

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Cheryl Saunders

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Saunders, Cheryl, 1955-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Saunders,
Dates:	August 13, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:58:31).
Abstract:	Academic administrator and choral director Cheryl Saunders (1955 -) organized the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Gospel Choir. Saunders was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 13, 2002, in Grand Forks, North Dakota. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_160
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Cheryl Eileen Saunders was born on May 7, 1955 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi to Lula Roberts and Isaac London. The oldest of four children, Saunders (then Roberts) stayed close to her family for many years, attending college in her hometown. Saunders has brought a unique perspective to music education.

Upon graduating from Blair High School in 1972, Saunders continued her education at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. She earned a bachelor's degree in music education in 1977 and a master's degree in music from the same school in 1983. In 1989, Saunders left the United States for England, serving as a facilitator and arts consultant for the Creative Futures Music Consulting Group and a teacher of mathematics and music for the Reading Borough Council. Saunders organized and conducted the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Gospel Choir, coordinated a U.S. servicemen's seminar of Germany, and organized a music program at the multicultural Coley Primary School in Reading, England. There, she helped children compose music.

Returning to the United States, Saunders became a doctoral candidate in the field of educational leadership at the University of North Dakota-Grand Forks in 1996. Saunders began consulting the university in 1997 while presenting at international music workshops. She showed the differences and similarities between Western and African American music, especially focusing on the history of church music. In 1998, teaching for the first time in a college setting, Saunders lectured at the University of North Dakota and the Northwest Technical College in East Grand Forks, Minnesota on the issues of multiculturalism. She also became the interim center coordinator for the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center, which provides support for students of all ethnicities. Saunders has been married to Lee R. Saunders since 1980. They have two children, Jasmine and Joshua.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Cheryl Saunders was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 13, 2002, in Grand

Forks, North Dakota, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator and choral director Cheryl Saunders (1955 -) organized the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Gospel Choir.

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:

Saunders, Cheryl, 1955-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Saunders, Cheryl, 1955---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Choral Director

HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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 Cheryl Saunders, August 13, 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 Cheryl Saunders, Section A2002_160_001_001, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Cheryl Saunders talks about her family history. Her mother, Lula Roberts, was born on May 5, 1932 in Wayne County Mississippi. Saunders' maternal grandmother's grandmother was a slave who family members affectionately referred to as "that old African." Saunders' maternal grandfather died of malaria while working in the Mississippi rice paddies when her mother was six months old. Her father, Reverend Isaac London was born on May 19, 1931 in Mississippi. Saunders' father visited her when he was in town, although she did not know that he was her father until she was twelve. Saunders lived with her mother and relatives in Hattiesburg, Mississippi and recalls growing up in a neighborhood called Newman Quarters. Although they were poor, Saunders remembers the joy of playing with other children and the sense of community that extended to poor whites when the river flooded. Saunders also recalls

witnessing neighbors' abusive relationships and the racial violence and discrimination in the South.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Saunders, Section A2002_160_001_002, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Cheryl Saunders describes her education. Saunders attended an all-black school until she went to Lillie Burney Junior High School during the first year of its integration. Saunders initially struggled in math, but her mother hired a tutor and she was able to catch up in nine weeks. During high school, Saunders attended a predominantly white school, and then returned to a black school for eleventh grade where students called her an "Oreo." Her final year of high school was at a white school where she fit in better given her interests and values. Upon graduating from Blair High School in 1972, Saunders continued her education at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. She earned a bachelor's degree in music education in 1977 and a master's degree in music from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1983. She lived in California and Arizona where she worked for the Seventh Day Adventist Church and met her husband, Lee R. Saunders. Saunders describes teaching Negro Spirituals in England.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Saunders, Section A2002_160_001_003, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

In 1989, Saunders left the United States for England, serving as a facilitator and arts consultant for the Creative Futures Music Consulting Group and as a teacher of mathematics and music for the Reading Borough Council. Saunders organized and conducted the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Gospel Choir, and organized a music program at the multi-cultural Coley Primary School in Reading, England. In her workshops, Saunders showed the differences and similarities between Western and African American music, especially focusing on the history of church music. Returning to the United States, Saunders became a doctoral candidate in the field of educational leadership at the University of North Dakota-Grand Forks in 1996. Saunders describes the impact of the 1997 Flood in Grand Forks, North Dakota on her family and community. Calling it a "mixed blessing," the flood was destructive, but schools and homes were able to be rebuilt using FEMA money.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Saunders, Section A2002_160_001_004, TRT: 0:31:01 ?

Cheryl Saunders talks about her career. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of North Dakota – Grand Forks in 2001. Saunders is the coordinator of the Learning Center at the University of North Dakota – Grand Forks. She also became the interim center coordinator for the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center, which provides support for students of all ethnicities and served on the University Planning and Budget Committee. She details her experience on campus with racism. Saunders describes the history of African Americans in North Dakota and her opposition to using Native American tribes as school mascots. Saunders reflects upon how she would like to be remembered and then narrates her photographs.