

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Augustus Colson

---

## 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>	Colson, Augustus, 1936-2017
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Augustus Colson,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 21, 2002
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2002
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:00:18).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Publishing chief executive Augustus Colson (1936 - 2017 ) started his own publishing company, Church Times, which combined his artistic and writing abilities, and used them to increase communications in the African American church community. Colson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 21, 2002, in Tallahassee, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2002_051
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Evangelist Augustus Colson was born to Minnie and Willie Colson in Chaires, Florida on May 25, 1936. He was the eldest of seven siblings and grew up in a religious family of four ministers. Determined to be in journalism, he practiced lettering art and graphics. Multi-talented, Colson graduated from Lincoln High School in 1955, with numerous awards in art. Colson's interest in journalism was finally realized at Alabama State College in Montgomery, under the tutelage of art professor Howard L. Oubre. In 1966, Colson graduated with a B.S. from Florida A & M University and turned his full attention to writing and art.

After several attempts to break into the media in Los Angeles, California without any success, Colson then returned to Tallahassee and started his own advertising production company. The company's resulting in-house publication, *Church Times*, was an instant success in showcasing local ministries. Furthermore, it provided a vehicle for the professional and personal growth and expansion of other graphic artists, illustrators, journalists, poets and photographers in the Georgia/Florida area. *Church Times* has been cited for its commitment to inspire and promote the rich traditions of Tallahassee's religious community since 1983.

Colson passed away on November 11, 2017 at the age of 81.

---

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Augustus Colson was conducted by Samuel Adams on April 21, 2002, in Tallahassee, Florida, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Publishing chief executive Augustus Colson (1936 - 2017 ) started his own publishing company, Church Times, which combined his artistic and writing abilities, and used them to increase communications in the African American church community.

---

# 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:

Colson, Augustus, 1936-2017

Adams, Samuel (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Colson, Augustus, 1936-2017--Interviews

---

# Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

# Occupations:

Publishing Chief Executive

---

# HistoryMakers® Category:

## 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 Augustus Colson, April 21, 2002. 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 Augustus Colson, Section A2002\_051\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Augustus Colson describes his family's history. His father, Willie Colson, was born on October 15, 1908 in Chaires, Florida to Lillie B. King and Campbell Colson. Willie Colson never knew his father, and worked all of his life as a logger and sharecropper. He also taught himself to read at the age of sixty-five with the help of a Bible. Colson's mother, Minnie Colson, was born to Pearl Fitz Bryant and Mack Bryant. Colson lived in Greenville, Florida and Chaires, Florida before his family settled in Tallahassee, Florida around 1943. From first to twelfth grade, Colson attended Lincoln High School, where his teacher Mr. Nesby encouraged his artistic talent and let him practice his art instead of doing his other school work. Colson was raised in a strict Pentecostal church and while his parents attended the Mount Sinai church, he joined the Primitive Baptist Church around 1954. Colson graduated from Lincoln High School in 1955.

Video Oral History Interview with Augustus Colson, Section A2002\_051\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:29 ?

Augustus Colson describes his experience finishing high school, attending Alabama State College, and getting drafted into the United States Army. In

eleventh grade, Colson discovered his interest in journalism with the aid of a teacher named Josie Speed. After discovering this interest, Colson dreamed of starting a newspaper. In 1955, Colson graduated from Lincoln High School and enrolled at Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama to study art. While attending Alabama State, Colson worked as a janitor and commercial artist and became involved in the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. Before he could graduate, Colson was drafted into the United States Army in 1958 and sent to Germany in 1959. In Germany, Colson used his skills as an artist and journalist to photograph his surroundings, draw maps, design logos, and write training aids for the Army. He returned to the United States in 1960 and enrolled at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee, Florida, FAMU.

Video Oral History Interview with Augustus Colson, Section A2002\_051\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:42 ?

Augustus Colson describes his experiences attending Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, FAMU, in Tallahassee and living in Los Angeles, California. After returning from the United States Army in 1960, Colson enrolled at Florida A&M University to study art, where he found a mentor in Dr. Howard Lewis and studied commercial art in trades to fulfill his graduation requirements. In 1961, Colson was recalled by the United States Army and relocated to New Orleans, Louisiana to train for the invasion of the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. Colson returned to Florida A&M University and graduated with his B.S. degree in art in 1966. After graduation, Colson moved to Los Angeles, where he recalls the Watts. He married Geneva Mordica Colson in November 1968. After 13 years of living in Los Angeles, Colson and his wife moved to Tallahassee.

Video Oral History Interview with Augustus Colson, Section A2002\_051\_001\_004, TRT: 0:31:07 ?

Augustus Colson discusses his career as a commercial artist in Tallahassee, Florida, his work for Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), and the start of his "Church Times" magazine. Colson returned home to Tallahassee around 1980 and began to provide his artistic services for neighborhood businesses. In 1987, Colson designed the logo for the Florida A&M centennial and began to work for the University in the paint shop, where he continued to work until 1997. In 1982, Colson attempted to market his business to local churches by collecting their programs and distributing them, which led to the creation of his "Church Times" magazine and to Colson becoming a minister. Colson reflected on his responsibility as an artist and his legacy of helping others. He ends the interview by narrating his photographs.