

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with James Paschal

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Paschal, James, 1920-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with James Paschal,
Dates:	March 28, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:25:50).
Abstract:	Food service entrepreneur and restaurateur James Paschal (1920 - 2008) owned Paschal's Restaurant, an important Atlanta, Georgia, meeting place during the Civil Rights Movement. Paschal was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 28, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_117
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Legendary Atlanta restaurateur James Paschal was born on October 8, 1920, in McDuffie County, Georgia, to Henry and Lizzie Paschal. Paschal started his first business, a shoeshine stand, at the age of thirteen, and at fifteen, he opened his first store; Paschal's mother ran the business while he attended school during the day. The grocery store was such a success that the owners from whom Paschal rented the property reclaimed it, at which time he relocated the business and expanded it to include a meat market and entertainment center with a juke box. The new store was called James' Place; it remained successful and stayed open for four years until he was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1941, the same year he graduated from McDuffie Training School.

In 1947, Paschal and his brother, Robert, opened a sandwich shop in Atlanta, Georgia, selling only sandwiches and sodas. The sandwich shop was so successful that they moved to a larger location on Martin Luther King Drive. In 1957, the Paschal Brothers opened Paschal's Restaurant; the new facility included a full service restaurant, banquet rooms, a 120 room hotel, and a jazz club called La Carousel Lounge. Paschal's Restaurant served as an important meeting place during the Civil Rights Movement; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his associates would hold strategy meetings there and families would reunite with relatives who had been arrested in protest marches. The Paschal Brothers also posted the bond for many of the protestors.

In 1978, the Paschals joined Dobbs House, Inc. in a joint venture to create Dobbs-Paschal Midfield Corporation; this food service company won the bid for a fifteen year contract at Atlanta Hartsfield Airport in 1980. After the contracted expired, the Paschals continued to provide food service at the airport, partnering with Concessions International, which was owned by Herman J. Russell.

In 1996, they sold the restaurant and hotel to Clark Atlanta University. In 2002, Paschal and Herman J. Russell opened a new Paschal's Restaurant in the Castleberry Hills area of Atlanta, near the Georgia Dome. Paschal was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for Business; he was also inducted into the Atlanta Hospitality and

Tourism Hall of Fame. Paschal's story, as told to Mae A. Kendall, was presented in the autobiography *Serving Up Hope and Freedom*. Paschal passed away on November 28, 2008 at the age of 88.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with James Paschal was conducted by Denise Gines on March 28, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Food service entrepreneur and restaurateur James Paschal (1920 - 2008) owned Paschal's Restaurant, an important Atlanta, Georgia, meeting place during the Civil Rights Movement.

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:

Paschal, James, 1920-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Paschal, James, 1920- --Interviews

African American businesspeople--Interviews

Restaurateurs--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Food Service Entrepreneur

Restaurateur

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 James Paschal, March 28, 2007. 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 James Paschal, Section A2007_117_001_001, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

James Paschal was born on October 8, 1920 in McDuffie County, Georgia to Lizzie Demmons Paschal and Henry Paschal. His paternal grandfather came to the United States from France after slavery ended. Paschal's parents began as cotton sharecroppers in rural McDuffie County. When Paschal was ten years old, his family moved to Thomson, Georgia, where he worked as a bellman at the Knox Hotel, delivered the Augusta Chronicle and sold cosmetics. Entrepreneurial from an early age, Paschal opened a store across from the McDuffie County Training School, where he was a student, at fourteen years old. After the building's white owners ended his lease, Paschal convinced a local businessman to build him a new store, James' Place, which sold groceries and sandwiches, and also had a jukebox and dance floor. When Paschal was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1941, he sold James' Place to his school principal. Then, after being discharged due to an injury, he joined his brother, Robert Paschal, in Atlanta, Georgia.

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

Restaurateurs--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with James Paschal, Section A2007_117_001_002, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

James Paschal was injured during basic training at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma; and was discharged from the U.S. military. He then joined his brother, Robert Paschal, in Atlanta, Georgia. There, Paschal became a porter and later an instructor for the Pullman Company, where he remained until the end of World War II. In 1947, Paschal and his brother opened Paschal's Restaurant in Atlanta. The restaurant's first location lacked a kitchen, so the brothers prepared food at home and brought it to the restaurant by taxi, until expanding in 1949. At the new Paschal's Restaurant, the brothers widened their menu, adding their specialty, fried chicken. The restaurant continuing expanding with the opening of La Carrousel Lounge in the restaurant's lower level; and, in 1967, Paschal's Motor Hotel. During the 1960s, Paschal's Restaurant served as a headquarters for Atlanta's Civil Rights Movement. The restaurant was also frequented by university students, and broke segregation laws by serving and employing whites.

Video Oral History Interview with James Paschal, Section A2007_117_001_003, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

James Paschal's company, Paschal's Concessions, Inc., partnered with Dobbs House, Inc. to form the Dobbs-Paschal Midfield Corporation. Under Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, Paschal's joint venture won a fifteen year contract at the William B. Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, where the corporation rented space to other food vendors. When the contract expired, Paschal continued to operate at the airport under another partnership, Concessions/Paschal's, J.V. Paschal was involved with numerous hospitality organizations, including the Georgia Restaurant Association; and was inducted into the Atlanta Hospitality Hall of Fame. In 1996, he sold Paschal's Motor Hotel and Restaurant to Clark Atlanta University, due to his brother's deteriorating health. Paschal built a new Paschal's Restaurant in 2002, in partnership with construction executive Herman Russell, with whom he had served on the board of the Citizens Trust Bank. Paschal also reflects upon his life, and how he would like to be remembered.