

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with E. Don Sarreals

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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>	Sarreals, E. Don
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals,
<b>Dates:</b>	January 15, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 MOV HD video files (2:35:59).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Atmospheric scientist E. Don Sarreals (1931 - ) is a leading Doppler radar specialist for the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Sarreals was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 15, 2013, in Silver Spring, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_010
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Meteorologist E. Don Sarreals was born on September 22, 1931 in Winston Salem, North Carolina to Espriela Sarreals and Sadie Scales. While still a young child, Sarreal's family migrated to New York City. He attended New York City Public School No. 46 and New York City Junior High School No. 164, before graduating from Bronx High School of Science in 1949. Sarreals went on to earn his B.S. degree in meteorology from the City College of New York in 1955 and his his M.S. degree in meteorology from New York University in 1958.

Before his career as a meteorologist began, Sarreals served in the U.S. Army in 1954 and worked as a part-time lecturer while earning his graduate degree. From 1969 to 1975, he served as President and Consultant for his company, Storm Finders, Inc. In 1961, Sarreals began his career as a Weather Radar Supervisor in the National Weather Service (NWS) New York Forecast Office. In 1976, Sarreals accepted a position as the television meteorologist for the National Broadcasting Corporation's WRC-TV in Washington, D.C. As the dissemination meteorologist for the NWS Headquarters from 1976 to 1980, Sarreals helped to develop the nation's first government-funded radio working system, NOAA Weather Radio. Sarreals also worked as the television meteorologist for the Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting. From 1980 to 1992, Sarreals was assigned as Chief of Operations and Requirements for the Next Generation Weather Radar Project (NEXRAD). In 1984, Sarreals was appointed Chairman of the Working Group for Doppler Radar Meteorological Observation. Sarreals also served as a staff member in the NWS Modernization Division, and as Assistant Federal Coordinator for DOC/NOAA/NWS Affairs in the Office of the Federal Coordination for Meteorological Service.

Sarreals is a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, a recipient of the Ward Medal for proficiency in meteorology, and a member of the American Meteorological Society. Sarreals is also the author of the "Federal Meteorological Handbook No. 1: National Weather Radio Operations" supervised the development of "Federal Meteorological Handbook No. 2: Doppler Weather Radar Observations". For his contributions and accomplishments, Sarreals was selected for inclusion in "Who's Who Among Black Americans".

E. Don Sarreals was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on January 15, 2013.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with E. Don Sarreals was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 15, 2013, in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was recorded on 6 MOV HD video files. Atmospheric scientist E. Don Sarreals (1931 - ) is a leading Doppler radar specialist for the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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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:

Sarreals, E. Don

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Sarreals, E. Don--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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National Weather Service (U.S.)

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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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 E. Don Sarreals, January 15, 2013. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/8/2013 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, January 15, 2013**

Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013\_010\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:38  
2013/01/15

Don Sarreals talks about his family background. Sarreals was born in 1931 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. His mother, Sadie Beatrice Scales, was born in April, 1903 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She was a homemaker and secretary. His father, Espriela Don Sarreals Sr., was born in 1901 in Mississippi. Due to racial pressures in Mississippi, his family moved to Grand

Rapids, Michigan, where he was raised for most of his life. Sarreals Sr. attended the University of Michigan and taught at public schools. Sarreals describes his parents' personalities and his earliest childhood memory.

African American families.

African American parents.

Race relations--Mississippi.

Moving, Household--Social aspects.

Childhood--North Carolina--Winston-Salem--1930-1935.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013\_010\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:19  
2013/01/15

Don Sarreals' family moved from Winston Salem, North Carolina to New York when he was a young boy. Sarreals talks about his experience growing up in New York. As a young boy, Sarreals enjoyed drawing and making comics, as well as playing tennis. Sarreals attended P.S. 46 for elementary school, where he excelled in all of his courses. He continued on to Junior High School 164, J. Edward Stitt, where he was placed in advanced level classes. After reading the book 'Storm' by George R. Stewart, Sarreals was inspired to become a meteorologist. 'Storm' also influenced the concept of naming storms.

Childhood--New York (State)--New York--1935-1945.

African American students--Academic achievement--New York (State)--New York.

Gifted children--New York (State)--New York.

Storms--Fiction.

Meteorology--Vocational guidance.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013\_010\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:09  
2013/01/15

Don Sarreals was inspired to become a meteorologist after reading the book 'Storm,' by George Rippey Stewart. After graduating from Junior High School 164 in 1946, Sarreals went on to attend Bronx High School of Science. While in high school, Sarreals developed an affinity for biology and seriously considered becoming a doctor. Sarreals graduated from high school in 1949 and went on to attend City College of New York, where he initially followed the pre-medicine track. His studies were interrupted in 1953, when he was drafted to the U.S. Army. He returned in 1955 and changed his major to meteorology. Sarreals graduated in 1957 with his B.S. degree in meteorology and received the Ward Medal in Meteorology.

Bronx High School of Science--African American students--1945-1950.

City University of New York. City College--Low-income students.

Military service--United States--1950-1955.

Meteorology--Study and teaching (Higher)--New York (State)--New York.

Meteorology--Awards.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013\_010\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:01  
2013/01/15

Don Sarreals began his teaching fellowship at City College of New York in 1957. He served as a part-time lecturer in the meteorology department. Sarreals also took courses towards a M.S. degree at New York University, but he did not write a thesis. After finishing the classes at NYU in 1961, he was hired by the National Weather Service (formerly, Weather Bureau), where he served as radar supervisor and radio meteorologist. He described his experiences as a

television meteorologist. In 1964, Sarreals guided President Lyndon B. Johnson's Air Force One through a severe thunderstorm. In 1969, Sarreals moved on to NBC, where he became the first black professional meteorologist on television in the United States.

City University of New York. City College--Scholarships, fellowships, etc.  
Meteorology--Study and teaching (Higher)--New York (State)--New York.  
United States. National Weather Service--Officials and employees.  
African American television weathercasters--History.

Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973--Relations with African Americans.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013\_010\_001\_005, TRT: 5:28:51  
2013/01/15

Don Sarreals was released from NBC's Channel 4 in 1974, despite the positive ratings of his evening news program. After taking a vacation, he was contacted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) where he contributed to a program that established a weather radio warning system. When Sarreals was not working with the U.S. Weather Service, he served as a consultant with his company, Storm Finders. In 1976, Sarreals served as an operational meteorologist at the National Weather Service's Headquarters. There, he contributed to the development of the Doppler radar system, which aids in determining the speed of various types of precipitation. In 1993, he served as Assistant Federal Coordinator for the NOAA, where he developed new standards for the modernization of weather services. He talks about his family and reflects upon his legacy.

National Broadcasting Company.

United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration--Officials and employees.

United States. National Weather Service--Officials and employees.

Doppler radar.

African American families.

Video Oral History Interview with E. Don Sarreals, Section A2013\_010\_001\_006, TRT: 6:13:01  
2013/01/15

Don Sarreals describes his granddaughter's interest in meteorology, and reflects upon how he would like to be remembered. He then describes his family photographs.

Grandparent and child.

Meteorology--Vocational guidance.

Photograph collections.