

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ernest J. Gaines

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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>	Gaines, Ernest J., 1933-2019
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ernest J. Gaines,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 22, 2017
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2017
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:36:34).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Author Ernest J. Gaines (1933- ) published several novels and was nominated twice for the Pulitzer Prize. The film version his novel <i>A Lesson Before Dying</i> won nine Emmy Awards. Gaines was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 22, 2017, in New Orleans, Louisiana. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2017_102
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Author Ernest J. Gaines was born on January 15, 1933 in Oscar, Louisiana to Manuel Gaines and Adrienne Jefferson Gaines. Gaines attended St. Augustine Catholic School until he moved to Vallejo, California in 1948 to live with his mother and stepfather. He graduated from Vallejo Junior College and went on to attend San Francisco State University, where he received his B.A. degree in language arts in 1957.

Before receiving his B.A. degree, Gaines served in the U.S. Army from 1953 until 1955, and then published his first short story, *The Turtle*, in a journal at San Francisco State University in 1956. He then published his second short story, *Boy in the Double-Breasted Suit*, the following year. These publications helped Gaines earn a Wallace Stegner Writing Fellowship in 1958 at Stanford University, where he remained for a year. Gaines published additional short stories before publishing his first novel, *Catherine Carmier*, in 1964. After publishing three subsequent novels, Gaines was the recipient of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Fellowship in 1971. In 1981, he became the writer-in-residence at the University of Louisiana and remained there until his retirement in 2004. After his retirement, Gaines focused on repairing and restoring his old plantation home in Louisiana.

Gaines was the recipient of numerous awards throughout his career. In 1967, Gaines won a National Endowment for the Arts grant; and in 1993, he was awarded the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. His work has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize twice, and his book, *A Lesson Before Dying*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction. The novel was also featured on Oprah's Book Club, in 1997. Several of Gaines' novels have been made into films as well, including *A Lesson Before Dying*, *A Gathering of Old Men*, *The Sky is Gray*, and *The Autobiography of Jane Pittman*. The film version of *A Lesson Before Dying* was critically acclaimed and won nine Emmy Awards. In 2007, a book award was established in his honor by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to encourage African-American fiction writers.

Ernest J. Gaines was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 22, 2017.

# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ernest J. Gaines was conducted by Denise Gines on May 22, 2017, in New Orleans, Louisiana, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Author Ernest J. Gaines (1933-) published several novels and was nominated twice for the Pulitzer Prize. The film version his novel *A Lesson Before Dying* won nine Emmy Awards.

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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:

Gaines, Ernest J., 1933-2019

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Gaines, Ernest J., 1933-2019 --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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### Occupations:

Author

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Ernest J. Gaines, May 22, 2017. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 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

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest J. Gaines, Section A2017\_102\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:38 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest J. Gaines, Section A2017\_102\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:11 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest J. Gaines, Section A2017\_102\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:12 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest J. Gaines, Section A2017\_102\_001\_004, TRT: 4:28:13 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest J. Gaines, Section A2017\_102\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:19 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Ernest J. Gaines, Section A2017\_102\_001\_006, TRT: 6:13:01 ?