

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie

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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>	Daylie, Daddy-O
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 29, 2001
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2001
<b>Physical Description:</b>	9 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:45:01).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Radio personality Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie (1920 - 2003 ) was a radio disc jockey who introduced audiences to jazz, blues and swing while furthering the cause of civil rights. Working at WAIT, Daylie was known for his linguistic gymnastics, sense of humor, and hip improvisational rhythmic monologues. Daylie was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 29, 2001, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2001_021
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

"The music host who loves you most," Holmes Daddy-O Daylie was born on May 15, 1920, in Covington, Tennessee. His mother died tragically during childbirth and his father five years later. Holmes was then raised by his older brother, Clinton, and the family moved to Chicago's South Side when Holmes was a child. He attended John D. Shoop elementary and Morgan Park High schools. A talented athlete, after graduation Daylie played professional basketball with the Harlem Yankees and the Globetrotters. However, he soon tired of the lodging discrimination encountered while traveling across the country, and he returned to Chicago to begin a new career.

Affectionately called "Daddy-O" long before his entrance into radio, Daylie was known for his linguistic gymnastics and sense of humor. These qualities would prove to be the key to his success. Discovered in 1947 while working as a bartender in the Beige room of the Pershing hotel, famous disk jockey Dave Garroway was impressed by the artistic rhymes Daddy-O used while serving his clientele. On Garroway's suggestion, Daylie enrolled in radio school to refine his skills and, in 1948, Daddy-O's Jazz Patio made its debut on station WAIT.

Daddy-O's relaxed style and hip improvisational rhythmic monologues during the forty-five minute program were an instant success. In addition to introducing audiences to the innovative sounds of jazz, blues and swing music, Daylie used his program as a platform to further the cause of civil rights and to highlight other social maladies in African American communities. One of Daddy-O's proudest achievements was Operation Christmas Basket, which helped feed hungry Chicagoans during the holiday season.

After leaving WAIT, Daddy-O first joined the staff of WMAQ radio and then "The Voice for Equality" WAAF 950 AM. He retired in 1988. Daylie passed away February 6, 2003.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on May 29, 2001, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 9 Betacame SP videocassettes. Radio personality Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie (1920 - 2003 ) was a radio disc jockey who introduced audiences to jazz, blues and swing while furthering the cause of civil rights. Working at WAIT, Daylie was known for his linguistic gymnastics, sense of humor, and hip improvisational rhythmic monologues.

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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:

Daylie, Daddy-O

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Daylie, Daddy-O--Interviews

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African American disc jockeys--Illinois--Chicago--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:

Radio Personality

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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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 Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, May 29, 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).

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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 Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_001, TRT: 0:27:56 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie begins by recounting his family background. He describes journeying back to his Tennessee birthplace as an adult, noting that segregation and racism still existed in 1978. Daylie tells a colorful story about a

local man he met in his birthplace, highlighting Daylie's status as a visitor rather than a native. Daylie recounts all of his thirteen siblings, focusing on eldest brother Clinton, who raised him from infancy. Daylie recalls his life on the South Side of Chicago living with Clinton, characterized by hard work. Daylie gives an anecdote about working in the family garden. He ends by crediting Clinton with instilling in him a sense of discipline and work ethic.

African American families--Tennessee.

Racism--Tennessee.

Rural-urban migration--United States.

African American neighborhoods--Illinois--Chicago--South Side.

African Americans--Mentoring.

Siblings.

Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:49 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie begins by describing his childhood neighborhood and the schools he attended. Daylie recalls becoming interested in sports as a child and details his early athletic prowess. He explains how this early interest led him into the world of professional athletics as an adolescent and a young adult. Daylie discusses playing professional baseball and basketball for traveling African American teams, detailing the racist conditions under which he played as he journeyed around the continent. Daylie closes by discussing the temptations that went along with being a professional athlete and how he learned to avoid them.

African Americans--Education.

African American neighborhoods--Illinois--Chicago--South Side.

African American athletes.

Racism--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:08 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie begins by describing how he grew tired of racism he faced as a professional athlete, which caused him to seek a new career. He details his bartending career and how it inspired him to become a radio disc jockey. He describes becoming the first African American to take a course at the School of Radio Technique in Chicago. Daylie talks about his early success as a disc jockey, and describes how he promoted his show without spending money on advertising. Daylie explains his rhyming style of speech and his forays into poetry and songwriting, and the influences behind his writing. He closes by talking about some of the musicians and celebrities with whom he had relationships as a bartender.

Racism.

African Americans--Bartenders.

African American disc jockeys--Study and teaching.

Influence (Literary, artistic, etc.).

Advertising--Radio programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:21 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie begins by talking about the start of his radio career, detailing negotiations to get his own show. He talks about using local taxi drivers to promote the show. Daylie describes winning a sizeable audience with

his rhyming speech and his jazz music programming. He talks about Al Benson and the other pioneering disc jockeys in the Chicago area who created opportunities for Daylie and other African American disc jockeys. Daylie gives an example of his popularity with an anecdote of his involvement in a local parade. He details his experiences with the charity organization Operation Christmas Basket. Daylie closes by telling of his relationship with comedian Redd Foxx.

Advertising--Radio programs.

African American disc jockeys.

Benson, Al, 1908-1978.

Foxx, Redd, 1922-1991.

S.C.L.C. Operation Breadbasket.

Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_005, TRT: 0:28:49 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie begins by telling stories about working with comedian Redd Foxx, focusing on Foxx's comedic talent and his liberal use of profanity. Daylie talks about the numerous benefit shows he has organized, featuring top entertainers such as Foxx, Dinah Washington, and Nancy Wilson. Daylie sadly describes the downfall and demise of his friend, jazz singer Joe Williams. Daylie briefly talks about using his influence to discover and market musicians from Chicago. He closes describing a specific benefit concert he organized to help a Chicago settlement house.

Foxx, Redd, 1922-1991.

Williams, Joe, 1918-1999.

African American musicians--Illinois--Chicago.

Benefit performances.

Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_006, TRT: 0:27:35 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie begins by explaining how an on-air conflict with Chicago street gangs played a role in his departure from WAIT radio station to WAAF radio station. Daylie details how the gangs threatened both his bowling alley business and Rev. Jesse Jackson's Operation Breadbasket movement. Daylie talks about becoming active in recreational sports for African Americans, detailing how he started the Daddy-O Fun Leagues. He explains how this involvement led him to get into the bowling alley business with entrepreneur Jacoby Dickens. Daylie explains how he got his start on television in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral, and talks about the success of his show. Daylie closes by briefly comparing his experience on television with working on the radio.

S.C.L.C. Operation Breadbasket

African Americans--Sports.

Bowling alleys.

WAAF (Radio station : Chicago, Ill.).

Gangs--Illinois--Chicago.

Television broadcasting.

Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_007, TRT: 0:30:01 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie begins by angrily denouncing the actions of Chicago street gangs. He details the impact of these gangs on his life and business, as

well as the lives of the entire South Side community. Daylie briefly discusses the danger he lived with as a specific target of the gangs. Daylie then reflects on his career and the state of music and the radio industry. He advocates dispensing with racial music labels, hoping that music will eventually be judged on its merits. He talks about the displacement of jazz radio programming by rap music. Daylie discusses the future of the black community, expressing concern about the explicit sexuality of popular culture. He closes by briefly reflecting on what his parents would have thought of his success.

Gangs--Illinois--Chicago--Southside.

Pop culture--United States.

African American parents.

Musical criticism.

Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_008, TRT: 0:10:12 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie signs off the interview with his favorite phrase. He then showcases various photographs, including images of Daylie with Nat "King" Cole, June Christy, and Eartha Kitt, along with photos of himself from his younger days.

Photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie, Section A2001\_021\_001\_009, TRT: 0:13:10 ?

Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie showcases photos he has brought to the interview, including images of himself with Godfrey Cambridge, Nancy Wilson, LeRoy Winbush, Dizzy Gillespie, and Ella Fitzgerald.

Photographs.