

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Allen Stringfellow

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Stringfellow, Allen
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Allen Stringfellow,
Dates:	January 8, 2001
Bulk Dates:	2001
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:23:25).
Abstract:	Collage artist and watercolor artist Allen Stringfellow (1923 - 2004) created artwork that often includes religious and jazz imagery, as well as baptismal scenes from his youth. His signature works include, "Ladies Day", "The Gallery," and, "All That Jazz." His works have been shown in many galleries, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago Historical Society and DuSable Museum of African American History. Stringfellow was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 8, 2001, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2001_071
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Allen Stringfellow was born on July 9, 1923. He was raised by his deeply religious great-grandmother, who would take Allen to open-air baptisms performed by their church in Champaign, Illinois. Although he did not live with his parents, who resided in Chicago, Stringfellow would often visit his mother and father, a jazz musician and nightclub manager.

Allen showed promise in his artistic abilities at a very young age. He enrolled in art classes at the University of Illinois in Champaign, and finished his training at the Art Institute in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After graduating, Stringfellow moved to Chicago where he taught print techniques at the South Side Community Arts Center as part of the National Youth Administration program. Later, as general manager of Armand Lee's well-known framing company, he worked with the most prestigious designers in the country. His influence in the art community steadily increased and, by 1960, Stringfellow owned an original art gallery in Chicago's Old Town community.

As with many artists, Stringfellow examines themes which have been important in shaping his life. His artwork often includes religious and jazz imagery. Many of his most famous pieces are inspired by baptismal scenes from his youth, including "Red Umbrella Down by the Riverside" and "Going to Lay Down My Sword and Shield." Although he has explored many artistic traditions, Stringfellow is currently working with collage and watercolor, examining the depth and movement that can be achieved through these mediums. Inspired by the late William S. Carter, Stringfellow refers to him as his best friend and motivator.

Stringfellow has been the recipient of numerous awards. His signature works include "Ladies Day", "The Gallery" and "All That Jazz". His works have been shown in many galleries, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago Historical Society and DuSable Museum of African American History.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Allen Stringfellow was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on January 8, 2001, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Collage artist and watercolor artist Allen Stringfellow (1923 - 2004) created artwork that often includes religious and jazz imagery, as well as baptismal scenes from his youth. His signature works include, "Ladies Day", "The Gallery," and, "All That Jazz." His works have been shown in many galleries, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago Historical Society and DuSable Museum of African American History.

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:

Stringfellow, Allen

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Stringfellow, Allen--Interviews

African American painters--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

African American artists--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

Collage

Champaign (Ill.)--Social life and customs

Grandparents as parents

African American arts--Illinois--Chicago

United States.--Work Projects Administration (Ill.)

Parks, Gordon, 1912-2006

Catlett, Elizabeth, 1915-

Art, Modern--20th century

Religion in art

Jazz in art

African American art--20th century

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Collage Artist

Watercolor Artist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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 Allen Stringfellow, January 8, 2001. 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 Allen Stringfellow, Section A2001_071_001_001, TRT: 0:29:59 ?

Allen Stringfellow recalls his life in Champaign, Illinois, in the early 1920s and 1930s, where he was raised by his grandmother, Mother Briggs. His parents were entertainers and didn't raise their six children. Stringfellow remembers an elementary school teacher who encouraged his artistic creativity. Stringfellow details his continuing interest and training in art, which was further encouraged by Roosevelt's New Deal programs at the South Side Community Arts Center.

African American painters--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

African American artists--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

Collage.

Champaign (Ill.)--Social life and customs.

Grandparents as parents.

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United States. Work Projects Administration (Ill.).

Parks, Gordon, 1912-2006.

Catlett, Elizabeth, 1915-.

Art, Modern--20th century.

Religion in art.

Jazz in art.

African American art--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Allen Stringfellow, Section A2001_071_001_002, TRT: 0:30:23
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Allen Stringfellow describes his life at the South Side Community Art Center and his fellow artists like Gordon Parks, Elizabeth Catlett and William Carter. Stringfellow was part of a program created by the New Deal program, the Works Progress Administration. He details the influence the program and his fellow artists had upon him.

Video Oral History Interview with Allen Stringfellow, Section A2001_071_001_003, TRT: 0:30:21
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Allen Stringfellow details his time working at Armand Lee's framing business, which exposed him to different kinds of art and improved his own art. Stringfellow explains how his art changed over time, and discusses some of the themes present in his art, including jazz and the church. He then talks about buyers of his work and his success in New York City.

Video Oral History Interview with Allen Stringfellow, Section A2001_071_001_004, TRT: 0:30:29
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Allen Stringfellow details the motivations and inspiration behind his most well-known pieces such as 'Red Umbrella Down by the Riverside' and 'All That Jazz'. He explains that music and religion played a large role in shaping his artistic vision. He says he draws much joy from collectors of his art who admire and enjoy his style.

Video Oral History Interview with Allen Stringfellow, Section A2001_071_001_005, TRT: 0:22:13
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Allen Stringfellow considers the importance of art in black culture, and his legacy as an artist. He then describes photographs that depict his life and career, including images of his most famous works. Stringfellow then discusses the important role of his assistant, Nicole, and shares his thoughts about spirituality and art.