time, Sprinkle-Hamlin also continued to work for the Forsyth County Public Library, serving as assistant library director, extension division, associate library director, and finally library director in 2000. She also served as a library consultant for W.H. Roberts & Associates.

Sprinkle-Hamlin worked extensively in the Winston-Salem community, serving on the board of directors for Family Services, Inc., Forsyth County Smart Start, the Shepherd Center of Greater Winston-Salem, and the Diggs Gallery of Winston-Salem University. She also served as a council member of the American Library Association (ALA), president of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, a Public Library Association Board member, and chair of the African American Issues Roundtable of the Southeastern Library Association. Sprinkle-Hamlin received the Roundtable for Ethnic Minority Roadbuilder's Award, the DEMCO/ALA Black Caucus Award for Excellence in Librarianship, and *The Chronicle* Women of the Year Award. She lived in Pfafftown, North Carolina.

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 23, 2012.

Sprinkle-Hamlin passed away on January 3, 2022, at the age of 76.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 23, 2012, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Librarian and arts administrator Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin (1945 - 2022) was executive producer of the National Black Theatre Festival and board president of the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. She also directed the Forsyth County Public Library in North Carolina.

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:

Sprinkle-Hamlin, Sylvia, 1945-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Sprinkle-Hamlin, Sylvia, 1945- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Arts Administrator

Librarian

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers|CivicMakers

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 Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, February 23, 2012. 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 Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, Section A2012_037_001_001, TRT: 1:29:13 ?

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin was born on April 25, 1945 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina to Thelma Norwood Holtzclaw and Arthur Sprinkle, Jr. Her maternal great-grandfather, James Norwood, was born into slavery in South Carolina. Following emancipation in 1863, he moved to Charlotte, North Carolina before settling in Winston-Salem. Her grandfather, Lonon Norwood, worked for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company; and with his savings, purchased fifty-five acres of farmland in Tobaccoville, North Carolina, where her mother was raised. Sprinkle-Hamlin's father was born in 1898 in Forsyth County, North Carolina. He went on to work at a lumber company in Rural Hall, North Carolina; and met Sprinkle-Hamlin's mother, who was twenty years his junior, in Tobaccoville. There, Sprinkle-Hamlin also grew up on her grandfather's farm; and was a member of Center Grove A.M.E. Zion Church. In Winston-Salem, she attended the segregated Carver Consolidated School. She also remembers patronizing the Forsyth County book mobile.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, Section A2012_037_001_002, TRT: 2:28:19 ?

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin completed the first through the twelfth grades at the segregated Carver Consolidated School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. As a young girl, she enjoyed listening to the radio, and reading 'The Boxcar Children' series and about African American history. Upon graduating in 1963, she matriculated at Winston-Salem State College. During her junior year, the basketball team, which included future NBA player Earl Monroe, helped raise funds for her Experiment in International Living trip to India. Heeding the advice of her mentor, librarian Lucy H. Bradshaw, she pursued a master's in library science at Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. Then, she moved to the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area, where she worked at the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Benjamin Banneker Urban Center; and obtained her master's in educational administration at Cheyney State College. When she returned to Winston-Salem, she sold Fashion 220 Cosmetics while working at Winston-Salem State University.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, Section A2012_037_001_003, TRT: 3:29:11 ?

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin's met her future husband, Larry Leon Hamlin, in 1979 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He had previously lived in Providence, Rhode Island, where he studied business at Johnson and Wales University and theater at Brown University; and founded the company Star Theater Productions. In 1979, he formed the North Carolina Black Repertory Company (NCBRC), the state's first professional African American theater company, for which he later secured funding from the North Carolina Arts Council. Then, with encouragement from poet Maya Angelou, he founded the National Black Theatre Festival, which was inaugurated in Winston-Salem in 1989, and attended by celebrity guests like media mogul Oprah Winfrey, and actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. Sprinkle-Hamlin talks about the funding for the festival, as

well as its overall success. At the time of the interview, NCBRC employed six staff members, and staged four productions each year, including works by playwrights Samm-Art Williams and Ted Lange.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, Section A2012_037_001_004, TRT: 4:28:11 ?

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin's husband, Larry Leon Hamlin, formed the North Carolina Black Repertory Company (NCBRC) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1979. He also founded the National Black Theatre Festival in 1989, and the exclusive donor membership program, Marvtastic Society, in 2003. At this point in the interview, Sprinkle-Hamlin reflects upon her husband's legacy, and talks about the NCBRC's marketing strategy and the ongoing community support for both the festival and NCBRC, of which Gerry Patton served as executive director and Mabel Robinson as artistic director. In addition to her work in theater, Sprinkle-Hamlin directed the Forsyth County Public Library in Winston-Salem, and served on numerous boards such as Diggs Gallery and the Shepherd's Center of Greater Winston-Salem. She reflects upon her life and legacy, and talks about her hopes and concerns for the African American community. Sprinkle-Hamlin concludes the interview by describing how she would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, Section A2012_037_001_005, TRT: 5:10:51 ?

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin narrates her photographs.