

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Father Darryl F. James

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	James, Darryl F., 1954-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Father Darryl F. James,
Dates:	December 13, 2016
Bulk Dates:	2016
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:28:44).
Abstract:	Father Darryl F. James (1954 -) was the rector of the Messiah-St. Bartholomew Church in Chicago, Illinois for twenty-one years, before becoming the rector of the historic Grace Episcopal Church in Jamaica, Queens. James was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 13, 2016, in Jamaica, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2016_125
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Father Darryl F. James was born on July 3, 1954 in Bridgeport, Connecticut to Laurayne Farrar James and Anthony James, Sr. His family grew up in both Richmond, Virginia and Spring Valley, New York. He earned his B.A. degree from Howard University in 1975, and his M.Div. degree from Yale University in 1979.

Upon graduation from Yale Divinity School, James was assigned to Trinity Cathedral in Newark, New Jersey, where he worked under the tutelage of Dean Dillard Robinson. He was then ordained as a deacon in 1984 at St. Matthew's and St. Joseph's Church, where he was also appointed Assistant for Youth and Young Adult Ministries. In 1985, James was ordained to the priesthood by the Reverend John M. Burgess in Detroit, Michigan. Later that year, James became the rector of the Messiah-St. Bartholomew Church in Chicago, Illinois, where he remained for twenty-one years. James was subsequently named to the Chicago School Board, serving from 1990 to 1995. Also in 1990, he was named the National President of the Union of Black Episcopalians. James then moved to leadership of the historic Grace Episcopal Church in Jamaica, Queens as Priest-in-Charge in 2007. Three years later, he assumed the role as church rector. A member of the Diocese of Long Island and the Queens community, James also joined the Investment Committee and the Episcopal Health Service Board of Managers, and co-founded the Downtown Jamaica Clergy. He later served as president of the Queens Federation of Churches. James launched several initiatives at Grace Episcopal Church, including the Bishop Thompson, Jr. Summer Music and Arts Workshop, the annual Father's Day Men of Valor Luncheon, and the Volunteers Appreciation Dinner, among others. In 2005, James, in partnership with St. Luke's Episcopal Church, assisted Hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans, Louisiana, providing aid and performing mission work in the region. He also participated in a pilgrimage to Northern India, visiting the Diocese of Mumbai and North India in Delhi. James also sponsored college tours for prospective college students throughout the United States.

Father Darryl F. James was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 13, 2016.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Father Darryl F. James was conducted by Harriette Cole on December 13, 2016, in Jamaica, New York, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Father Darryl F. James (1954 -) was the rector of the Messiah-St. Bartholomew Church in Chicago, Illinois for twenty-one years, before becoming the rector of the historic Grace Episcopal Church in Jamaica, Queens.

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:

James, Darryl F., 1954-

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

James, Darryl F., 1954- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Priest

HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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 Father Darryl F. James, December 13, 2016. 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 Father Darryl F. James, Section A2016_125_001_001, TRT: 1:29:43 ?

Father Darryl F. James was born on July 3, 1954 in Bridgeport, Connecticut to Laurayne Farrar James and Anthony James, Sr. His maternal grandmother, Alice Whiting Farrar, was born in Virginia, and moved at a young age to the majority-white town of Bridgeport. There, she married James' maternal grandfather, Edward Farrar, who moved from Virginia to work for the Bridgeport Brass Company. They married and raised seven children in Bridgeport, including James' mother. James' paternal family originated in Richmond, Virginia, where

his great-grandmother, Fannie James, worked for Maggie Lena Walker, who founded the city's first black bank. She also raised three daughters, including James' paternal grandmother, who married a postal worker. They raised James' father in Richmond, and he went on to study physical education at Virginia State College in Petersburg. During the summer, he served as the athletic director of the all-black Camp Atwater in North Brookfield, Massachusetts.

Video Oral History Interview with Father Darryl F. James, Section A2016_125_001_002, TRT: 2:29:53 ?

Father Darryl F. James' parents met and married in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and later moved to a predominantly black neighborhood in Richmond, Virginia. There, James grew up in the Brookfield Gardens apartments, where his neighbors included the civil rights lawyer Spottswood William Robinson III. His mother was the local coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and worked on the Poor People's Campaign. James began his education at the all-black Albert V. Norrell Elementary School in Richmond. After the local schools were integrated, he was sent to J.E.B. Stuart Elementary School, and then attended J.A.C. Chandler Junior High School. Each week, James rode his bicycle to St. Philip's Episcopal Church. He was confirmed as a member of the church at twelve years old, and soon became interest in joining the clergy. James completed his freshman year at Armstrong High School, and then moved with his family to Spring Valley, New York, where he attended the majority-Jewish Ramapo High School.

Video Oral History Interview with Father Darryl F. James, Section A2016_125_001_003, TRT: 3:29:22 ?

Father Darryl F. James enrolled at Howard University in 1972. He studied political science and joined the Absalom Jones Student Association, an Episcopal organization led by Father E. Nathaniel Porter. Through the group, he witnessed the church's efforts to serve the black community, and was inspired to join the ministry. Upon graduating, James enrolled at the Absalom Jones Theological Institute in Atlanta, Georgia and met Bishop John Burgess, who recruited him to study at the Yale Divinity School in 1977. While there, James challenged his white classmates' prejudice, and was mentored by the black theologian James H. Cone. James completed his Episcopal training the Berkeley Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut. From 1979, he served as a lay assistant at the Trinity and St. Philip's Cathedral in Newark, New Jersey, and then moved to St. Matthew's-St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in Detroit, Michigan. He also remembers Bishop Barbara Harris' election as the first female Episcopal bishop in 1989.

Video Oral History Interview with Father Darryl F. James, Section A2016_125_001_004, TRT: 4:29:56 ?

Father Darryl F. James was ordained as a deacon at St. Matthew's-St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in Detroit, Michigan. The congregation was led by Reverend Orris G. Walker, Jr., who later became the first black bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island. With his guidance, James learned to preach sermons extemporaneously, and went on to be ordained into the priesthood. He was also active in Detroit's Church Army, which provided services to unwed mothers. In 1985, James was recruited to pastor the predominantly black Messiah-St. Bartholomew Episcopal Church in Chicago, Illinois. There, he started a Christmas toy drive and a mentorship program for young men, where he emphasized etiquette and grooming. After twenty years, James was recruited by Reverend Orris G. Walker, Jr. to head the Grace Episcopal Church in Queens, New York, which had a predominantly West Indian congregation. At this point,

James talks about the spiritual foundation of his priesthood.

Video Oral History Interview with Father Darryl F. James, Section A2016_125_001_005, TRT: 5:29:50 ?

Father Darryl F. James served a congregation of over three hundred people as head priest of the Grace Episcopal Church in Queens, New York. In that role, James presided over sacraments like baptisms and marriages, and maintained the church edifice and cemetery, which were over three hundred years old. He also founded a youth program called New Grace Ministries, where he encouraged younger congregants to become active members of the church. During this time, James served as the national president of the Union of Black Episcopalians, which advocated for the inclusion of the church's minority members. During the presidential campaign of 2016, James started a voter registration drive and encouraged his congregation to vote. At this point in the interview, James reflects upon his life and legacy, as well as his advice to young African Americans interested in joining the ministry. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.