

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden

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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>	Dryden, Charles W. (Charles Walter)
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 20, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:39:50).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Tuskegee airman Lt. Col. Charles Dryden (1920 - 2008 ) was named a member of the famed 99th Pursuit Squadron, and later the 332 Fighter Group, which served in the Mediterranean during World War II. Dryden led a flight of six pilots engaging enemy fighter aircrafts in aerial combat over Pantelleria, Sicily; it was the first time in aviation history that black American pilots of the U.S. Army Air Corps engaged aircrafts in combat. Dryden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 20, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_169
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Tuskegee Airman Charles W. Dryden was born on September 16, 1920, in New York City to Jamaican parents who were educators. Dryden graduated from Peter Stuyvesant High School and earned his B.A. degree in political science from Hofstra University and his M.A. degree in public law and government from Columbia University. In 1996, he was awarded an honorary degree of doctor of

humane letters by Hofstra University.

In August 1941, Dryden was selected for aviation cadet training at the Tuskegee Army Flying School in Alabama. He was commissioned on April 29, 1942 as a second lieutenant in a class of only three graduates, which was the second class of black pilots to graduate in the history of the U.S. Army Air Corps. Upon completing his training, Dryden was named a member of the famed 99th Pursuit Squadron, and later the 332 Fighter Group, which served in North Africa, Sicily and Italy during World War II. On June 9, 1943, Lt. "A-Train" (his P-40 nickname) led a flight of six pilots engaging enemy fighter aircraft in aerial combat over Pantelleria, Sicily. It was the first time in aviation history that black American pilots of the U.S. Army Air Corps engaged aircraft in combat.

Following the war, Dryden served as a professor of air science at Howard University and retired in 1962 as a command pilot with 4,000 hours flying time. A member of the board of directors of the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame, he also is a member of the Atlanta Metro Lions Club, Quality Living Services (a senior citizens' organization) and the Atlanta Chapter-Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (ACTAI), which he helped found in 1978 and which he served as president, vice president and national convention committee chairman in 1980 and 1995. He has been inducted into the Honorable Orders of the Daedalians, the Kentucky Colonels and the Palmetto Gentlemen of South Carolina. In 1998, Colonel Dryden was inducted into the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame. His autobiography was published by the University of Alabama Press in 1997 entitled *A-Train: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman*. He was designated an Outstanding Georgia Citizen by the Secretary of State in 1997.

Dryden has three sons, by a former marriage. His wife, Marymal Morgan Dryden, has three sons and a daughter, also by a former marriage. Between them they have five grandchildren. They have made Atlanta their home.

Dryden passed away on June 24, 2008 at the age of 87.

Dryden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 20, 2004.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden was conducted by Jodi Merriday on September 20, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Tuskegee airman Lt. Col. Charles Dryden (1920 - 2008 ) was named a member of the famed 99th Pursuit Squadron, and later the

332 Fighter Group, which served in the Mediterranean during World War II. Dryden led a flight of six pilots engaging enemy fighter aircrafts in aerial combat over Pantelleria, Sicily; it was the first time in aviation history that black American pilots of the U.S. Army Air Corps engaged aircrafts in combat.

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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:

Dryden, Charles W. (Charles Walter)

Merriday, Jodi (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Dryden, Charles W. (Charles Walter)--Interviews

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## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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United States. Army Air Forces. Fighter Group, 332nd.

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## **Occupations:**

Tuskegee Airman

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

MilitaryMakers

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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 Lt. Col. Charles Dryden, September 20, 2004. The HistoryMakers® African American Video

## Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden, Section A2004\_169\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:20 2004/09/20

To be reviewed.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden, Section A2004\_169\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:10 2004/09/20

To be reviewed.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden, Section A2004\_169\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:20 2004/09/20

To be reviewed.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden, Section A2004\_169\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:50 2004/09/20

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden, Section A2004\_169\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:20 2004/09/20

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Charles Dryden, Section A2004\_169\_001\_006, TRT: 0:11:50 2004/09/20

Lt. Col. Charles Dryden narrates his photographs.