

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Porter G. Peeples

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Peeples, Porter G., 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Porter G. Peeples,
Dates:	December 9, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:33:25).
Abstract:	Nonprofit chief executive Porter G. Peeples (1945 -) is the director of the Urban League of Lexington, Kentucky. Peeples was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 9, 2002, in Lexington, Kentucky. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_227
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civil servant Porter G. Peeples was born on October 29, 1945 and raised in Lynch, Kentucky. In his youth, he attended public schools financially backed by U.S. Steel, the corporation that owned the area's mines.

Before enrolling at the University of Kentucky, Peeples spent several summers in New York City, working and living with relatives, and had attended Hazard Community College. Peeples was one of only about fifty African American students when he enrolled at the University of Kentucky, but he rose to the challenge and excelled in his work.

Not long after Peeples graduated Kentucky, he became the director of education for the Urban League in Lexington and soon became the director of the local chapter. He was the youngest person to hold this position in the United States. Peeples has championed many causes as an advocate for the disadvantaged of Lexington. Under his guidance, the Lexington Urban League has made its mark with programs for clerical training, open housing, community development, training in penal institutions and operation of a community radio station. He was the chairman for the Equity Commission monitoring the Fayette County Schools and was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Housing Corporation.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Porter G. Peeples was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 9, 2002, in Lexington, Kentucky, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit chief executive Porter G. Peeples (1945 -) is the director of the Urban League of Lexington, Kentucky.

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:

Peeples, Porter G., 1945-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Peeples, Porter G., 1945---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Nonprofit Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Porter G. Peeples, December 9, 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 Porter G. Peeples, Section A2002_227_001_001, TRT: 0:28:30
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Porter G. Peeples describes his upbringing. His father, coal miner Roy O'Neil Peeples, Sr., was born near Birmingham, Alabama in 1914, and moved to Lynch, Kentucky in search of work. Here he met and married Carrie Lou Conner, a coal mining widow who was born in 1913 in Kentucky. The couple gave birth to Porter G. Peeples on October 29, 1945, and raised their family in a coal town operated by U.S. Steel. As a youth Peeples fished and hunted with his father. He also describes his disciplinarian mother. He enjoyed seeing the mountains that surrounded his town, and hearing the coal-hauling trains. As a youth, Peeples spent his summers working in New York City. He attended schools operated by U.S. Steel, including West Main High School. When a teacher predicted that he would become a shoe salesman, Peeples was motivated to excel in school. After graduating in 1963, he enrolled at Hazard Community College. Then he began attending the University of Kentucky 1965, where he earned his B.A. degree in education in 1967.

Video Oral History Interview with Porter G. Peeples, Section A2002_227_001_002, TRT: 0:28:30
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Porter G. Peeples' father mined coal for U.S. Steel, and often endured strikes and layoffs, causing the family to suffer financially. This had a profound effect on Peeples' desire to succeed. He attended Hazard Community College before transferring to the University of Kentucky in 1965. Peeples was studious, yet enjoyed socializing at neighboring Historically Black Colleges, and attending the University of Kentucky basketball games. He graduated with his B.A. degree in education, and taught special education before being hired as education director of the Lexington Urban League in 1968. A few months later, the director of the organization quit, thrusting Peeples into the position. It took years of networking for Peeples to develop a relationship with Lexington's African American community, but his commitment to the community led to his success. Peeples also talks about the history of the National Urban League, and the suspicion surrounding the death of National Urban League leader Whitney Young.

Video Oral History Interview with Porter G. Peeples, Section A2002_227_001_003, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Porter G. Peeples led the Lexington Urban League in facilitating community and economic development in the African American community. For example, the organization initiated a program that employed released prisoners to rehabilitate or construct over 100 homes in dilapidated areas in Lexington. The organization also waged a major fight against educational inequality in 2001. This led to an overhaul of Kentucky's standardized testing system, and the removal of Lexington's school superintendent. Peeples also led preservation efforts for the Lexington Urban League's current headquarters. Peeples notes that the Lexington Urban League operates like a business in an effort to network across racial lines, and to better relate to the organization's stakeholders. Peeples shares his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He also comments on reparations, economic viability in Lexington, and Orlando "Tubby" Smith, former head coach of the University of Kentucky basketball team.

Video Oral History Interview with Porter G. Peeples, Section A2002_227_001_004, TRT: 0:05:55 ?

Porter G. Peeples' parents, Roy O'Neil and Carrie Lou Peeples, witnessed him rise to success as director of the Lexington Urban League before their deaths. However, Peeples' father never hesitated to remind him that he had a position—not a "real" job. Peeples has been married twice, and has one son and a stepdaughter. He would like to be remembered as a person who did the right things for the right reasons; as a person who respected everyone; and as an individual who was trusted and believed.