

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with James Cameron

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cameron, James, 1914-2006
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with James Cameron,
Dates:	July 14, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:37:58).
Abstract:	Civil rights activist and museum chief executive James Cameron (1914 - 2006) was the founder of America's Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Cameron survived a lynching as a youth. Cameron was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 14, 2005, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_163
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

James Cameron, founder of America's Black Holocaust Museum, was born February 23, 1914, in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, to James Herbert Cameron and Vera Carter. When Cameron's father left the family the family moved to Birmingham, Alabama, and later to Kokomo, Indiana. When his mother remarried, Cameron resettled in Marion, Indiana. Cameron attended DaPayne School through the 8th grade where he was given the name Apples because he carried apples in his pockets for lunch. On the night of August 7, 1930, Cameron's friends Abe Smith, nineteen, and Tommy Shipp, eighteen, tried to hold up a white couple at the local

Lovers' Lane. The Grant County Sheriff arrested Cameron charging him and his friends with murder; the Ku Klux Klan stormed the jail and tried to lynch the trio. During the altercation, Cameron passed out; his two friends were lynched but Cameron's life was spared.

Although Madame C.J. Walker sent him two NAACP lawyers from Indianapolis, Cameron was convicted in his 1931 trial as an accessory. Paroled in 1935, Cameron moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he worked for Stroh's Brewing Company and attended Wayne State University. In Madison, Wisconsin, Cameron founded the local branch of the NAACP and founded two more chapters in Muncie and South Bend, Indiana.

In 1983, Cameron mortgaged his house in order to publish his memoir, *A Time of Terror*. In 1988, with the assistance of philanthropist Daniel Bader, Cameron founded America's Black Holocaust Museum, a non-profit devoted to preserving the history of lynching in the United States and the struggle to eradicate it. Located in a twelve thousand square-foot gym purchased for one dollar from the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the museum contains artifacts from slavery, stereotypes, lynching postcards, and photographs. America's Black Holocaust Museum is visited annually by thousands of school children. Cameron appeared on ABC television's *Nightline*, and scores of other television programs. In 1991, Cameron was officially pardoned by the State of Indiana.

Cameron passed away on June 11, 2006 at age 92.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with James Cameron was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 14, 2005, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civil rights activist and museum chief executive James Cameron (1914 - 2006) was the founder of America's Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Cameron survived a lynching as a youth.

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:

Cameron, James, 1914-2006

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cameron, James, 1914-2006--Interviews

African American civil rights workers--Interviews

Museum directors--Wisconsin--Milwaukee--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

America's Black Holocaust Museum

Occupations:

Civil Rights Activist

Museum Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|EducationMakers

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 James Cameron, July 14, 2005. 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 James Cameron, Section
A2005_163_001_001, TRT: 0:30:50 2005/07/14

African American civil rights workers--Interviews.

Museum directors--Wisconsin--Milwaukee--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with James Cameron, Section
A2005_163_001_002, TRT: 0:28:08 2005/07/14

Video Oral History Interview with James Cameron, Section
A2005_163_001_003, TRT: 0:30:00 2005/07/14

Video Oral History Interview with James Cameron, Section
A2005_163_001_004, TRT: 0:09:00 2005/07/14