

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Henry 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, Henry, 1932-2009
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry Lucas,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 1, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:15:10).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Dentist Dr. Henry Lucas (1932 - 2009 ) served as a dentist in the U.S. Air Force before going into private practice as a dental surgeon and heading a group practice, the Sutter Place Dental Group, in San Francisco. Lucas also lectured at the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry and is a past president of the California State Board of Dental Examinations. Lucas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 1, 2005, in San Francisco, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_093
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Dr. Henry Lucas was born on February 27, 1932 in Rahway, New Jersey. Following his graduation from high school, Lucas attended Howard University and received his B.S. degree in 1957. He completed his studies in dentistry at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee in 1960 and his postgraduate studies in orthodontics at the University of the Pacific in 1972.

Serving as a dentist in the U.S. Air Force before going into private practice as a dental surgeon, Lucas started his own private practice, the Sutter Place Dental Group in San Francisco, California. Recognized as one of the Outstanding Young Men of America in 1966, he was voted one of the top ten dentists in the United States in 2004. A lecturer at the University of the California School of Dentistry and a past president of the California State Board of Dental Examinations, Lucas is also a Fellow of the American Academy of General Dentistry and a member of the American Cosmetic Dentistry. His other professional affiliations include The American Society of Dentistry for Children and the California Dental Health Advisory Committee.

An active Republican, in 1981, President Reagan appointed Lucas to the President's Commission on (Iran) Hostage Compensation. President Reagan later appointed him to the President's Private Sector Initiative Task Force and the Department of Transportation Committee. Also a member of the Minority Business Resource Center, the Foundation for the Advancement of Minority Enterprise (FAME) and the Martin Luther King Commission for the State of California, Lucas founded and serves on the board of directors for the Time Savings and Loan Association. In 1997, he endowed the Henry Lucas, DDS Scholarship Fund at Meharry Medical College to assist promising dental students.

Lucas passed away on June 1, 2009 at the age of 77.

Lucas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 1, 2005.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Henry Lucas was conducted by Loretta Henry on April 1, 2005, in San Francisco, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Dentist Dr. Henry Lucas (1932 - 2009 ) served as a dentist in the U.S. Air Force before going into private practice as a dental surgeon and heading a group practice, the Sutter Place Dental Group, in San Francisco. Lucas also lectured at the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry and is a past president of the California State Board of Dental Examinations.

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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, Henry, 1932-2009

Henry, Loretta (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Lucas, Henry, 1932-2009--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:

Dentist

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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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 Dr. Henry Lucas, April 1, 2005. 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 Dr. Henry Lucas, Section A2005\_093\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Dr. Henry Lucas was born on February 27, 1932 in Rahway, New Jersey to Margaret Williams Lucas and Henry Lucas, Sr. His paternal great-grandmother was descended from the Geechee people of the Sea Islands, Georgia. His mother was born in Jacksonville, Florida and his father was born in Savannah. They

each moved to New Jersey as children. Lucas was largely raised by his paternal grandmother, Sarah Lucas, whom he describes as loving, but a strict disciplinarian. He remembers running away to her house as a child, canning foods from her garden and enjoying the smells of her cooking. Lucas recalls influential teachers at Grover Cleveland Elementary School and Rahway High School. From the age of nine, Lucas worked at Mark Harris Department Store. Mark Harris, his boss, saved part of Lucas' paycheck to later pay for Lucas' college expenses. At Howard University in Washington, D.C., Lucas encountered lighter-skinned students who shunned him for his darker skin and first learned black history.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry Lucas, Section A2005\_093\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:59 ?

Dr. Henry Lucas attended the majority-white Rahway High School. Although he wanted to play sports, his grandmother told him to focus on school instead. He decided to pursue a career in dentistry after accompanying his mother to her job cleaning a dentist's office. At Howard University, he first encountered black history and his study of the subject inspired him to excel in his life. Lucas experienced prejudice while attempting to join the Greek system at Howard, but eventually became president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. He remembers his fraternity brother HistoryMaker Andrew Young. Lucas attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee for its rigorous academic program. He recounts wearing a tie to class to boost his confidence. During the Korean War Lucas trained for four months with the U.S. Air Force then returned to Meharry. After graduating in 1960, he was stationed at Chanute Air Force Base in Champaign County, Illinois. He later moved to California to work at the Martinez Outpatient Clinic.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry Lucas, Section A2005\_093\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Dr. Henry Lucas joined the Republican Party after President Dwight Eisenhower desegregated Washington, D.C. In San Francisco, California, Lucas joined HistoryMaker Dr. Daniel A. Collins' dental practice and became a partner within a few months. After eight years, he left to study orthognathic surgery at the University of the Pacific. Lucas served on President Richard Nixon's committee for black capitalism alongside presidential aide Robert J. Brown. The program created legislation to help African American businessmen get government contracts. Lucas remembers being questioned about his contributions to Nixon's campaign during the Watergate scandal. On the way to the Republican National Committee, Lucas was severely injured in a car accident. He describes his recovery from the accident, his use of alternative medicines to reduce his reliance on painkillers and beginning a new dental practice afterwards. Lucas joined the board of Meharry Medical College at the behest of Dr. Collins.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry Lucas, Section A2005\_093\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:41 ?

Dr. Henry Lucas served on the President's Commission on Hostage Compensation in 1981 in the wake of the Iran Hostage Crisis. He shares his memories of President Ronald Reagan and their conversations on race. While Lucas was serving on the board of Meharry Medical College, the school was in danger of closing. However, Lucas called upon Reagan, who was able to help secure funding for the school to pay off its debts and renovate parts of its campus. Lucas was also a member of the Health Professions Education Foundation, the National Health Service Corps and Plan of Action for Challenging Times (PACT). He presents his case for reparations for the descendants of slavery, and his critiques of the American welfare system. Lucas talks about his three children and his passion for skiing.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry Lucas, Section A2005\_093\_001\_005, TRT: 0:16:30 ?

Dr. Henry Lucas laments the diminishing focus on education and argues that forced integration was harmful to the African American community. He hopes to see the United States level the playing field for people of all races, and voices his concerns for the African American community. Lucas believes that everyone's life has a purpose and has no regrets from his experience. He describes his four grandchildren and his hope that they will embrace his value for self-discipline. Lucas concludes by describing how he would like to be remembered and reflecting upon the importance of history.