

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Henry L. Cook

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cook, Henry L., Sr., 1939-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry L. Cook,
Dates:	March 16, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:52:35).
Abstract:	Civil rights activist and dentist Dr. Henry L. Cook (1939 -) was the former President of Georgia Dental Association and the recipient of the Georgia Dental Society's highest honor, the Dr. J. E. Carter Award. Dr. Cook was also awarded the Civil Rights Award from the National Dental Association. Cook was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 16, 2002, in Columbus, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_015
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Highly regarded as a businessman and community leader, dentist Dr. Henry Lee Cook, Sr. was born on September 7, 1939 in Macon, Georgia. He earned a B. S. degree in Biology from Tuskegee University in 1962.

Cook served in the United States Air Force as a First Lieutenant from 1962 to 1965. He was married, in 1964, to the former Mamie Richmond and they have been married for the past 38 years. In 1965, Cook traveled to Nashville, Tennessee and earned a D. D. S. from Meharry Medical College in 1969. Setting up private practice as a dentist in Columbus, Georgia, Cook practiced dentistry successfully for 32 years. In 1976, he built the Martin Luther King, Jr. Shopping Center in Columbus' black community, which included an ultra-modern dental office.

Throughout his career, Cook has been involved in a variety of professional and civic organizations. His affiliations include: the American College of Dentistry, the Pierre Fauchard Academy, the National Dental Association, the Georgia Dental Association, the Western District Dental Society, and the State Health Strategies Council. He is the former chairman of the board of the Columbus Technical Foundation, the Columbus Technical Institute and the A. J. McClung Y. M. C. A. Cook is currently chairman of the Minority Assistance Corporation, the Columbus Business Development Center and the Supervisory Board of Personal Review. Among his many awards, Cook is the recipient of the Georgia Dental Society's highest honor, the Dr. J. E. Carter Award and the Civil Rights Award from the National Dental Association. Both of his children, Henry and Cathy are dentists.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Henry L. Cook was conducted by Samuel Adams on March 16, 2002, in Columbus, Georgia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civil rights activist and dentist Dr. Henry

L. Cook (1939 -) was the former President of Georgia Dental Association and the recipient of the Georgia Dental Society's highest honor, the Dr. J. E. Carter Award. Dr. Cook was also awarded the Civil Rights Award from the National Dental Association.

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:

Cook, Henry L., Sr., 1939-

Adams, Samuel (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cook, Henry L., Sr., 1939---Interviews

African American dentists--Interviews.

African American civil rights workers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Dentist

HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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 Dr. Henry L. Cook, March 16, 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 Dr. Henry L. Cook, Section A2002_015_001_001, TRT: 0:30:15
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Henry Cook was born on March 16, 2002 in Macon, Georgia. His father, Jesse Cook, died when Cook was six; his mother, Annie Cook, died when Cook was ten. After his parents' deaths, Cook lived with his maternal grandparents, John and Dora Jackson, in Byron, Georgia. Cook was very close to his grandparents who taught him responsibility. Cook was an outgoing boy who loved to read; he

had contests with a classmate on who could read the most books. Cook's academic potential was encouraged by his grandparents and his siblings, who did not have the same educational opportunities. One of his school teachers, Elizabeth Richmond, insisted that Cook attend high school, which meant that he had to live away from home during the week in order to attend the black high school in Fort Valley, Georgia. Richmond made sure that Cook had the funds to attend college; she would later become his adopted mother. Cook majored in electrical engineering at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, and worked his way through college.

African Americans--Georgia--Social life and customs.

African Americans--Georgia--History.

Tuskegee University.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry L. Cook, Section A2002_015_001_002, TRT: 0:30:29
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Henry Cook describes HistoryMaker Robert Church, one of his mentors, a father figure, and someone he did not want to disappoint as a child. In order to attend high school, Cook had to commute from Byron, Georgia to Fort Valley, Georgia. Lacking a social life and without many friends in high school. Cook enrolled at the Tuskegee Institute as a mechanical engineering major, but later decided to major in biology due to his desire to attend medical school. At Tuskegee, Cook took his collegiate education very seriously. He joined the ROTC his junior year, which led him to join the U.S. Air Force after graduation in 1962. In the Air Force, Cook was a munitions officer stationed in Paris, France. However, he left the military in 1965 in order to avoid serving in the Vietnam War. After his military service, Cook enrolled at Meharry Medical College, graduating from there in 1969. Cook also talks about the gerrymandering in Tuskegee, Alabama, his experiences with racial discrimination, and the deaths of his grandparents.

Tuskegee University--20th century--social life and customs.

United States. Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps--History--20th century.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

United States. Air Force.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry L. Cook, Section A2002_015_001_003, TRT: 0:31:07
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Henry Cook graduated from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee in 1969. At Meharry, Cook worked hard academically to catch up with his classmates and he eventually rose to the top of his class. After graduation, Cook and his wife, Mamie Cook, moved to Columbus, Georgia where he took over a financially stable dental practice that had many patients. After five years, Cook was able to build his own office, the interior of which was designed by his wife. Cook talks about growing his dental practice, his involvement in professional dental organizations like the National Dental Association and the Georgia Dental Association, changes in healthcare access, and his treatment of indigent patients. He also talks about his children, the importance of mentors to academic success, and the sacrifices required by those in the legal and medical fields. Cook lists Meharry Medical College, Howard University, and the Morehouse School of Medicine as important producers of African American medical providers.

Meharry Medical College.

National Medical Association (U.S.). Foundation.

National Dental Association (1932)--History.

Dentistry--United States--History--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry L. Cook, Section A2002_015_001_004, TRT: 0:20:44
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Henry Cook talks about the role of Meharry Medical College in producing black dentists and encouraging them to work with underserved populations. Cook also describes his grandmother, his legacy, and the different ways he gives back to his family and his community out of gratitude for the opportunities he has been afforded in life. Cook narrates his photographs.

Meharry Medical College.

Dentistry--United States--History--20th century.