



# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Everett Greene

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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>	Greene, Everett
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 12, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 Betacam SP videocassettes (4:02:48).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Singer and stage actor Everett Greene (1934 - ) recorded his debut album in 1994 called "At Last." His other albums include "I've Got Love" and "My Foolish Heart." He has also acted in musicals including "Showboat" and received a local Emmy Award in Chicago for the nationally-aired TV special entitled "Precious Memories: Strolling 47th Street." Greene was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 12, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_327
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Singer and stage actor Everett Francis Greene, Sr. was born on February 16, 1934 in Washington, D.C. to Lillian and Lawrence Greene. He grew up in the Barry Farms section of the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, D.C. As a youth, Greene began performing in school quartets. He continued to perform with his quartet after entering the Marine Corps in 1952. Following a tour in Korea, Greene married and started a family in Indianapolis, Indiana. He worked as a mold maker and then in the melting department in Indianapolis' industrial manufactories. It was not until after his retirement in 1982 that Greene focused on his professional music career.

Greene was a bass singer who trained himself to sing at a higher range. He performed in his church and regularly throughout the local Indianapolis music scene. He recorded his debut album, "At Last," in Chicago in 1994, followed by his release of "My Foolish Heart" in 1998 and "I've Got Love" in 2002. He was then featured with the Buselli-Wallarab Jazz Orchestra on the album, "Heart & Soul: The Music of Hoagy Carmichael."

Greene has co-starred with folk singer Odetta Gordon and Broadway star Jean DuShon in an extended run of "The Little Dreamer: A Night in the Life of Bessie Smith" at the Ivanhoe Theater in Chicago. In addition, Greene has portrayed "Joe" in "Showboat." Greene received a local Emmy Award in Chicago for the nationally-aired TV special entitled "Precious Memories: Strolling 47th Street." He has been in a number of television commercials for The Hoosier Lottery, the Indiana Pacers, H.H. Gregg and Cincinnati Bell. Greene has toured in the United States, Japan and Canada with the musical revue "In the House of the Blues."

Everett Greene was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 12, 2007.

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Everett Greene was conducted by Larry Murphy on November 12, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 8 Betacam SP videocassettes. Singer and stage actor Everett Greene (1934 - ) recorded his debut album in 1994 called "At Last." His other albums include "I've Got Love" and "My Foolish Heart." He has also acted in musicals including "Showboat" and received a local Emmy Award in Chicago for the nationally-aired TV special entitled "Precious Memories: Strolling 47th Street."

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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:

Greene, Everett

Murphy, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Greene, Everett--Interviews

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African American singers--Interviews.

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African American actors--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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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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ArtMakers

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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 Everett Greene, November 12, 2007. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/26/2011 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, November 12, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene, Section A2007\_327\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:42  
2007/11/12

Everett Greene discusses his family background and his earliest childhood memories growing up in Washington, D.C. Greene talks about his mother, Lillian Lewis Greene, and the importance of music and church as a major part of their family's upbringing. His mother was a singer in the choir and had a profound impact on Greene's life. Church was central to his family's life. As the fourth sibling in the family, Greene and all of his siblings attended Bethlehem Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. Greene describes how he had an opportunity to travel with his father, Lawrence Lorenzo Greene, a musician who worked for the government for forty-five years and a drummer in a local band in Washington, D.C. He concludes this segment of the interview by reflecting on his family's gospel group, the Greene Singers, and how he started singing at an early age.

African American families--Washington (D.C.).

African American mothers--Religious life.

African American musicians--Washington (D.C.).

African American singers.

African American churches--Washington (D.C.)

Gospel music United States.

Gospel musicians.

Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene, Section A2007\_327\_001\_002, TRT: 0:31:07  
2007/11/12

Everett Greene talks about his family history and discusses his early childhood in Washington, D.C. He had a wonderful relationship with his father, Lawrence Lorenzo Greene, and his paternal grandfather, Garfield Greene. Greene describes his father as a fun loving man who loved to joke around and became the life of the party during family gatherings. Greene's father was also a baseball manager of the Anacostia AC's, an African American baseball team. Greene characterized his grandfather as a strong family man. Garfield Greene drove for a vegetable company to delivering food to areas and St. Elizabeth Hospital in Washington, D.C. Greene remembers the camaraderie with his neighbors and their impact on his life. He concludes the interview segment by describing how he sang with a glee club in elementary school and traveled to Washington, D.C. singing with the Melodaires.

African American children--Washington (D.C.).

African American fathers.

African American children--Social life and customs.

African American families--Washington (D.C.).

Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene, Section A2007\_327\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:49  
2007/11/12

Everett Greene describes growing up in Barry Farms, a small neighborhood in Southeast Washington, D.C. Barry Farms, near the Anacostia area of Washington, D.C., that consisted of project housing built during World War II. Greene talks about earning money doing various jobs in the neighborhood and attending James G. Burney Elementary School from 1939 to 1945 where his schoolmates competed to excel. He notes the difficulty in transitioning to Randal Junior High and subsequently Turner Junior High School. Greene was a stutterer throughout school and as a result his teachers treated him negatively. Greene explains how singing helped him with this condition. He ends this segment of the interview by describing how he and his friends would meet at the Howard Theatre in Washington, D.C. and watch "Chitlin' Circuit"

performances.

Barry Farms (Washington, D.C.)

African American neighborhoods--Washington (D.C.).

African American students--Washington (D.C.).

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

Education (Elementary)

Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene, Section A2007\_327\_001\_004, TRT: 0:31:12  
2007/11/12

Everett Greene talks about his singing career. He formed early quartets with classmates and would perform at Cardoza Senior High School in Washington, D.C. games. He noted that he did not participate in his school's theater group. Green is a bass singer and describes sneaking into night clubs with his group to perform because he was under age. He then describes his experience in the U.S. Marines, including the discrimination he encountered while he was in the military. He concludes this segment of the interview by noting that all of the men in his family joined the military.

African American entertainers.

Race discrimination--United States--History.

African Americans--Education(Secondary)--Washington (D.C.).

African American soldiers--History.

Marines.

Discrimination.

Military.

Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene, Section A2007\_327\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:28  
2007/11/12

Everett Greene provides further information about his life and his career. Greene's brother also served in Korea. In 1955, Greene was discharged from the military service and moved to Indianapolis, Indiana to live with his mother. Greene discusses working at a grocery store, than later in a foundry. He traveled to Washington D.C. frequently to find work, however, he settled in Indianapolis and started a family. Greene shares how he met his wife, Elmira Lawson. He notes that most of the employees where he worked were African American and after retirement in 1982, Greene focused on his musical career and traveled to Chicago, Illinois to sing in musicals. He ends this segment of the interview by talking about joining Eastside Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans--History.

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

African American churches--Indiana--Indianapolis.

Black Theater.

African American actors.

Marriage.

Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene, Section A2007\_327\_001\_006, TRT: 0:29:45  
2007/11/12

Everett Greene discusses the connection that his family and African Americans communities in general have with religion and music. He explains what religion and church means to him. He describes the African American church experience and how a musician minister's behavior influenced some of the

musicians that he knew. Greene also talks about avoiding some of the seamier side of the music world in Indianapolis and discusses some of the current attractions in the city. He ends this segment of the interview by describing his parent's divorce and his frequent visits to Washington, D.C. to attend family functions.

African Americans Religion.

African Americans--Social life and customs--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American families--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American musicians--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American families--Washington (D.C.).

African American churches.

Gospel music.

Divorce.

Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene, Section A2007\_327\_001\_007, TRT: 0:30:31  
2007/11/12

Everett Greene describes the music scene and its relevance in Indianapolis, Indiana. He focuses on the 1950s music scene on Indiana Avenue, where all the nightclubs were located. Greene was highly involved with singing and performing at the nightclubs in Indianapolis, however, he focused on singing in the church. Greene talks about his union membership and his commercial work including acting in plays and voice-overs. When he sings he aims to tell a story, not just to sing the words. Greene ends this segment of the interview by sharing how he recorded his first album in 1994, "At Last," and how he also performed on cruise ships.

Actors--United States.

African American singers.

African Americans in the performing arts--United States.

African American actors.

Voice-overs.

Jazz singers.

Video Oral History Interview with Everett Greene, Section A2007\_327\_001\_008, TRT: 0:31:14  
2007/11/12

Everett Greene describes how he became involved with Helen Wells Talent Agency in Indianapolis, Indiana. One of his acting assignments with the agency was playing Reverend Greene at a theatre in Indianapolis. Greene was a voice-over character in the children's story, "The Elephant's Child" by Rudyard Kipling and "A Tree in Tappen Wood" by Emily Crocker. From 1989 to 1990, Greene performed "Showboat" in Indianapolis at the Beef & Boards Dinner Theatre. Greene shares his belief that future singers should try to connect with the audience quickly. He then explains the differences between blues and the jazz genres. One thing he would do differently would be to learn all the music instruments that he could. Greene ends the interview with words of encouragement and that he would like to be remembered as a person that says what he means.

African Americans in the performing arts.

Voice-overs--Vocational guidance.

African American actors.

Jazz--1991-2000.

Jazz singers.

African American gospel singers.