

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Manning Marable

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Marable, Manning, 1950-2011
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable,
Dates:	December 5, 2005, October 4, 2005 and October 5, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	11 Betacame SP videocassettes (5:26:59).
Abstract:	Academic administrator and African American studies professor Manning Marable (1950 - 2011) is the founding director of the Institute for the Research in African American Studies at Columbia University. Since 1976, Marable has written <i>Along the Color Line</i> , a syndicated commentary series on African American politics and public affairs. Marable was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 5, 2005, October 4, 2005 and October 5, 2005, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_228
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Author and director of the Institute for the Research in African American Studies at Columbia University, Manning Marable is one of America's most widely read scholars. Born on May 13, 1950, in Dayton, Ohio, Marable received his A.B. degree from Earlham College in 1971, his M.A. degree in American history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1972, and his Ph.D. in American history from the University of Maryland in 1976.

Marable's academic career began in 1980 with a position as the senior research associate of Africana Studies at Cornell University. In 1982, Marable became a professor of history and economics, and Director of the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University. As a professor of sociology at Colgate University in 1983, Marable was the founding director of its Africana and Latin American Studies Program, and in 1987, he moved to The Ohio State University to become the Chair of the Black Studies Department. From 1989 to 1993, Marable served as the professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder. In 1993, Marable became the founding director of the Institute for the Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University.

Since 1976, Marable has written *Along the Color Line*, a syndicated commentary series on African American politics and public affairs, which was published in newspapers and magazines in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, the Caribbean, and India. Marable is a prolific author that has written over 200 articles in academic journals and edited volumes. Marable has also written over twenty books, including co-editing with Myrlie Evers-Williams *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero's Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters, and Speeches*, which was published by Basic Civitas Books in 2005. At the time of his interview, Marable had several books in progress, including one entitled *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, which is due to be published by Viking in 2009.

In 2002, Marable established the Center for Contemporary Black History at Columbia University, which produced *Souls*, a quarterly academic journal of African-American studies. In 2005, Marable and members of his Malcolm X Biography Project designed the content for the multimedia educational kiosks featured at the Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center at the historic Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan, the site of Malcolm X's 1965 assassination.

Marable passed away on April 1, 2011.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Manning Marable was conducted by Shawn Wilson on December 5, 2005, October 4, 2005 and October 5, 2005, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 11 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator and African American studies professor Manning Marable (1950 - 2011) is the founding director of the Institute for the Research in African American Studies at Columbia University. Since 1976, Marable has written *Along the Color Line*, a syndicated commentary series on African American politics and public affairs.

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:

Marable, Manning, 1950-2011

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Marable, Manning, 1950-2011 --Interviews

Columbia University--Faculty--Interviews

African American intellectuals--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Columbia University. Center for Contemporary Black History.

Occupations:

Academic Administrator

African American Studies Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Manning Marable, December 5, 2005, October 4, 2005 and October 5, 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 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 Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_001_001, TRT: 0:29:03
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Manning Marable was born on May 13, 1950, to June Morehead Marable and James Marable. His mother was born in 1924 in Columbus, Ohio, to Minnie Morehead and Jack W. Morehead, an African Methodist Episcopal minister and an authoritarian patriarch who read extensively. Marable's mother learned how to type in high school and then worked as a secretary at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base during World War II, saving money to attend college. She enrolled at Wilberforce University and transferred to the inaugural class at Central State University. Influenced by the historian Dr. Charles H. Wesley, she encouraged Manning to develop an early interest in history. Marable's mother aspired to a middle class lifestyle, and believed in assimilation. Contrary to his wife, Marable's father was a black nationalist, who was born in 1921 in Wedowee, Alabama, to Fannie and Manning Marable. Manning begins his interview with a reflection upon the importance of knowing one's heritage.

Columbia University--Faculty--Interviews.

African American intellectuals--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_001_002, TRT: 0:30:03
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Manning Marable's paternal great grandfather, Morris Marable, was born in 1845, the son of a slaveholder in Georgia. Sold to the Marable family in Alabama in 1854, he ran away in 1865. Resettling twenty miles away, he purchased land and operated a cotton gin business until the cotton market collapsed during World War I. He married Warner Clockster, of the Creek tribe, and had thirteen children. Marable's grandfather, Manning Marable, established saw mill and moonshine distillery businesses. His farmworkers lived on the family's land during the Great Depression. Marable's father, James Marable, was born and raised in Randolph County, Alabama. After serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War I, he attended Wilberforce University, where he met Marable's mother. Upon graduation, his parents worked for Ohio's Dayton public school system, where they were subject to racial discrimination. Marable recalls reading W.E.B. Du Bois as a child, his neighborhood in Dayton, and his father's black nationalism.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_001_003, TRT: 0:29:33
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Manning Marable graduated from Jefferson Township High School in Dayton, Ohio, in 1968, where he was encouraged by his history teacher, Frederick Gallo. He attended Earlham University, where he became involved with the Black Leadership Action Committee; wrote for the newspaper; and had a radio show, 'The Black Magazine.' As a youth, Marable was influenced by his father's black nationalism, and adopted the ideology while in college. He spent his senior year

at the University of Nairobi in Kenya in 1971, where he developed a love for Africa; met a woman whom he nearly married; and learned about the founding of the African National Congress. Marable obtained his master's degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and his Ph.D. degree at the University of Maryland in College Park, where he was mentored by Booker T. Washington's biographer, historian Louis R. Harlan. He recalls his disagreements with Harlan's impression of Washington, and his experience of racial discrimination in College Park.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_001_004, TRT: 0:29:40
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Manning Marable graduated in 1976 from the University of Maryland in College Park, and began writing a column called 'From the Grassroots' for a small African American newspaper in Tuskegee, Alabama. By the 1980s, the series was published in two hundred newspapers nationwide. He began his academic career as a professor at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and then as chair of political science at Tuskegee Institute. Marable was politically active in the 1970s, serving as the communications coordinator of the National Black Political Assembly. He recalls their efforts to find a suitable candidate to run for president; the surge in black political activism in the 1970s; and the importance of learning about African American history. Marable reflects upon the success of the African American community in achieving political power as a result of activism; only to be met with deindustrialization and the decay of urban centers. He also recalls 1970s black art, including the political music of Marvin Gaye.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_002_005, TRT: 0:30:28
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Manning Marable's paternal uncles established Marable Enterprises in Tuskegee, Alabama, where they built hundreds of homes. He recalls waking up there to the smell of his grandmother's pork chops, biscuits and sausage gravy. He recounts how, following a deal in which black voters supported the Democratic Party in the 1880 Alabama elections, the party funded the establishment of Tuskegee Institute in 1881. In 1982, Marable was hired as the director of the Institute for Race Relations at Fisk University, where he held a conference to analyze the socio-economic impact of President Ronald Reagan's arms race. Due to financial challenges at Fisk, he accepted a position at Colgate University, where he established an African American and Latino studies program. In 1986, he became the chair of the black studies program at The Ohio State University. Marable also talks about Shirley Chisholm and Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr.'s presidential bids; efforts to establish an all-black state; and the effect of trauma on memory.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_002_006, TRT: 0:30:03
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Manning Marable explains how the conditions of the 1970s, including President Ronald Reagan's administration and the deindustrialization of American cities, gave rise to a black underclass struck with socioeconomic hardship and public health issues like crack cocaine addiction. He recalls Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr.'s presidential campaigns of 1984 and 1988, when blacks and whites alike became aware of the political power of enfranchised people of color. Marable's most significant publications in the 1980s included 'How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America,' 'Race Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America' and 'Black American Politics.' As chair of The Ohio State University's black studies department, he became interested in living black history and transformation as an alternative to integration or

separatism. In 1993, he accepted a position at Columbia University, where he created the Institute for Research in African American Studies and a course for prisoners at Rikers Island.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_002_007, TRT: 0:29:34
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Manning Marable was diagnosed with sarcoidosis in 1986. He describes the effects of the steroid prednisone, and how racial discrimination affects the illness' treatment. Marable met his second wife, Leith Mullings, an anthropologist and former nurse, after moving to New York in 1993, where she helped him find an alternative medication. In New York, Marable's work received wider access to the media, and his book 'Beyond Black and White' made him visible to audiences beyond academia. He also served as an expert for British news sources in the aftermath of the Los Angeles riots of 1992, explaining how they were precipitated not only by Rodney King's assault, but also by a history of disinvestment in South Central Los Angeles. Marable belonged to the network of black intellectuals that included Henry Louis "Skip" Gates, Jr., Lani Guinier and Stanley Nelson. He describes his concept of transformation and his vision for the future of black studies. Marable also talks about the history of affirmative action.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_002_008, TRT: 0:29:57
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Manning Marable joined Colgate University in 1983, where he was the founding director of its black studies program. While there, he published three books in three years: 'Black American Politics,' 'Black Radical Democrat' and 'African and Caribbean Politics.' Marable joined Randall Robinson and Mary Frances Berry in non-violent political activism against the Apartheid regime in South Africa. In 1987, he became the chair of the black studies department of The Ohio State University. Tasked with recuperating the faculty, he recruited scholars like F. Abiola Irele, Ali Mazrui and Melba Joyce Boyd. Around this time, Marable was diagnosed with sarcoidosis, a chronic immune condition. From 1989 to 1993, he served as professor of ethnic studies, history and political science at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Marable recalls Harold Washington's mayoral victory in Chicago; Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr.'s presidential campaign; and how the 1990s hip-hop community responded to ineffective African Americans leaders.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_003_009, TRT: 0:29:30
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Manning Marable worked at the University of Colorado Boulder from 1989 to 1993, amid a difficult divorce from his first wife. During this time, he formulated his career goal to revive W.E.B. Du Bois' tradition of activist scholarship, in which academics work in their communities. Marable was offered the position of director of the proposed black studies department at Columbia University in 1993. He moved to New York, where he met his second wife, Leith Mullings, during a job interview. A medical anthropologist and former nurse, she helped him manage his life-threatening health condition, sarcoidosis. Marable's book 'Beyond Black and White' was published in 1995, and attracted the attention of the Asian American, Latino and white communities. Marable also recounts the history of the crack cocaine epidemic; its impact upon African Americans; and the U.S. government's negligent response to it.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_003_010, TRT: 0:29:42
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Manning Marable was in London, England, during the Los Angeles riots of 1992 and the Million Man March. He served as an expert for prominent British news outlets such as the BBC and ITV. As the director of the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University, he published several volumes of collected essays; wrote articles that featured in prominent black newspapers; and was interviewed frequently on local television. Marable and his wife, Leith Mullings, were active in the Black Radical Congress, a conference formed to unite various activist groups in resisting African Americans' oppression, alongside Bill Fletcher, Jr. and Barbara Ransby. He explains the increasing class divergence among African Americans; the gentrification of urban black centers, such as New York City's Harlem; the concept of neoliberalism; and how President William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton's policies were unfavorable to the black community at large as well as to individual African American leaders.

Video Oral History Interview with Manning Marable, Section A2005_228_003_011, TRT: 0:29:26
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Manning Marable was invited by New York Theological Seminary to speak at Sing Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining, New York, where he was influenced by his meetings with prisoners, whom he came to consider the source of future leadership. Marable shares his planned publications, including a biography, 'Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention,' which he began researching in 1980s. In 1999, Marable established Columbia University's Souls Journal, a critical journal of black politics, culture, and society. During his tenure at Columbia, Marable advocated and secured five years of funding for all minority doctoral students admitted to the university's twenty-eight graduate programs. He concludes by reflecting upon the challenges to his career posed by his health condition and medication, which rendered him nearly blind; the progress made by the African American community since slavery; the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks; and the neglect of the victims of Hurricane Katrina.