

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with E. Lee Lassiter

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Lassiter, E. Lee, 1936-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with E. Lee Lassiter,
Dates:	July 16, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2010
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:24:00).
Abstract:	Journalism professor and newspaper columnist E. Lee Lassiter (1936 -) worked at the "Baltimore News-American" for twenty years, writing a nationally syndicated column for twelve of those years. He joined Coppin State University in 1986 as an associate professor of journalism and English before retiring in 2003. Lassiter was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 16, 2010, in Baltimore, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2010_070
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Newspaper columnist and journalism professor E. Lee Lassiter was born on July 11, 1936, in Carpenter, North Carolina. His father, Narvie Lassiter, was a tenant farmer while his mother, Margie Upchurch Lassiter, was a housewife and sold cosmetics. Lassiter's parents made a pact that all of their children would graduate from high school and, unlike most tenant farmers, insisted they attend school every day. Lassiter attended the segregated Apex Elementary School in Apex, North Carolina and Barry O'Kelly High School in Method, North Carolina,

graduating in 1954. He worked his way through college at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in, receiving his B.A. degree in secondary education in 1959. He earned his M.A. degree in journalism from Boston University in 1963 and his Ed.D. degree from Morgan State University in 1993.

While a student at Tuskegee, Lassiter joined the Reserve Officers Training Corps. In 1961, he served in the Adjutant General's Corps of the Army as a correspondence officer and technical writer and remained in the Army Reserves for another ten years. Near the close of 1961, he joined the editorial staff at the *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper before moving, in 1965, to the *Baltimore News-American*, where he remained until the newspaper ceased operations in 1986. During his time at the *Baltimore News-American*, Lassiter wrote editorials and worked in various positions in the editing department. In 1974, he became a regular columnist at the newspaper, with syndicated columns in newspapers around the nation. After the paper closed, Lassiter accepted a position as an associate professor of English at Coppin State University. He retired from teaching in 1999, and began working as a public relations associate for the University. In 2003, he retired from that position, but accepted a contract to work in the same capacity online from his home.

Lassiter is an active member of numerous associations, including the NAACP, the Baltimore Tuskegee Alumni Association and the Black Writers' Guild of Maryland. He has been a member of Mount Ararat Baptist Church in Baltimore for forty-four years. Active in community service for almost forty years, among his numerous awards are the Tuskegee University Presidential Associate Award, African Methodist Episcopal Church Christian Service Award and the Council for Cultural Progress Public Service Award. In 1981, he was honored with a Giant in Journalism trophy. Lassiter lives in Baltimore with his wife, Hannah Louise Lassiter.

E. Lee Lassiter was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 16, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with E. Lee Lassiter was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 16, 2010, in Baltimore, Maryland, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Journalism professor and newspaper columnist E. Lee Lassiter (1936 -) worked at the "Baltimore News-American" for twenty years, writing a nationally syndicated column for twelve of those years. He joined Coppin State University in 1986 as an associate professor of journalism

and English before retiring in 2003.

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:

Lassiter, E. Lee, 1936-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Lassiter, E. Lee, 1936---Interviews

African American journalists--Maryland--Baltimore--Interviews.

African American college teachers--Maryland--Baltimore--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Coppin State University

Occupations:

Journalism Professor

Newspaper Columnist

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers|MediaMakers

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 E. Lee Lassiter, July 16, 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 E. Lee Lassiter, Section
A2010_070_001_001, TRT: 0:30:46 2010/07/16

E. Lee Lassiter describes his family's history. Lassiter's mother, Margie Ree Upchurch Lassiter, was born in October of 1915 in Chatham County, North Carolina. His father, Narvie Hester Lassiter, was also born in Chatham County in January of 1909. He talks about his parents' growing up, their ancestries, his maternal grandfather, Claude Upchurch, and his paternal grandfather, Clarence L. Lassiter's livelihood as a farmer. He also discusses his parents' inability to complete their own education, their emphasis on education, and how they met and married.

African American families--North Carolina.

African Americans--Education (Elementary)--North Carolina.

African American tenant farmers--North Carolina--Chatham.

African American grandparents--North Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Lee Lassiter, Section
A2010_070_001_002, TRT: 0:27:20 2010/07/16

E. Lee Lassiter grew up in Carpenter, North Carolina, where his parents raised eight children. In this section of the interview, Lassiter describes his upbringing, the community where he grew up in, his parents' personalities, his likeness to them, and his memories as a child, especially of Christmastime with his family. He also talks about his father's reputation as a good farmer, his parents' emphasis on education, and their efforts as parents, despite their financial hardships. Lassiter recalls his favorite shows on the radio, and hearing Joe Louis and Max Schmeling's boxing match.

African American families--North Carolina--Wake County.

African Americans--Social life and customs--North Carolina--Wake County.

Race discrimination--North Carolina--Wake County.

African American tenant farmers--North Carolina--Wake County.

African Americans--Education--North Carolina--Wake County.

Education--Parent participation--North Carolina--Wake County.

African American parents.

Radio programs.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Lee Lassiter, Section
A2010_070_001_003, TRT: 0:28:25 2010/07/16

E. Lee Lassiter attended Amos Elementary School, where he enjoyed his reading classes. He talks about being bused sixteen miles from Carpenter, North Carolina to Apex, North Carolina to attend the school for African American children there. He describes his schoolhouse, his experience and menorting there and his involvement in extracurricular activities. Lassiter also talks about his

mother's entrepreneurship, his family's car, and their involvement in New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. He recalls his interest in reading magazines while growing up, and watching the show 'Amos 'n' Andy'.

Radio programs.

Amos 'n' Andy (Radio program).

Door-to-door selling--North Carolina--Wake County.

Sales personnel.

Look magazine.

African Americans--Education (Elementary)--North Carolina--Apex.

Segregation in education--North Carolina--Apex.

African American churches--North Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Lee Lassiter, Section
A2010_070_001_004, TRT: 0:28:54 2010/07/16

E. Lee Lassiter attended Berry O'Kelly High School near Raleigh, North Carolina, where he continued to stay involved in extracurricular activities. This is where he learned about black history and literary giants, and served as the editor of the school newspaper. He discusses his experience in high school, his father taking his older brother and him to the black museum in Raleigh, and his awareness of civil rights and the 'Brown vs. Board of Education' ruling. Lassiter also talks about the long trip that he and his brother would take from his family's farm to their high school in Raleigh, and his decision to attend Tuskegee University.

Segregation in education--North Carolina.

African American high school students--Societies, etc.

Shaw University.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.

Ebony (Chicago, Ill.).

Richard B. Harrison Library (Raleigh, N.C.).

North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company.

Tuskegee Institute.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Lee Lassiter, Section
A2010_070_001_005, TRT: 0:28:35 2010/07/16

In 1954, E. Lee Lassiter graduated from Berry O'Kelly High School in Method, North Carolina, and applied and was accepted into Tuskegee University's five-year program. He describes how his family was able to raise \$150 for him to attend Tuskegee, his journey to Tuskegee, Alabama, and his long stay away from home. Lassiter discusses his experience at Tuskegee University and his education there, the teachers who influenced him, meeting his future wife, and his academics. In 1959, Lassiter graduated from Tuskegee University, and then applied to Boston University on a James Foundation Scholarship for his graduate studies in journalism.

African American students--Education (Higher)--Alabama--Tuskegee.

Tuskegee Institute.

African American college students--Alabama--Tuskegee.

College students--Work.

African American universities and colleges--Alabama--Tuskegee.

Smith, Stanley Hugh.