

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with William Foster

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Foster, William P. (William Patrick)
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with William Foster,
Dates:	April 20, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:32:12).
Abstract:	Academic administrator and band director William Foster (1919 - 2010) was chairman of the Music Department and director of bands at Florida A&M University. Foster is founder of "Marching 100". Foster is credited with revolutionizing marching band techniques and reshaping the world's concept of marching bands. Under Foster's direction the FAMU band developed over 200 half-time pageants; and have appeared in three films, three commercials, numerous magazine articles and thirty-four nationally televised network performances. Foster was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 20, 2002, in Tallahassee, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_054
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Dr. William Patrick Foster, chairman of the Music Department and director of bands, emeritus at Florida A&M University, was born on August 25, 1925, in Kansas City-Wyandotte, Kansas. Known by his students and colleagues as "The Law" and "Dr. Maestro," Foster was the son of a railway mail clerk. At the age of twelve, Foster first learned to play the clarinet. At Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas, Foster showed talent in playing the clarinet and was appointed student director of the Sumner High School Orchestra. In 1936, at age seventeen, he was director of an all city Kansas City, Kansas, band.

Foster was one of three commencement speakers when he graduated from Sumner High School in 1937. He received a B. A. degree in music education from the University of Kansas in 1941 and a master's degree from Detroit's Wayne State University in 1950. Foster earned a Ed.D. in education with a major in music from Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City in 1955. He taught at Lincoln University, Fort Valley State University and Tuskegee Institute, before coming to Florida A&M University (FAMU) in 1946.

Foster created the internationally famous 329 piece Marching "100" Band and developed over 200 half-time pageants; they have appeared in three films, three commercials, numerous magazine articles and thirty-four nationally televised network performances. The FAMU Marching Band was presented with the prestigious Sudler Intercollegiate Marching Band Trophy on October 26, 1984. In 1989, the French chose Foster as America's official representative in the Bastille Day Parade, celebrating the Bicentennial of the French Revolution. The band also appeared in the Fifteenth and the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary national telecasts from Walt Disney World in 1986 and 1996. Foster is credited with revolutionizing marching band techniques and reshaping the world's concept of

marching bands.

A scholar, Foster has written eighteen articles for professional journals and has received numerous awards and citations for excellence. In 1998, he was elected to the National Band Association Hall of Fame. Often imitated, Dr. William Foster is considered the dean of America's band directors.

Foster passed away on August 28, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with William Foster was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on April 20, 2002, in Tallahassee, Florida, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator and band director William Foster (1919 - 2010) was chairman of the Music Department and director of bands at Florida A&M University. Foster is founder of "Marching 100". Foster is credited with revolutionizing marching band techniques and reshaping the world's concept of marching bands. Under Foster's direction the FAMU band developed over 200 half-time pageants; and have appeared in three films, three commercials, numerous magazine articles and thirty-four nationally televised network performances.

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:

Foster, William P. (William Patrick)

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Foster, William P. (William Patrick)--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Occupations:

Band Director

HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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 William Foster, April 20, 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 William Foster, Section A2002_054_001_001, TRT: 0:29:43 ?
William P.Foster remembers his parents and talks about their backgrounds and upbringings. He then lists his siblings before talking about the influence of his step-grandfather. Foster recalls his earliest memories and the hard times he faced during his upbringing and then briefly describes his personality as a child. He discusses his grandfather's personality and some of the experiences they shared together. Foster describes his memories of his childhood neighborhood. Next, he explains his early interest and experiences in music as he talks about learning to play the clarinet.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Foster, Section A2002_054_001_002, TRT: 0:29:00 ?
William P.Foster describes his time at high school in Kansas City, explaining how he first became interested in becoming a band director. He then discusses his time at the University of Kansas, where he received a good education, but perhaps more importantly, became motivated to establish a black band that would rival any white band in the country. Foster then discusses his first teaching jobs at the university level, eventually moving to Florida A&M, which had the necessary financial resources for him to fulfill his vision.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Foster, Section A2002_054_001_003, TRT: 0:31:15 ?
Dr. William P.Foster, for over half a century the director of the famous "Marching 100" of Florida A & M University, recalls his early years at FAMU, building the music program and introducing innovative techniques for marching band performance. From the benefit of his long experience, he assesses the most important factors in choreography and music selection.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Foster, Section A2002_054_001_004, TRT: 0:31:14 ?
William P.Foster discusses his career as the director of the Florida A&M marching band, the Marching 100. Foster details the band's national exposure and rise to prominence, as well as explaining the logistics and organization required to direct the band and detailing the rehearsal process.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Foster, Section A2002_054_001_005, TRT: 0:31:00 ?
Dr. William P. Foster, director for over fifty years of the famous Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Marching 100, reflects on his long career and his ideas about creating a successful band and inspiring young people. He discusses his groundbreaking book 'Band Pageantry' and shows photos depicting his life and career.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Foster, Section A2002_054_Foster_William_06_MED_001, TRT: 1:05:29
- Video Oral History Interview with William Foster, Section A2002_054_Foster_William_06_MED_002, TRT: 0:28:17
- Video Oral History Interview with William Foster, Section A2002_054_Foster_William_06_MED_003, TRT: 0:48:04