

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Joseph Segars

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Segars, Joseph Monroe, 1938-2014 |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Segars, |
| Dates: | August 11, 2004 and September 23, 2004 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2004 |
| Physical Description: | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:08:36). |
| Abstract: | Consul general and foreign ambassador Joseph Segars (1938 - 2014) served as the United States State Department's consul general in South Africa, Jamaica, and Nigeria, and later served as ambassador to the Republic of Cape Verde. Segars was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 11, 2004 and September 23, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2004_124 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Joseph Monroe Segars was born on November 6, 1938, in Hartsville, South Carolina. He was raised by his mother's sister and her husband, Walter and Francis Hines, after his parents migrated to Philadelphia in search of better jobs. His uncle was a painter and his aunt worked as a domestic. In 1956, he earned his high school diploma from Butler High School. Upon graduation he joined his family in Philadelphia and worked in a lamp factory before attending college.

Between 1957 and 1961, Segars attended Cheyney University of Pennsylvania where earned his bachelor's of science degree in education. Following his graduation, he taught sixth grade in the Gary, Indiana, public school system until 1967. That year, Segars moved back to Philadelphia where he taught sixth grade in the public schools there. At the urging of a family friend, he joined the Foreign Service in 1970 and was the first African American assigned to Vienna, where he served until 1973.

In 1974, Segars was assigned to the State Department's West African Affairs Department as a desk officer primarily responsible for Liberia and Sierra Leone. In 1976, Segars became one of the first African Americans to be assigned to strife-torn South Africa, and his arrival in Johannesburg coincided with the outbreak of unrest in Soweto. Until his departure from South Africa in 1978, Segars served as Consul General. From South Africa, Segars traveled to Kingston, Jamaica, where he served as Consul General until 1980. The following year, he served as a desk officer in the Office of Southern African Affairs overseeing three African countries. In 1983, Segars was appointed Consul General in Lagos, Nigeria, where he remained until 1986. From 1986 until 1989, he served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Tanzania, where he lobbied successfully to win the country's understanding and support for U.S. efforts to resolve major southern African conflicts. Leaving Tanzania in 1989, Segars worked as a Career Counselor in the Office of Human Resources. From 1992 until 1993, he participated in the State Department's 34th annual Seminar for Senior-level officials. In 1993, Segars received his first ambassadorship to the Republic of Cape Verde, where he remained until his retirement in 1996.

Since his retirement he has served as a consultant on Africa issues. He is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and the recipient of several prestigious awards for his foreign service. In 1997, he was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Southeastern University.

Joseph Monroe Segars passed away on July 20, 2014 at the age of 75.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Joseph Segars was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on August 11, 2004 and September 23, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Consul general and foreign ambassador Joseph Segars (1938 - 2014) served as the United States State Department's consul general in South Africa, Jamaica, and Nigeria,

and later served as ambassador to the Republic of Cape Verde.

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:

Segars, Joseph Monroe, 1938-2014

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Segars, Joseph Monroe, 1938-2014--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Foreign Service.

United States. Dept. of State

Occupations:

Consul General

Foreign Ambassador

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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 Joseph Segars, August 11, 2004 and September 23, 2004. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Joseph Segars, Section
A2004_124_001_001, TRT: 0:30:14 2004/08/11

Former Ambassordor to Cape Verde, Joseph Segars details his early life in South Carolina and his temporary separation from his parents after their move to Philadelphia. Segars lived with his aunt Frances and uncle Walter Hines for a period of time. Upon his move to Philadelphia, he found his impoverished parents continued to have more children, much to his consternation.

Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Segars, Section
A2004_124_001_002, TRT: 0:30:27 2004/08/11

Former US Ambassador to the Republic of Cape Verde, Joseph Segars, shares more than 20 photos drawn from his childhood, family life and years in the Foreign Service.

Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Segars, Section
A2004_124_001_003, TRT: 0:30:20 2004/08/11

Former Cape Verdean ambassador, Joseph Segars charts his quest for an education, despite his family's lack of resources. After graduating from Cheyney State University, Segars moved to Gary Indiana to teach for several years. A chance encounter during a Jamaican vacation with a State Department official led Segars to apply for a position in Foreign Service.

Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Segars, Section
A2004_124_001_004, TRT: 0:29:07 2004/08/11

Former US Ambassador to Cape Verde, Joseph Segars details the daily life as a Consul in South Africa, Nigeria and Tanzania. Segars discusses particular challenges he faced as a black Foreign Service official in Africa during the 1970s and 1980s.

Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Segars, Section
A2004_124_002_005, TRT: 0:08:28 2004/09/23

Former US Ambassador to the Republic of Cape Verde, Joseph Segars, details his steady climb in the Foreign Service which eventually led to his appointment as ambassador in 1992. After retiring, he worked in Washington D.C. in the Foreign Service as an advisor. Segars laments the lack of progress by black and minorities in the Foreign Service, as noted by a statistically unchanged percentage over the last 30+ years.