

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reggie Wells

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wells, Reggie
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reggie Wells,
Dates:	March 20, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2018
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:43:02).
Abstract:	Makeup artist Reggie Wells (1947 -) worked as Oprah Winfrey's personal makeup artist for over twenty years. Wells was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 20, 2018, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2018_052
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Makeup artist Reggie Wells was born on December 2, 1947 in Baltimore, Maryland to John and Ada Wells. Wells graduated from City College High School in 1965, and went on to attend the Maryland Institute College of Art, where he received his B.F.A. degree in 1971 and his M.A. degree in art education in 1975.

Wells began teaching art in the Baltimore Public School system in 1968. In 1976, he moved to New York City, where he worked at department store makeup counters for several years. Wells entered the entertainment industry as a makeup artist for a Jordache jeans advertising campaign. Over the course of his career, Wells worked with *Essence* magazine and *O Magazine* as well as *Glamour Magazine*, *Time*, *Life*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Mademoiselle*. He also worked with a number of celebrities, including Whitney Houston, Beyoncé, Halle Berry, Natalie Cole, Aretha Franklin, Leontyne Price, Joan Rivers, and former first lady Michelle Obama. He often created his own makeup to accommodate the darker skin tones of his clients. In 1990, Wells became Oprah Winfrey's full-time personal makeup artist after working together during an *Essence* photo shoot. He traveled internationally with Winfrey to events in South Africa, Australia, and the Middle East, and hosted a segment on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* called "Make-Up 101." Wells also collaborated with lighting technicians on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* to develop techniques for highlighting darker skin on camera. In 2000, Wells published *Face Painting: African American Beauty Techniques from an Emmy Award Winning Makeup Artist*. In 2011, he became the international creative director for Hissyfit, an Australian cosmetics company. Wells volunteered in senior citizen communities in Baltimore, giving residents makeovers and organizing photo shoots. He also traveled to makeup shows across the country, teaching master classes and day of beauty Seminars.

Wells won a day time Emmy award for outstanding makeup for his work on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in 1995, and was nominated in 2003, 2004, and 2005. Wells was a board member and trustee for the Maryland Institute College of Art from 2010 to 2016.

Reggie Wells was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 30, 2018.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reggie Wells was conducted by Harriette Cole on March 20, 2018, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Makeup artist Reggie Wells (1947 -) worked as Oprah Winfrey's personal makeup artist for over twenty years.

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:

Wells, Reggie

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wells, Reggie--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Makeup Artist

HistoryMakers® Category:

StyleMakers

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 Reggie Wells, March 20, 2018. 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).

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 Reggie Wells, Section A2018_052_001_001, TRT: 1:28:47 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Reggie Wells, Section A2018_052_001_002, TRT: 2:29:13 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Reggie Wells, Section A2018_052_001_003, TRT: 3:28:16 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Reggie Wells, Section A2018_052_001_004, TRT: 4:28:19 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Reggie Wells, Section A2018_052_001_005, TRT: 5:28:32 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Reggie Wells, Section A2018_052_001_006, TRT: 6:17:16 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Reggie Wells, Section A2018_052_001_007, TRT: 7:02:39 ?