

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Christopher R. Reed

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Reed, Christopher Robert
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Reed,
Dates:	December 17, 2009
Bulk Dates:	2009
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:01:57).
Abstract:	History professor Christopher R. Reed (1942 -) was a professor of history at Roosevelt University. Reed's books include 'The Chicago NAACP and The Rise of Black Professional Leadership'; 'All the World is Here!: the Black presence in the White City'; 'Black Chicago's First Century: 1833 – 1900' and 'History of the Chicago Urban League.' Reed was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 17, 2009, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2009_149
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Historical scholar, Christopher Robert Reed was born on January 11, 1942 in Chicago, Illinois to Robert and Josephine Reed. Reed's maternal great grandfather served in the 116th Infantry of the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War and took part in the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House in 1865. Growing up in East Garfield Park on Chicago's West Side, Reed attended John Marshall Elementary School and graduated from John Marshall High School in 1959. Starting at Crane Junior College, Reed earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in history from Roosevelt University in 1963 and 1968 respectively. While attending Roosevelt University, he met future colleagues John Bracey (professor of history at University of Massachusetts) and Juliet E. K. Walker (founder of the Center for Black Business History). The Roosevelt faculty included Charles V. Hamilton, August Meier, St. Clair Drake and Lorenzo Dow Turner. At Roosevelt, Reed was also a member of the Negro History Club. From 1971 to 1980, he served as assistant professor of history at Northern Illinois University, and from 1980 to 1982, he served as Dean of Arts and Sciences at Malcolm X College (formerly Crane Community College). In 1982, Reed garnered his Ph.D. from Kent State University in Kent, Ohio.

From 1982 to 1987, Reed served as professor of Black Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He returned to Roosevelt University as professor of history in 1987 where he taught courses on North American Slavery, the History of Blacks in Chicago (1770 – 1960) and the History of Blacks in Chicago (1960 to the present). Reed is the author of a few books including *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* in 1997; *All the World is Here!: The Black Presence at White City*, a book about African and African American participation in Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893, in 2000; wrote the introduction for *History of the Chicago Urban League* (with Arvah E. Strickland) in 2001 and *Black Chicago's First Century, Volume 1, 1833-1900* in 2005. He retired from teaching in 2009.

Reed is often called upon as an expert on Chicago history and the history of black Chicago. He is a member of the

East Garfield Park Coalition, the West of Western Housing Alliance, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boys and Girls Club and was a member of the West Side Coalition for Unity and Political Action supporting the late Harold Washington. In 2001, at Roosevelt, he was the recipient of the St. Clair Drake Award for Outstanding Scholarship. Reed, Chicago's Black History Forum, keeps his great grandfathers' Army discharge papers in a bank vault. Reed is married and lives in the Chicago area.

Reed was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 17, 2009.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Christopher R. Reed was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 17, 2009, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. History professor Christopher R. Reed (1942 -) was a professor of history at Roosevelt University. Reed's books include 'The Chicago NAACP and The Rise of Black Professional Leadership'; 'All the World is Here!: the Black presence in the White City'; 'Black Chicago's First Century: 1833 – 1900' and 'History of the Chicago Urban League.'

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:

Reed, Christopher Robert

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Reed, Christopher Robert--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

History Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Christopher R. Reed, December 17, 2009. 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 Christopher R. Reed, Section A2009_149_001_001, TRT: 0:26:00 ?

Christopher R. Reed was born on January 11, 1942 in Chicago, Illinois to Josephine Slaughter Rhodes and Robert Reed. His maternal great-grandfather, Henry Slaughter, helped capture Confederate General Robert E. Lee during the Civil War. His maternal grandmother's family was enslaved by the Trimble family in Virginia, and later settled in Hillsboro, Ohio. Reed's mother was raised there with her twin brother until the start of World War I, when they were sent to live with relatives in Chicago, Illinois. Reed's father was born in Sherrill, Arkansas, and spent part of his childhood in Little Rock, Arkansas. At ten years old, he moved to East St. Louis, Illinois, where several of his older siblings lived. The city offered many employment opportunities; and, during the Great Depression, Reed's father joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and worked as an apprentice to a doctor. He became a barber after moving to Chicago, Illinois, where he met Reed's mother and successfully opened three barber shops.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Reed, Section A2009_149_001_002, TRT: 0:27:00 ?

Christopher R. Reed was raised by his parents, Robert Reed and Josephine Slaughter Rhodes, in Chicago, Illinois, and lived in a spacious home on South Parkway with his two older siblings from his mother's first marriage. His father opened a barbershop on the South Side, where Reed's parents were active in the community. His mother played piano at Congressman William Dawson's political meetings, which were hosted at the Reeds' home; and his father once met boxer Joe Louis, who was training in Washington Park. Due to the overcrowding on the South Side, Reed's family moved in the mid-1940s to East Garfield Park. His parents divorced in 1948, and Reed stayed with his mother on the West Side. He was one of the few African Americans in the neighborhood, where he attended the majority-white John Marshall Elementary School and Marshall High School. Reed and his friends enjoyed R and B and jazz music, and frequented the Midwest Boys Club, which opened in East Garfield Park during his childhood.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Reed, Section A2009_149_001_003, TRT: 0:30:56 ?

Christopher R. Reed attended John Marshall Elementary School and Marshall High School in Chicago, Illinois. A strong student, he was encouraged academically by his peers as well as the faculty, which included both white and African American teachers, many of whom held master's degrees. Reed excelled in English, and aspired to become a lawyer. Although the majority-white schools did not participate in Negro History Week, Reed learned about African and African American history by reading Jet and Ebony magazines and listening to his father's customers at Reed's Barbershop. Reed was also influenced by historian Lerone Bennett's 'Before the Mayflower' and Joel Augustus Rogers' 'From "Superman" to Man.' At this point in the interview, Reed talks about the history of Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, an African American trader who was considered to be the first resident of Chicago. He shares his research on du Sable, and talks about the lack of knowledge about du Sable among contemporary residents of Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Reed, Section A2009_149_001_004, TRT: 0:35:50 ?

Christopher R. Reed spent his teenage years in the East Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois, where his block club protested against

racially restrictive housing covenants. Upon graduating from Marshall High School in 1960, Reed briefly attended Crane Junior College and worked at the U.S. Social Security Administration, before transferring to Roosevelt University. There, he studied under noted academics like St. Clair Drake, Lorenzo Dow Turner, Charles V. Hamilton and August Meier. His peers included future historians Darlene Clark Hine, Juliet E.K. Walker and John H. Bracey, Jr., with whom Reed cofounded the college's Negro History Club. After graduating, Reed remained active in the community of East Garfield Park. He joined the Midwest Community Council under the leadership of Nancy Jefferson, as well as the Westside Coalition for Unity and Political Action, which helped elect Chicago Mayor Harold Washington. Reed also talks about Chicago's black historical archives, including The HistoryMakers.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Reed, Section A2009_149_001_005, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Christopher R. Reed studied American history at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1963 and a master's degree in 1968. The following year, he enrolled in a Ph.D. degree program at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. There, he studied under August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, and wrote a dissertation on black politics in Chicago during the Great Depression. After graduating in 1982, Reed taught for nine years at Northern Illinois University, and then joined the faculty of the University of Illinois at Chicago. He remained involved in local politics, and was active with the Westside Coalition for Unity and Political Action. In 1987, Reed returned to his alma mater, Roosevelt University, as a professor of history. He published numerous books, including 'All the World is Here!: The Black Presence at White City' about the role of African Americans in the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. He reflects upon his scholarly work, and the importance of history.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Reed, Section A2009_149_001_006, TRT: 0:33:31 ?

Christopher R. Reed describes his research on the African American business community in Chicago, Illinois. At the time of the interview, Reed planned to publish his findings in a book titled 'The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis 1920-1929.' Reed shares his hopes for the impact of his scholarship, and reflects upon his life and legacy. He also describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and how he would like to be remembered. Reed concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.