

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with E. Don Sarreals

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Sarreals, E. Don, 1931-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals,
Dates:	January 15, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:35:59).
Abstract:	Atmospheric scientist E. Don Sarreals (1931 -) is a leading Doppler radar specialist for the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Sarreals was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 15, 2013, in Silver Spring, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_010
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Meteorologist E. Don Sarreals was born on September 22, 1931 in Winston Salem, North Carolina to parents Espriela Sarreals and Sadie Scales. While still a young child, Sarreal's family migrated to New York City. He attended New York City Public School No. 46 and New York City Junior High School No. 164 before graduating from Bronx High School of Science in 1949. Sarreals went on to earn his B.S. degree in meteorology from the City Colleges of New York in 1955 and his his M.S. degree in meteorology from New York University in 1958.

Before his career as a meteorologist began, Sarreals served in the U.S. Army in 1954 and worked as a part-time lecturer while earning his graduate degree. In 1961, Sarreals began his career as a weather radar supervisor in the National Weather Service (NWS) New York Forecast Office. In 1976, Sarreals accepted a position as the television meteorologist for the National Broadcasting Corporation's WRC-TV in Washington, D.C., from 1969 to 1975, while concurrently serving as president and consultant for Storm Finders, Inc. As the dissemination meteorologist for the NWS Headquarters from 1976 to 1980, Sarreals helped to develop the nation's first government-funded radio working system, NOAA Weather Radio. Sarreals also worked as the television meteorologist for the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting. From 1980 to 1992, Sarreals was assigned as chief of Operations and Requirements for the Next Generation Weather Radar Project (NEXRAD). In 1984, Sarreals was appointed chairman of the Working Group for Doppler Radar Meteorological Observation. Sarreals also served as a staff member in the NWS Modernization Division, and as as assistant federal coordinator for DOC/NOAA/NWS Affairs in the Office of the Federal Coordination for Meteorological Service.

Sarreals is a fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, a recipient of the Ward Medal for proficiency in meteorology, and he is a member of the American Meteorological Society. Sarreals is also the author of the *Federal Meteorological Handbook No. 1: National Weather Radio Operations* supervised the development of *Federal Meteorological Handbook No. 2: Doppler Weather Radar Observations*. For his contributions and accomplishments, Sarreals was selected for inclusion in *Who's Who Among Black Americans*.

E. Don Sarreals was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 15, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with E. Don Sarreals was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 15, 2013, in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Atmospheric scientist E. Don Sarreals (1931 -) is a leading Doppler radar specialist for the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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:

Sarreals, E. Don, 1931-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Sarreals, E. Don, 1931- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

National Weather Service (U.S.)

Occupations:

Atmospheric Scientist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 E. Don Sarreals, January 15, 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).

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 E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013_010_001_001, TRT: 1:28:38 ?
Don Sarreals talks about his family background. Sarreals was born in 1931 in

Winston-Salem, North Carolina. His mother, Sadie Beatrice Scales, was born in April, 1903 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She was a homemaker and secretary. His father, Espriela Don Sarreals Sr., was born in 1901 in Mississippi. Due to racial pressures in Mississippi, his family moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he was raised for most of his life. Sarreals Sr. attended the University of Michigan and taught at public schools. Sarreals describes his parents' personalities and his earliest childhood memory.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

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Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013_010_001_002, TRT: 2:28:19 ?

Don Sarreals' family moved from Winston Salem, North Carolina to New York when he was a young boy. Sarreals talks about his experience growing up in New York. As a young boy, Sarreals enjoyed drawing and making comics, as well as playing tennis. Sarreals attended P.S. 46 for elementary school, where he excelled in all of his courses. He continued on to Junior High School 164, J. Edward Stitt, where he was placed in advanced level classes. After reading the book 'Storm' by George R. Stewart, Sarreals was inspired to become a meteorologist. 'Storm' also influenced the concept of naming storms.

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Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013_010_001_003, TRT: 3:28:09 ?

Don Sarreals was inspired to become a meteorologist after reading the book 'Storm,' by George Rippey Stewart. After graduating from Junior High School 164 in 1946, Sarreals went on to attend Bronx High School of Science. While in high school, Sarreals developed an affinity for biology and seriously considered becoming a doctor. Sarreals graduated from high school in 1949 and went on to attend City College of New York, where he initially followed the pre-medicine track. His studies were interrupted in 1953, when he was drafted to the U.S. Army. He returned in 1955 and changed his major to meteorology. Sarreals graduated in 1957 with his B.S. degree in meteorology and received the Ward Metal in Meteorology.

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Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013_010_001_004, TRT: 4:29:01 ?

Don Sarreals began his teaching fellowship at City College of New York in 1957. He served as a part-time lecturer in the meteorology department. Sarreals also took courses towards a M.S. degree at New York University, but he did not write a thesis. After finishing the classes at NYU in 1961, he was hired by the National Weather Service (formerly, Weather Bureau), where he served as radar supervisor and radio meteorologist. He described his experiences as a television

meteorologist. In 1964, Sarreals guided President Lyndon B. Johnson's Air Force One through a severe thunderstorm. In 1969, Sarreals moved on to NBC, where he became the first black professional meteorologist on television in the United States.

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Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013_010_001_005, TRT: 5:28:51 ?

Don Sarreals was released from NBC's Channel 4 in 1974, despite the positive ratings of his evening news program. After taking a vacation, he was contacted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) where he contributed to a program that established a weather radio warning system. When Sarreals was not working with the U.S. Weather Service, he served as a consultant with his company, Storm Finders. In 1976, Sarreals served as an operational meteorologist at the National Weather Service's Headquarters. There, he contributed to the development of the Doppler radar system, which aids in determining the speed of various types of precipitation. In 1993, he served as Assistant Federal Coordinator for the NOAA, where he developed new standards for the modernization of weather services. He talks about his family and reflects upon his legacy.

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Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013_010_001_006, TRT: 6:13:01 ?

Don Sarreals describes his granddaughter's interest in meteorology, and reflects upon how he would like to be remembered. He then describes his family photographs.

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