

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paul Cooke

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Cooke, Paul P. |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paul Cooke, |
| Dates: | March 1, 2004 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2004 |
| Physical Description: | 4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:49:08). |
| Abstract: | College president Paul Cooke (1917 - 2010) was a former president of the District of Columbia Teachers College, a position he held from 1966 to 1974. Cooke was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 1, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2004_009 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

College president Dr. Paul Phillips Cooke was born on June 29, 1917 in New York City to Mamie Kathleen Phillips and Louis Philips Cooke, Sr. Cooke attended Garrison Elementary School and Garnet-Patterson Junior High School, both in Washington, D.C. He earned a diploma from Dunbar High School where he played on the baseball team and was a member of the Cadet Corps. During his senior year in 1933, his company was asked to perform at a wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

From 1933 to 1937, Cooke attended Miner Teachers College in Washington, D.C. where he earned his B.S. degree. He continued his studies at New York University where he earned his M.A. degree in education. In 1943, Cooke earned another M.A. degree in English from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and completed his studies with an Ed.D. degree from Columbia University in 1947. While attending Columbia, Cooke was drafted and served in the U.S. Army between 1945 and 1946, after which he was honorably discharged with the rank of corporal. In 1951, Cooke worked to assist Washington D.C. area African American deaf children who were being sent out of the city for their education while white deaf students from the city were being taught at Kendall School. Cooke worked as a professor at the District of Columbia Teachers College for twenty-two years until 1966 when he was appointed president of the college and served in that post until 1974. In 1978, Cooke worked as a consultant for the World Peace Through Law Center, an organization that advocates for poor and disadvantaged people.

Cooke was a member of the World Veterans Federation, the American Veteran's Committee and served as an officer for the Catholic Interracial Council of Washington, D.C. In 1983, Paul Phillips Cooke Day was declared in Washington, D.C. by former Mayor Marion Barry and in 1986, the University of the District of Columbia awarded him with an honorary degree and also gave him the U.D.C. Legacy Award in 2004. The university also established the Paul Phillips Cooke Lecture Series and the Paul Phillips Cooke Scholarship Program. Cooke was also active in his fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi, Inc., which awarded him the Laurel Wreath in 1995.

Cooke passed away on July 4, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paul Cooke was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on March 1, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. College president Paul Cooke (1917 - 2010) was a former president of the District of Columbia Teachers College, a position he held from 1966 to 1974.

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:

Cooke, Paul P.

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cooke, Paul P.--Interviews

African American college presidents--Washington (D.C.)--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

District of Columbia Teachers College

Occupations:

College President

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 Paul Cooke, March 1, 2004. 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 Paul Cooke, Section A2004_009_001_001, TRT: 0:27:44 ?

Paul Cooke was born on June 29, 1917 in New York, New York. His mother Mamie Philipps Cooke was born 1883 and grew up in Washington, D.C. where she attended M Street High School and Howard University. While his maternal grandfather was born into slavery in South Carolina, his paternal grandfather Francis Rudolph Cooke was not; rather, he was an effective grocer whose stalls were eventually demolished and replaced by the National Archives and Records Administration. Cooke's father, Louis Cooke, was a first class machinist in the U.S. Navy during World War I. Cooke describes his earliest memories in Washington, D.C. where he and his brother grew up, near the YMCA, U Street, and segregated theaters, such as the Lincoln, Circle and Republic theaters. He also describes his experiences as a student at Garrison Elementary School, Garnet-Patterson Junior High School, and Dunbar High School in the late 1920s and early 1930s, including influential teachers and former classmates.

African American children--New York (State)--New York.

African American families--Washington (D.C.).

African American Catholics--Washington (D.C.).

St. Augustine Catholic Church (Washington, D.C.).

African American students--Education (Secondary)--Washington (D.C.).

Dunbar High School (Washington, D.C.)--Students.

High school athletes--Washington (D.C.).

Scurlock, Addison N., 1883-1964.

African American photographers--Washington (D.C.).

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Cooke, Section A2004_009_001_002, TRT: 0:29:39 ?

Paul Cooke talks about his experiences at Dunbar High School and Miner Teachers College in Washington, D.C. In high school, as part of the Drill Cadet Corps, he participated in a wreath laying ceremony at Arlington Cemetery in D.C. for notable soldiers who passed during World War I. Around that time, in 1934, Cooke traveled to the World's Fair in Chicago, Illinois with his brother Louis Philip Cooke, Jr. He received a M.S. degree in education from New York University in 1941, an M.A. degree in English from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. in 1943, and a Ed.D. degree in education from Columbia University in New York in 1947. Between schooling, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and temporarily stationed in Texas before being honorably discharged in 1946. Cooke talks about his family and recounts his experiences as President of the District of Columbia Teachers College during campus demonstrations after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, and the Vietnam War.

Dunbar High School (Washington, D.C.)--Students.

Depressions--1929.

African Americans--Education (Higher)--New York (State)--New York.

African Americans--Education (Higher)--Washington (D.C.).

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, African American.

African American families--Washington (D.C.).

African American college presidents--Washington (D.C.).

District of Columbia Teachers College--Presidents.

Miner Teachers College--Students.

New York University--Students.

Catholic University of America--Students.

Columbia University--Students.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Cooke, Section A2004_009_001_003, TRT: 0:29:02 ?

Paul Cooke describes his involvement in instances of civil obedience during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Most notably, he recalls desegregation activities at Washington D.C.'s National Theater, as well as the renowned 1952 court case, *Miller v. Board of Education of District of Columbia* whereby deaf black children were sent to Baltimore, Maryland for specialized education while deaf white children were able to attend schools within Washington, D.C. Cooke describes his and the American Veterans Committee's involvement in both the *Miller* and the "Thompson restaurant case." Both cases ultimately limited racial exclusion in Washington, D.C. in the 1950s. He addresses Washington, D.C.'s 1968 race riots, specifically the impact of the fire for his family and the city. Cooke also talks about his work with World Peace Through Law and at Beacon College in Washington, D.C. He reflects upon his accomplishments and legacy. Civil rights movements--Washington (D.C).

African Americans--Civil rights--Washington (D.C.).

National Theatre (Washington, D.C.).

Segregation in education.

American Veterans Committee.

African American college presidents--Washington (D.C.).

District of Columbia Teachers College--Presidents.

Riots--Washington (D.C.).

World Peace Through Law Center.

African Americans--Conduct of life.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Cooke, Section A2004_009_001_004, TRT: 0:22:43 ?

Paul Cooke narrates his photographs.