

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with David "Oggi" Ogburn

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Ogburn, David, 1942-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn,
<b>Dates:</b>	October 21, 2013 and October 25, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	10 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:30:47).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Photographer David "Oggi" Ogburn (1942 - ), founder of Oggi's Kitchen Photomarket, has been a photographer for over forty years, capturing historic snapshots of famous musicians, U.S. Presidents, and Historian Chancellor James Williams. Ogburn was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 21, 2013 and October 25, 2013, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_278
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Photographer David Oggi Ogburn was born on December 14, 1942 in Brooklyn, New York to Archibald and Nannie Ogburn. He graduated from Andrew Jackson High School in Queens, New York in 1961. After taking courses at Saint Paul's College, Ogburn went on to receive his B.A. degree in sociology from Howard University in 1968, as well as his M.A. degree in urban studies in 1973.

Ogburn was hired in the 1960s as a social worker for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. From 1969 until 1971, Ogburn worked as a merchandiser for General Motors. In 1970, he also worked as a freelance photographer, and founded Oggi's Kitchen Photomarket in 1971. Then, in 1975, Ogburn began serving as assistant to the Historian Chancellor James Williams, where he documented his work through photography and audiotape until 1987. Ogburn was also hired by local D.C. radio stations including Howard University's WHUR-FM as a freelance photographer. He served for three years as a soundman for the D.C. Black Repertory Company and as the campaign photographer for President Jimmy Carter and former Washington, D.C. Mayor Walter Washington. For twenty-four years, Ogburn worked for the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters. He has also photographed for record labels Sony, Arista, WEA, BMG, Polygram, Motown, and MCA.

Ogburn's photographs have been published in trade and consumer magazines ranging from Billboard to U.S. News and World Report. His work has been included in several photography collection books about African American images, history and culture. Ogburn's photography has also been exhibited at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History; the African American Museum in Philadelphia; the Brooklyn Museum of Art; as well as at various exhibits in Atlanta, Detroit, Montgomery, and Beijing, China. He received many honors and awards including *Impact* magazine's Award of Excellence in 1997; the Exposure Group's 2002 Photographer of the Year Award; and the Mid Atlantic Music Alliance's Preservation of Music History honor in 2007. Ogburn has also been a member of the Exposure Group since 1998.

David Oggi Ogburn was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 21, 2013.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 21, 2013 and October 25, 2013, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 10 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Photographer David "Oggi" Ogburn (1942 - ) , founder of Oggi's Kitchen Photomarket, has been a photographer for over forty years, capturing historic snapshots of famous musicians, U.S. Presidents, and Historian Chancellor James Williams.

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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:

Ogburn, David, 1942-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Ogburn, David, 1942- --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:

Photographer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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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 David "Oggi" Ogburn, October 21, 2013 and October 25, 2013. 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 David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_001\_001, TRT: 1:27:34 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn was born on December 14, 1942 in Brooklyn, New York, New York. His mother, Nannie Cabbell Ogburn, was born on October 19, 1921 in Brooklyn. She was a dressmaker and her ancestry included African, Native

American and white. One of her grandfather's was descended from Native Americans and moved to Brooklyn because he could not own property in Virginia. Her other grandfather owned a farm in Virginia and is distantly related to Carter G. Woodson. His father, Archibald Ogburn, was born on August 3, 1918 in Springfield, Ohio but raised in Brooklyn where Ogburn's paternal father was the pastor of Saint Cyprian's Church. Ogburn's father attended Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia briefly and was deployed to Okinawa, Japan during World War II. He worked for the Department of Corrections. Ogburn's parents met in Brooklyn. He describes his parents' personalities and his mother expectation that he do well enough in school to pass. Ogburn has two younger siblings.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_001\_002, TRT: 2:31:09 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn recalls his early childhood and youth. He describes his siblings and remembers playing sports and serving as an altar boy at his paternal grandfather's church, Saint Cyprian's Church, in New York, New York. He also recalls the tragic death of a childhood friend due to an overdose and the presence of gangs. He attributes his escape from these influences coming from his ability to play sports. He describes his father's, Archibald Ogburn, impact on him growing up and he details working at prison commissaries, due to his father's position with The Department of Corrections. Ogburn initially rejected the idea of attending college, but after losing an office job with Ideal Toy Company, he decided to attend Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia. Finally, he details some of the famous neighbors he was acquainted with when his family moved to Queens, New York, New York, such as Jackie Robinson, Jr. and Count Basie, and he recalls seeing famous basketball players, such as Wilt Chamberlain.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:47 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn talks about his college experiences and his early experience with photography. He explains how he was expelled from Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia because the dean of the school disliked Ogburn. Ogburn then attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. to study sociology and psychology. He was expelled from Howard, too, for low grades. Ogburn was later readmitted to Howard but placed on academic probation, which led to him becoming serious about his grades. After graduating from Howard, he returned home to work for the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. After the end of an unhappy marriage, he returned to Washington, D.C. and began exploring his interest in photography. He started his own lab, which he called "Oggi's Kitchen" due to it being in the kitchen of his small apartment. He was recommended for his first assignment of photographing Roberta Flack for WHUR, a local radio station, by a friend who worked there.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_001\_004, TRT: 4:27:55 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn's first gig photographing Roberta Flack for the Washington, D.C. radio station, WHUR, led to other jobs. He recalls some of the important figures he knew from WHUR, including HistoryMakers Cathy Hughes and Dyana Williams. In addition to freelancing as a photographer, while he was in graduate school at Howard University, Ogburn worked part-time as a sound man for the company founded by HistoryMaker Robert Hooks and Vantile Whitfield, the D.C. Black Reparatory Company in Washington, D.C.

There he met actress Lynn Whitfield and Sydney Poitier's daughter. Ogburn graduated from graduate school in 1973. In 1974, he read Chancellor Williams' book 'The Destruction of Black Civilization.' Coincidentally, not long after finishing the book he had the opportunity to travel to Egypt. Ogburn was so moved by the book and his trip that he wrote to Chancellor Williams requesting to meet him. In recounting his first meeting with Williams, Ogburn details important milestones of Williams's education and career.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_001\_005, TRT: 5:22:41 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn shares stories about Chancellor Williams and reflects upon Williams's legacy and impact on his own life. He talks about Chancellor Williams's childhood and writings, and he recalls traveling with Chancellor Williams to a variety of locations, including universities and prisons. He also shares a story about Chancellor Williams taking legal action against Third World Press to obtain royalties. In recounting stories about Chancellor Williams, Ogburn reflects on his beliefs, outlooks, and attitudes as well as the impact Williams had on other people, who were often reverent toward him. Ogburn also talks about his own sense of inhabiting two worlds, his experiences with Williams representing the intellectual one, and his experiences working in the music business as a photographer representing a more hedonistic environment.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_002\_006, TRT: 6:29:49 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn details the documents of Chancellor Williams. While talking about Chancellor Williams's relationship with his family, he also shares Chancellor Williams's scholarship on, and criticism of, churches that were focused on prosperity and money. In offering a final reflection on Chancellor Williams's legacy, Ogburn notes that his ideas were groundbreaking for African history and African American identity. His scholarship inspired Ogburn to start a black history-focused newsletter while President of the House of Ogburn. Ogburn also responds to the criticisms of Chancellor Williams's scholarship and explains why Chancellor Williams was unable to execute all his planned works. Ogburn's early photography assignments in 1974, included the hearing for the impeachment of Richard Nixon, and prominent musicians of the time, such as Earth, Wind & Fire. He talks about the creation of the Quiet Storm radio format, HistoryMaker Cathy Hughes' radio station, WHUR, and comedian Petey Greene.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_002\_007, TRT: 7:29:50 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn shares memories of many people he has encountered through his career as a photographer. He describes his friendship with Jon Lucien and HistoryMaker Dyana Williams who helped make his first photography show possible. He recalls photographing many famous musicians, such as Bob Marley, the band Earth, Wind & Fire, Art Blakey, and Grover Washington, Jr. Ogburn particularly admires Janet Jackson for her hard work and drive and enjoyed working with Sade. He mentions briefly an experience photographing the Angolan rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi. He explains that his success in the entertainment industry was aided by his self-control, even as the lifestyle and environment emphasized partying and involved long hours and lots of travel. He also explains the pricing for various photographs and explains the components that factor into the pricing as well as noting the features of newer cameras today.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_002\_008, TRT:

8:30:04 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn shares memories of famous photographers that he met throughout his career. Ogburn recalls meeting James Van Der Zee in his later years and attending his funeral. Ogburn also talks about his encounters with Samuel Yette, Gordon Parks, Roy DeCarava, Edward Steichen, Yousuf Karsh, Moneta Sleet, and Maurice Sorrell. Ogburn credits Deborah Willis for helping him exhibit his work and mentions that he exhibited with Chester Higgins, Jr. He describes some of his memorable works, including pictures of a music group called "Process and the Doo Rags". In reflecting on how freelance artists can face financial difficulties, he also attempts to dispel rumors that the Ernest Withers was an informant for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. While recalling some difficult moments in his career, he explains how respect for others allowed him to form a rapport with the many famous people he encountered. He also describes how his trip to Egypt had a profound effect upon his sense of history and identity.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_002\_009, TRT: 9:30:54 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn describes some highlights of his career. He recalls working for the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters and the important opportunities to photograph celebrities and politicians that that work afforded him. He shares a story about receiving a thank-you letter from Angela Bassett after sending a photograph of her and Ruby Dee. Ogburn also recalls some of his favorite pictures and his most lucrative ones. He recounts overcoming his early shyness in his career in encounters photographing Michael Jackson and Gladys Knight. While remember photographing Brandy, he reflects on changes within the music industry. In reflecting on these important milestones in his career, he talks about pictures that raised conflicts for him and lessons he learned. He also mentions who he would like to photograph now, if he were not retired, and shares his hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with David "Oggi" Ogburn, Section A2013\_278\_002\_010, TRT: 10:11:04 ?

David "Oggi" Ogburn considers his professional legacy and reflects on how he would like to be remembered. He believes that his professional legacy is mainly in his photography work, for which he continues to be sought out today. Ogburn considers himself blessed to have achieved so much educationally and professionally, and he feels fortunate to have met and documented musicians, such as the Heath Brothers and James Mtume. Ogburn also considers his work in history to be part of his legacy, especially given his work with Chancellor Williams and the appreciation for black culture and history gained through that association. In reflecting on the many famous musicians he photographed in the past, Ogburn compares activist entertainers involved in the Civil Rights Movement, such as Harry Belafonte, with entertainers today, who are less politically committed. Finally, Ogburn hopes to be remembered as someone who treated others as he wants to be treated