

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Donald George

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	George, Donald E., 1966-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Donald George,
Dates:	April 30, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2010
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:36:38).
Abstract:	Cultural heritage educator Donald George (1966 -) was a cultural heritage educator for AMISTAD America Incorporated. He traveled the world aboard the Freedom Schooner Amistad to share the story of the Amistad slave revolt of 1839. George was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 30, 2010, in Hartford, Connecticut. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2010_007
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Donald B. Eardley George is an educational speaker, teaching African American history aboard the Amistad ship. George was born on May 31, 1966, in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in West Africa. His mother was Marie George, descended from the Mende slaves and his father was Emmanuel George. George is a descendant of one of the leading founders of Sierra Leone. In addition, George has seven siblings: Emmanuel, Ellen, and Onikeh, Avril, Deanie, Leslie, and Olayamatu.

In 1991, George graduated from Transworld College in the United Kingdom with

an Associate's degree in office administration. Following his education, George began working with the Council of Churches as a program assistant. The United Church of Christ brought George to Amistad America, Inc. in 2004 where he became the International Multicultural Education Coordinator. George lectured on the Amistad Incident of 1839 while aboard the Freedom Schooner Amistad. He was also heavily involved in the Atlantic Freedom Tour in 2007 where the Amistad sailed to England, West Africa, and the Caribbean. George has acted as liaison for Amistad America Inc. with the Caricom and African Union ambassadors at the United Nations on a permanent memorial, student video conference, and the International Slavery Remembrance Day Project.

Since 2004, George has been an affiliate of Friends of Amistad, a history and humanitarian organization. In 2005, George was presented an award by the African American Telecommunication Professionals of SBC. Two years later, George received the Golden Star Achievement award from the Peace and Love Group of Sierra Leoneans and in 2008, he was given the Irma Kingsley Johnson Distinguished Service award by the Chicago Friends of the Amistad Research Center. In 2010 George received the diamond award from the University of Mass African Students Union.

George has two children, Desmond and Juliet who were born and live in Sierra Leone.

Donald George was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 30, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Donald George was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 30, 2010, in Hartford, Connecticut, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Cultural heritage educator Donald George (1966 -) was a cultural heritage educator for AMISTAD America Incorporated. He traveled the world aboard the Freedom Schooner Amistad to share the story of the Amistad slave revolt of 1839.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The

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:

George, Donald E., 1966-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

George, Donald E., 1966---Interviews

Organizations:

Occupations:

Cultural Heritage Educator

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 Donald George, April 30, 2010. 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 Donald George, Section
A2010_007_001_001, TRT: 0:29:28 2010/04/30

Donald George was born on May 31, 1966 in Freetown, Sierra Leone to Marie George and Emmanuel George, Sr. His paternal ancestor, David George, escaped from slavery, and was captured by a group of Creek Native Americans called the Blue Salt. During the Revolutionary War, he fought on the side of the British, and then moved to Nova Scotia, Canada, where he became a Baptist preacher. In 1792, David George helped to found the British colony of Freetown, where George's father was born around 1930. George's mother was a member of Sierra Leone's Loko tribe, and was born to a woman called Mommy Kadey in 1925. George's mother grew up in poverty, but was determined to receive an education despite her social class and gender. She raised four children, of whom George was the youngest. He was very close to his mother, who pampered him; and was given the middle name Bankole in honor of his uncle, Bankole Timothy, a notable Sierra Leonean journalist and biographer.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald George, Section
A2010_007_001_002, TRT: 0:33:33 2010/04/30

Donald George was a descendant of David George, an escaped slave who helped found the British colony of Freetown in Sierra Leone. There, David George established The Golden Street Baptist Church, which was the first Baptist church in Africa. George's parents, Emmanuel George, Sr. and Marie George, met while she was performing as the lead soprano of the Eastern Choral Group. George's parents divorced when he was young, and he was raised by his mother in an impoverished

household in Freetown. Although he knew his father during this time, they did not form a close relationship until George's adulthood. George remembers lessons from his mother, and describes her influence on his parenting style. He also talks about the history of Freetown, which was established as a British colony for former American slaves who escaped to Nova Scotia. The nation of Sierra Leone gained independence from Great Britain in 1962.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald George, Section
A2010_007_001_003, TRT: 0:26:51 2010/04/30

Donald George grew up in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he attended the Christ Church Primary School and the Methodist Boys High School. Throughout his childhood, he was active at the Regent Road Baptist Church, which was originally founded as The Golden Street Baptist Church by his ancestor, David George. In 1983, George graduated from Freetown's Prince of Wales School, where his brother, Emmanuel George, Jr., was a teacher. George went on to attend the Trans World Education College, where he earned an associate's degree in 1991, around the time that the Sierra Leone Civil War began. During the war, George worked for Christian Aid for Under-Assisted Societies Everywhere (CAUSE), and received threats of violence because of his humanitarian work. On one occasion, his car was destroyed by an arsonist. George describes the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was established after the war, and reflects upon the problem of reintegrating soldiers who were conscripted as children.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald George, Section
A2010_007_001_004, TRT: 0:32:17 2010/04/30

Donald George worked for the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone around the time of the Sierra Leone Civil War. In this capacity, he worked to secure funds from the international community to help rebuild the country, and to support citizens who were the victims of war crimes. In 2004, George was recommended by the council's general secretary for a position at AMISTAD America Incorporated, a nonprofit organization aimed at educating people about the Amistad slave revolt of 1839. At this point in the interview, he describes the history of La

Amistad, a cargo ship that was taken over a group of slaves who were kidnapped from Sierra Leone. Hoping to bring positive publicity back to Sierra Leone after the Sierra Leone Civil War, George accepted the position at AMISTAD America Incorporated. He also talks about the aftermath of the Sierra Leone Civil War, including the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, war crime trials and the nationalization of Sierra Leone's mining industry.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald George, Section
A2010_007_001_005, TRT: 0:31:33 2010/04/30

Donald George became an educator at AMISTAD America Incorporated in 2004, and worked aboard the Freedom Schooner Amistad, an educational recreation of La Amistad. In 2007, the Freedom Schooner Amistad sailed to Sierra Leone, and attracted international media attention to the country for the first time since the Sierra Leone Civil War. George was also able to visit his children, Desmond George and Juliet George, who remained in Sierra Leone after he moved to the United States. George describes the case of the United States v. Libellants and Claimants of the Schooner Amistad, in which former President John Quincy Adams successfully argued before the U.S. Supreme Court that the captives aboard La Amistad were free men and women. George also shares lessons from the life of Sengbe Pieh, who led the Amistad revolt. He concludes this part of the interview by reflecting his hopes and concerns for the African American community, as well as his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald George, Section
A2010_007_001_006, TRT: 0:02:56 2010/04/30

Donald George narrates his photographs.