

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Douglas Alan-Mann

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Alan-Mann, Douglas
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Douglas Alan-Mann,
Dates:	December 17, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:32:38).
Abstract:	Stage actor and stage director Douglas Alan-Mann (1952 - 2011) has served as the artistic director of the Chicago Theater Company, has performed in such plays as, <i>No Place to Be Somebody</i> , <i>Our Town</i> , and <i>Ceremonies in Dark Old Men</i> , and appeared in the film <i>Mahogany</i> . Mann was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 17, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_232
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Accomplished stage performer and director Douglas Alan-Mann was born in Chicago on June 10, 1952, to Malinda, a homemaker, and Donald, a truck driver. He attended Chicago public schools growing up, but graduated from Bangor High School in Bangor, Michigan, in 1970. During high school, Alan-Mann was very active in theater, performing in various plays and productions. This passion grew into a successful career in the arts.

Alan-Mann has been involved with numerous Chicago-based plays and productions as an actor, director and stage manager, and has also worked as the production manager for the X-BAG Theater and later as the artistic director of the Chicago Theater Company. He has played roles in such plays as *No Place to Be Somebody*, *Our Town* and *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men* and also appeared in the film *Mahogany*. In 1998, Mann worked on a theatrical production, *A Red Death*, written by David Barr, based on the Walter Mosley novel. He has worked on many productions making poignant commentaries about problems in our society.

In 1999, Alan-Mann directed another Barr play, *The State of Mississippi vs. Emmett Till*, presented by the Pegasus Players. The play was based on the tragic historical events of 1955 - during the civil rights movement - when fourteen-year-old Emmett Till was brutally murdered while visiting his cousins in Mississippi. In an eye-opening case that revealed much of the ugliness of racism in America, the two men responsible for this heinous crime were found innocent. Also in 1999, Alan-Mann adapted a highly acclaimed original play, *The Journal of Ordinary Thought*, dramatizing everyday life for African Americans in Chicago neighborhoods. In 2001, he directed another Barr creation, *Billy*, based on a novel by Albert French. This play relays the story of a ten-year-old African American boy convicted and executed for killing a white girl in self-defense.

In 1975, Mann was awarded a Joseph Jefferson Award Nomination for his performance in *Where is the Pride, Where is the Joy?* at the X-BAG Theater.

Douglas Alan-Mann passed away on April 22, 2011.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Douglas Alan-Mann was conducted by Adele Hodge on December 17, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Stage actor and stage director Douglas Alan-Mann (1952 - 2011) has served as the artistic director of the Chicago Theater Company, has performed in such plays as, No Place to Be Somebody, Our Town, and Ceremonies in Dark Old Men, and appeared in the film Mahogany.

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:

Alan-Mann, Douglas

Hodge, Adele (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Alan-Mann, Douglas--Interviews

African American actors--Interviews.

African American theatrical producers and directors--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Stage Actor

Stage Director

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 Douglas Alan-Mann, December 17, 2002. 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 Douglas Alan-Mann, Section A2002_232_001_001, TRT: 0:30:28 ?

Douglas Alan-Mann narrates his photographs. Alan-Mann was born on June 10, 1952 in Provident Hospital in Chicago, Illinois to Donald and Malinda Mann. His father, a truck driver, was born on July 25, 1931 in Chicago, Illinois to Houston Mann and Vivian McPhan. His mother, a homemaker, was born on September 30, 1932 in Livingston, Alabama to Raymond and Amanda Jenkins. As a young boy, Alan-Mann developed a close relationship with his favorite grandparent, Vivian McPhan. He describes her influence in his life and the impact of her death. Alan-Mann and his younger sister grew up in Chicago near Washington Park. He describes the sights, sounds, and smells of growing up. When Alan-Mann was a sophomore in high school, his family moved to Bangor, Michigan. Although he was initially opposed to the move, Alan-Mann was happy to be off the streets of Chicago in retrospect. He discovered his love for theater in Bangor and acted in school plays at Bangor High School. Alan-Mann also talks about Mrs. Lewis, his favorite teacher from Farren Elementary School in Chicago.

African American children--Education (Elementary)--Illinois.

African American children--Education (Secondary).

African American families--Illinois--Chicago.

African American families--Michigan.

Bangor (Mich.)--Social life and customs.

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

Video Oral History Interview with Douglas Alan-Mann, Section A2002_232_001_002, TRT: 0:31:13 ?

Douglas Alan-Mann attended several grade schools in Chicago, Illinois including Farren Elementary School, Overton Elementary School, and Vincennes Upper Grade Center. He attended DuSable High School for one year before his family moved to Bangor, Michigan. Alan-Mann finished his high school education at Bangor High School. After graduating in 1970, he returned to Chicago to pursue acting, joining Clarence Taylor's Experimental Black Actors Guild (X-BAG). A commercial for Illinois Bell Telephone Company earned Alan-Mann public recognition and his first paycheck. Alan-Mann talks about his early career and the Chicago Theater Company's founding in 1984. In the theater's nascence, Alan-Mann made a living doing voiceover work. He talks about the theater's growth, operations, and marketing model. As the theater's artistic director, Alan-Mann learned how to obtain audience feedback and to respond to critics. He shares his favorite plays, his hopes for the future of Chicago Theater Company, and his advice for aspiring actors.

Acting--Vocational guidance--United States.

African American children--Education (Elementary)--Illinois.

African American children--Education (Secondary).

African American families--Illinois--Chicago.

African American families--Michigan.

African American theater--Illinois--Chicago--History--20th century.

African American theatrical producers and directors.

Bangor (Mich.)--Social life and customs.

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

Video Oral History Interview with Douglas Alan-Mann, Section A2002_232_001_003, TRT: 0:30:57 ?

Douglas Alan-Mann describes the differences between theater and film. Over the years, he witnessed some changes in the industry for African American actors, but believes that there has not been much progress in the depiction of African Americans in film. Alan-Mann enjoys close relationships with his sister, Ursula Mann, and his son, Dealan Mann who is also an actor. Alan-Mann never married. He talks about his mother's death and his improving relationship with his father. His father marched with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Chicago Freedom Movement. Alan-Mann discusses his approach to writing, acting, and directing. He also reflects upon his legacy, the impact of the Civil Rights Movement, and how he would like to be remembered. Alan-Mann closes by sharing how he chooses plays to produce.

African American actors--United States.

African American families--Illinois--Chicago.

African American families--Michigan.

African American theater--Illinois--Chicago--History--20th century.

African American theatrical producers and directors.

Bangor (Mich.)--Social life and customs.

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