

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Frank Lucas

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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>	Lucas, Frank, 1930 August 29-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Frank Lucas,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 13, 2003
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2003
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:13:42).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Graphic designer Frank Lucas (1930 - ) became the first African American illustrator and photographer in Boston's advertising industry. As director of art and design for children's trade books, Lucas pioneered new techniques in design, production and printing. Lucas also taught art at Boston area schools. Lucas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 13, 2003, in Sudbury, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2003_078
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Graphic designer Frank Lucas was born on August 29, 1930, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He went on to become the first African American illustrator and photographer in Boston's advertising industry.

Raised in Cambridge, Lucas was attracted to art at an early age. With his talent, he was hired as an Army illustrator and photographer during the Korean War. After the war, he returned to Boston and graduated from the Vesper George School of Art in 1955. Lucas was then hired as a graphic designer at Parsons Friedmann and Central. He would later move to Barker Black Studios, where he worked primarily with publishers.

In 1966, Lucas was hired at Ginn and Company, a publishing house where he supervised art editors in the purchase of illustrations and photography for school textbooks. During his thirty-one years there, Lucas also managed packaging and oversaw art direction for the firm's advertising and promotional materials. Later, as director of art and design for children's trade books, Lucas pioneered new techniques in design, production and printing. He retired from the company in 1997. Since then, he has served as a consultant and art director to Course Crafters, a firm that produces materials for Sesame Street, Berlitz and several other educational publishers.

In addition to his work experience, Lucas has directed the career of many art students teaching art at several Boston art schools. He also taught graphic design and lectured at the famous Rhode Island School of Design. Lucas and his daughter, Diahanne, published a monthly New England newspaper, *Reunion*, for four years. Lucas has drawn wide praise and is the recipient of several awards for his professional work. He and his wife, Patricia Ann, have been married since 1957 and have three children. They reside in Sudbury, Massachusetts.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Frank Lucas was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 13, 2003, in Sudbury, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Graphic designer Frank Lucas (1930 - ) became the first African American illustrator and photographer in Boston's advertising industry. As director of art and design for children's trade books, Lucas pioneered new techniques in design, production and printing. Lucas also taught art at Boston area schools.

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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:

Lucas, Frank, 1930 August 29-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Lucas, Frank, 1930 August 29---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:

Graphic Designer

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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 Frank Lucas, April 13, 2003. 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 Frank Lucas, Section A2003\_078\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:26 ?

Frank Lucas was born on August 29, 1930 in Cambridge, Massachusetts to Millicent Alleyne Lucas and Kenneth Lucas. Kenneth Lucas was born in September of 1896 in Barbados. His mother, Rose Lucas, was a homemaker and his father died while building the Panama Canal. Millicent Lucas was born on June 6, 1896 in Barbados to Adriana Alleyne and Thomas Alleyne. Both of Lucas's parents emigrated to Boston, Massachusetts separately, where his father worked in iron smelting and Lever Brother soap factories and his mother worked as a domestic. His father built a wood and lead club to protect himself on his route to and from work. Lucas had one brother, Roy Allen, who became an actor and TV producer, and a sister, Eileen Lucas, who tragically died before he was

born. He remembers a pleasant childhood with lots of freedom to attend movies, baseball games, and other events around Boston. Lucas, a good student, attended Houghton Elementary School and Rindge Technical School, where he decided that he wanted to be an artist.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Lucas, Section A2003\_078\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:15 ?

Frank Lucas graduated from Rindge Technical School in 1950 and enrolled at the Vesper George School of Art in Boston, Massachusetts. He paid his first year's tuition with his insurance policy, and was able to attend until his second year when his parents were asked to pay the bill. At the same time, Lucas was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1952 and became an artist/illustrator with the Ninth Division during the Korean War. From 1952 until 1954, Lucas remained stateside in the Army and was promoted to the rank of Corporal. He graduated from Vesper George School of Art on funds from the GI Bill in 1955 and looked for employment in advertising. After his first job painting for Cochran's Department Store, Lucas experienced hiring discrimination until he was hired at Parsons, Friedman and Central, where he stayed from 1956 until 1964. Lucas married Patricia Ann in 1957, started a family, and in 1964 was hired by Barker-Black Studios. Lucas also describes the career of his brother, Roy Allen, an actor.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Lucas, Section A2003\_078\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:16 ?

Frank Lucas was the office manager and designer at Barker-Black Studio in Boston, Massachusetts from 1964 until 1966, when the studio was suddenly closed. He briefly worked in Jerry Pinkney's studio before being hired at the publisher Ginn and Company in 1966 as the supervisor in charge of the high school division. Lucas was the first African American in the editorial staff of Ginn and Company and remembers his introduction to the president of the company, and the scarcity of other African Americans in editorial positions nationwide. Lucas later became manager of the cover department and stayed with Ginn and Co. as it was bought by Xerox, Gulf and Western Industries, Simon and Schuster, and then Viacom. Lucas reflects upon his attempts to introduce more diversity to covers at Ginn and Company, and the practice of making different covers for sale of books in the South. After retiring in 1997, Lucas consulted for Course Crafters, where he helped find artists to work with Berlitz, Sesame Street, and Leap Frog.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Lucas, Section A2003\_078\_001\_004, TRT: 0:31:00 ?

Frank Lucas talks about his family. He has two sons: Frank Lucas, Jr., who is a cyclist and graphic designer, and Micheal Lucas, who is a police officer. He also has a daughter, Diahanne Lucas, with whom he published the Reunion newspaper. Their monthly paper was about African American history and accomplishments in New England and ran for four years. Lucas describes his speaking engagements and shares his advice to never give up, know as much about your craft as you possibly can know, and be willing to ask for help. Lucas also describes organizing the Cambridge Reunion Group to raise funds and provide college scholarships to students in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Lucas comments on his multicultural collection of art and historical objects and his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He ends the interview by reflecting upon his legacy and narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Lucas, Section A2003\_078\_001\_005, TRT: 0:14:45 ?

Frank Lucas continues to narrate his photographs.