

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Raleigh Trammell

---

## 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>	Trammell, Raleigh, 1936-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Raleigh Trammell,
<b>Dates:</b>	February 27, 2008
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2008
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:39:40).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Civil rights activist and pastor Reverend Raleigh Trammell (1936 - ) was the National Board Chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He participated in the Civil Rights Movement, played a major role in the Poor People's Campaign and is the pastor of Central Missionary Baptist Church. Trammell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 27, 2008, in Dayton, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2008_034
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) national board chairman, Reverend Raleigh Trammell was born on December 30, 1936, in Grantville, Georgia. His father, Walter Trammell, worked in a cotton mill and his mother, Thomasina Smith Trammell, was a homemaker who ardently preached to him the benefits of education. Trammell attended segregated Grantville School all twelve years, graduating in 1955. He went on to attend Clarke University, then known as Clarke College, where he was influenced by Reverend Dr. William Holmes

Borders of Wheat Street Baptist Church and Dr. C. Eric Lincoln, founder of the Black Academy of Arts and Sciences. When he graduated in 1959, Trammell was an ordained minister and was well-seasoned in civil rights doctrine. Trammell met Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and joined the SCLC in 1960. In 1963, he participated in the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, Alabama, Albany, Georgia and the March on Washington. Trammell also participated in the march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965, promoting voting rights for African Americans. After the assassination of Dr. King in 1968, Trammell played a major role in the Poor People's Campaign. He later moved to Dayton, Ohio, joining his parents and siblings as residents and was hired as pastor of Central Missionary Baptist Church. In 1966, he started working for the Montgomery County Welfare Department as deputy director. Then in 1983, Trammell was elected president of the Dayton chapter of the SCLC. Working closely with Andrew Young, Trammell rose to vice chair of the SCLC in 1996 and chairman of the national board in 2004.

Trammell was the first non-union recipient of the AFL-CIO Community Award in 1991. He received the Outstanding Service Award from the NAACP in 1995, the 1996 IBPOE of W Award in 1996 and was inducted into Selma, Alabama's Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 1998. In 2005, Trammell garnered the Humanitarian Award from the State of Alabama, and in 2006, he received the Doug Couttee Award. Trammell lives in Dayton, Ohio where he has organized an annual march of 10,000 people to commemorate the ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is the country's largest march. Trammell and his wife, Ann, have two daughters, Angela and Cheryl.

---

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Raleigh Trammell was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 27, 2008, in Dayton, Ohio, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civil rights activist and pastor Reverend Raleigh Trammell (1936 - ) was the National Board Chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He participated in the Civil Rights Movement, played a major role in the Poor People's Campaign and is the pastor of Central Missionary Baptist Church.

---

## 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:**

Trammell, Raleigh, 1936-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Trammell, Raleigh, 1936---Interviews

---

African American civil rights workers--Interviews

---

---

African American clergy--Interviews

---

African American executives--Interviews

---

## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

Southern Christian Leadership Conference

---

## **Occupations:**

Civil Rights Activist

---

Pastor

---

## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

CivicMakers|ReligionMakers

---

## **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 Reverend Raleigh Trammell, February 27, 2008. The HistoryMakers® African American Video

## 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 Reverend Raleigh Trammell, Section A2008\_034\_001\_001, TRT: 0:27:50 2008/02/27

Reverend Raleigh Trammell was born on December 30, 1936 in Grantville, Georgia to Tommie Smith Trammell and Walter Trammell. In Georgia, his mother was born to a family of sharecroppers in 1902. She grew up in a strictly segregated town, where she was expected to work for whites without pay. Trammell's father also grew up in Georgia, where he labored in the cotton fields and at the cotton mill. He also worked for a time as a hotel cook. Trammell's mother, who was educated only through the fifth grade, strongly believed in the importance of education, and sent Trammell and his fourteen siblings to school each November after the cotton harvest. As his family's seventh son, Trammell was believed to have healing powers, and often cared for the sick and for his family's livestock. Trammell grew up in the segregated town of Grantville, where his home was adjacent to the African American cemetery. He recalls the blackout procedures used to protect his community against air raids

during World War II.

African American civil rights workers--Interviews.

African American clergy--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Raleigh Trammell, Section A2008\_034\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:00 2008/02/27

Reverend Raleigh Trammell attended the all-black Grantville School in Grantville, Georgia, where he was influenced by Mr. Lewis, his teacher and basketball coach. Trammell and his teammates played on a dirt basketball court until his senior year, when the white school allowed African Americans to use their gym for the first time. In Grantville, Trammell's family had belonged to Greater Jehovah Baptist Church for generations, and its congregants encouraged him to pursue the ministry. He was also encouraged by his principal, who hired college counselors, and secured scholarships to Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia for all three students in Trammell's graduating class. At Clark College, Trammell studied under C. Eric Lincoln, the founder of the Black Academy of Arts And Letters. Civil rights activist Julian Bond was his classmate, and Trammell often visited Morehouse College, where he was inspired by President Benjamin E. Mays' speeches. During this time, he worked as a curbside hop at the Rainbow Inn diner.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Raleigh Trammell, Section A2008\_034\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:10 2008/02/27

Reverend Raleigh Trammell studied religious philosophy, history and pastoral administration at Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia. He aspired to become a pastor, and admired Reverend William Holmes Borders of the Wheat Street Baptist Church, who welcomed outsiders and demonstrated the principles of nonviolence. In 1956, Trammell traveled to Alabama to meet the organizers of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and then joined Reverend Borders' civil rights marches in Atlanta. He learned techniques for achieving social change, and the tactics of nonviolence. Upon graduating in 1959, Trammell married Ann Walker Trammell, and relocated to Dayton, Ohio, where his mother, Tommie Smith Trammell, had moved

two years prior. He joined the Dayton Organization, where he worked to address racial discrimination in housing, employment and policing. The group organized demonstrations at the Rike-Kumler Company and other stores with discriminatory hiring practices. In 1963, Trammell attended the March on Washington with his wife.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Raleigh Trammell, Section A2008\_034\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:40 2008/02/27

Reverend Raleigh Trammell was the pastor of the Central Missionary Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio. In this role, Trammell joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), as well as the NAACP and Urban League. He focused his activism on police brutality, hiring discrimination and housing segregation. In Dayton, Trammell protested against the Rike-Kumler Company's discriminatory hiring practices at a demonstration led by NAACP chapter president Floyd Johnson, where twenty people were arrested. With the SCLC chapter, Trammell invited Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak at the University of Dayton. Trammell was influenced by Dr. King, as well as Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, who led the movement in Birmingham, Alabama. In 1962, Don L. Crawford became Dayton's first African American city commissioner; and, in 1970, the city elected its first African American mayor, James McGee. While Trammell was initially skeptical of both politicians, he was impressed by Mayor McGee's policies on urban renewal.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Raleigh Trammell, Section A2008\_034\_001\_005, TRT: 0:30:00 2008/02/27

Reverend Raleigh Trammell was appointed to the deputy directorship of the Montgomery County Welfare Department in 1972; and, in the mid-1970s, was accused of giving aid to needy families that did not qualify. He refused to plead guilty to a lesser count, and spent a year in prison. After his release in 1980, Trammell was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) chapter in Dayton, Ohio; and established the city's Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, which was the largest in the country. In 2004, Trammell became the SCLC's national chairman. He hosted the

national convention in Dayton in 1994 and 2006, and cultivated the SCLC's relationship with Reverend Jesse L. Jackson and Reverend Dr. Joseph Lowery. Trammell talks about gun violence in Dayton, the role of civil rights organizations at the time of the interview and his hopes for the African American community. He also reflects upon his life and legacy, his family and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Raleigh Trammell, Section A2008\_034\_001\_006, TRT: 0:16:00 2008/02/27

Reverend Raleigh Trammell narrates his photographs.