

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Roland C. McConnell

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McConnell, Roland, C. (Roland Calhoun), 1910-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Roland C. McConnell,
Dates:	June 10, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:13:00).
Abstract:	Historian Roland C. McConnell (1910 - 2007) is Professor Emeritus at Morgan State University. McConnell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 10, 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_070
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Professor of history and author Roland C. McConnell was born in Amherst, Nova Scotia, Canada on March 10, 1910. His parents, A.M.E. Reverend Thomas Benjamin McConnell of Kingstree, South Carolina, and Helen Viola Halfkenny McConnell met in Canada. McConnell attended Riverside School in Elkin, West Virginia and Garnet-Patterson Middle School in Washington. McConnell graduated from Dunbar High School in 1927, where he was a classmate of historian Sadie I. Daniels and Dr. Robert C. Weaver. McConnell earned his A.B. degree in 1931 and his M.A. degree in 1933 from Howard University, where Charles Wesley introduced him to Carter G. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now ASALH).

After graduating, McConnell taught at Elizabeth State Teachers College before joining the United States Army in 1942. In 1943, McConnell served as visiting lecturer at Howard University and archivist at the National Archives. Under the tutelage of Dr. Ralph Betts Flanders, McConnell was awarded his Ph.D. from New York University in 1945.

Arriving at Morgan State University in 1948, McConnell became chairman of the Division of Social Science from 1953 to 1955, chairman of the Department of History from 1967 to 1975 and Professor Emeritus in 1981 and Carter G. Woodson Scholar in Residence. McConnell taught history in a department with Dr. Benjamin Quarles and contributed articles to *The Journal of Negro History*, *The North Carolina Historical Review*, *The Maryland Pendulum*, and the *Afro-American* and *Baltimore Sun* newspapers. His book, *Negro Troops of Antebellum Louisiana*, *A History of the Battalion of Men of Color* is still widely referenced.

In addition to his writings and teaching, McConnell served as chair of the Maryland Commission on Afro-American History and Culture from 1972 to 1984 and was the recipient of the Meritorious Plaque from the State of Maryland and Morgan State University. He was presented with a trophy from ASALH's *Journal of Negro History* and ASALH's Mary McLeod Bethune Service Award. With his late wife, Catherine Taylor McConnell, he was guest editor for the spring and summer 1991 edition of the *Journal of the Afro-American Genealogical Society*.

McConnell's latest work is an illustrated history of his beloved Morgan Park neighborhood in Baltimore.

McConnell passed away on May 1, 2007 at the age of 97.

McConnell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 10, 2004.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Roland C. McConnell was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 10, 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Historian Roland C. McConnell (1910 - 2007) is Professor Emeritus at Morgan State University.

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:

McConnell, Roland, C. (Roland Calhoun), 1910-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

McConnell, Roland, C. (Roland Calhoun), 1910---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 Roland C. McConnell, June 10, 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 Roland C. McConnell, Section A2004_070_001_001, TRT: 0:29:41 ?

Roland C. McConnell was born on March 10, 1910 in Nova Scotia, Canada. His

mother, Helen Halfkenny McConnell, was born in the 1890s in Nova Scotia; she attended vocational school and was interested in playing music. McConnell's maternal grandmother opened her home to indigenous Canadians for meals. His father, Thomas McConnell, was born around 1865 in Kingstree, South Carolina. He attended Morris Brown College and Wilberforce University before becoming an A.M.E. minister. He met McConnell's mother while serving as a minister to the church where she worked as clerk in Nova Scotia. The pair married and after several years, moved the family to the U.S. where the elder McConnell's ministry took them to Ohio, New York, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. McConnell attended Riverside School in Elkins, West Virginia, and Garnet-Patterson School and Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in D.C. He was interested in history as a child and was tutored in math. McConnell describes his favorite teachers and his two brothers.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland C. McConnell, Section A2004_070_001_002, TRT: 0:29:27 ?

Roland C. McConnell graduated from Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. in 1927. He describes his principal and teachers, including a woman who was a Latin scholar and helped found Frelinghuysen University in D.C. McConnell was a contemporary of Robert C. Weaver, who went on to serve as secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. At Dunbar, McConnell participated in Cadets Corps. He attended Howard University where he studied history under William Leo Hansberry, was introduced to Carter G. Woodson by Charles H. Wesley, and had an active social life. McConnell earned his B.A. degree in 1931, and remained at Howard to earn his M.A. degree in history in 1933. He wrote his M.A. thesis on the reopening of the African slave trade in the U.S.A. McConnell earned his Ph.D. from New York University and taught in North Carolina before being drafted by the U.S. Army. He did not serve in combat due to poor eyesight; instead, he worked in the National Archives in D.C.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland C. McConnell, Section A2004_070_001_003, TRT: 0:29:13 ?

Roland C. McConnell received a grant from North Carolina to work on his Ph.D. degree in history, which he earned from New York University in 1945. There, he studied under Dr. Ralph Betts Flanders and worked with a number of Jewish historians of African American history. He wrote his dissertation on the Negro in North Carolina from 1900 to 1940. McConnell went on to work in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. for three years. In 1948, after being invited onto the faculty three times, he accepted a position at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, where he taught until his retirement. Amongst McConnell's colleagues at Morgan State were Benjamin Quarles, HistoryMaker The Honorable Sandye Jean McIntyre, II and Barbara Gill. McConnell has written articles on African Americans in colonial Florida and Maryland; the Corps d'Afrique, African American soldiers from Louisiana who fought in the Civil War; and, Isaiah Dorman, an African American scout for George Armstrong Custer.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland C. McConnell, Section A2004_070_001_004, TRT: 0:30:18 ?

Roland C. McConnell wrote a book about the history of Morgan Park, the neighborhood where he lived in Baltimore, Maryland near Morgan State University. Morgan State's last white president, John Oakley Spencer, was responsible for moving the school from downtown Baltimore to its present location and the surrounding land was acquired and developed into Morgan

Park. McConnell talks about the history of the neighborhood and notable people who have lived there, including HistoryMaker Richard I. McKinney and the Murphy family, who owned the Afro American newspaper. McConnell describes the Murphy's house and the significance of the family in developing the Afro American. McConnell takes pride in his students and talks about his favorite historical figures and periods, which are the Civil War and Reconstruction. He describes his hopes for history scholars and the African American community. McConnell concludes by reflecting upon his legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland C. McConnell, Section A2004_070_001_005, TRT: 0:14:21 ?

Roland C. McConnell narrates his photographs.