

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

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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>	Cook, Henry L.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry L. Cook,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 16, 2002
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2002
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:52:35).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Civil rights activist and dentist Dr. Henry L. Cook (1939 - ) is 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.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2002_015
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## 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 Marie 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.

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## 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 Betacam SP videocassettes. Civil rights activist and dentist Dr. Henry

L. Cook (1939 - ) is 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.

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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:

Cook, Henry L.

Adams, Samuel (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cook, Henry L.--Interviews

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African American dentists--Interviews.

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African American civil rights workers--Interviews.

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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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 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 2/5/2013 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, March 16, 2002

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Henry L. Cook, Section A2002\_015\_001\_001, TRT:  
0:30:15 2002/03/16

Henry Lee Cook discusses his family history, his youth, and his education. Both of Cook's parents died when he was young. As the youngest child, he moved from Macon, Georgia, to his grandparents' house in Byron, Georgia, where he learned responsibility. His integrity combined with his love for reading and learning helped him excel in school which allowed him to pursue high school and even college when most people in his town were never able to get beyond seventh grade. Cook had to move away to Fort Valley for high school and then

to Alabama to attend Tuskegee University for college. By the time Cook made it to Tuskegee, he was an avid reader, a responsible worker and majored in mechanical engineering. Influences in his life outside of his family include his six siblings, Elizabeth Richmond, James Gibson, and Wilber Taliaferro Thompson.

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 2002/03/16

Henry Cook discusses his mentorship with Robert Church in high school, his experience at Tuskegee University, and life in the Air Force. Cook discusses his difficult first year at Tuskegee, the effects of his grandparents' deaths on him in college, and course changes that led him first to consider medical school before joining ROTC. Upon being the first in his community to graduate from college, Cook enlisted with the Air Force and was stationed in France for his military career. Cook decided to leave the military when the Vietnam War began which led him to Meharry Medical College. Cook also briefly discusses how the Jim Crow laws of the south affected him.

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 2002/03/16

Henry Cook mentions his marriage before discussing his experiences at Meharry Medical College and then in his own dental practice in Columbus, Georgia. Cook mentions how he chose dentistry and how he was able to develop relationships with other black professionals through organizations such as the National Dental Association, the National Medical Association, and the Georgia Dental Society. Although Cook wanted to move to Atlanta, he found an opportunity to pick up a dental practice in Columbus, Georgia, where he has excelled for over thirty years. Within five years, he had his own building and now he practices there with his son, Henry L. Cook, II. His daughter, Cathy L. Cook, is a dentist in the military. Cook discusses the increase in black professionals and the improvement in African Americans seeking medical treatment. Cook suggests mentoring programs to encourage black youth to pursue the sciences.

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 2002/03/16

Henry Cook discusses the importance of Meharry Medical College to black dentists and underserved populations. Cook discusses his goal of helping his family and the community since he was helped with his education. He describes the influence of his grandmother and that he wishes his legacy to be that he helped anyone and everyone.

Meharry Medical College.

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