Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers ® Video Oral History with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Gregg, Lucius Perry, 1933-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg,
Dates:	April 17, 2007 and April 20, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	11 Betacame SP videocasettes (5:16:14).
Abstract:	Aircraft commander Lucius Perry Gregg, Jr. (1933-2019) founded the Foundation for the Study of America's Technology Leadership in Marina Del Rey, California. Gregg was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 17, 2007 and April 20, 2007, in Marina Del Rey, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_143
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Aircraft commander Lucius Perry Gregg, Jr. was born on January 16, 1933 in Henderson, North Carolina to Rachel and Lucius Gregg, Sr. Gregg graduated from Wendell Phillips High School in Chicago, Illinois in 1950 before receiving his B.S. degree from the U.S. Naval Academy as the fourth African American to graduate from there. He later received his M.S. degree in aeronautics and astronautics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1961.

In 1955, Gregg began his service in the United States Air Force, working as a pilot from 1956 to 1959. In 1961, he became the mission commander for the VIP Squadron at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. Also during this year, Gregg started working for the United States Air Force Office of Scientific Research as a project director in space technology where he worked until 1965. He subsequently became the Northwestern University Associate Dean of Science, and was promoted to the rank of major in the U.S. Air Force. In 1969, Gregg became Northwestern's Alfred P. Sloan Fund program officer before moving to the First Chicago University Finance Corporation, assuming the role of president in 1972. In 1975, he graduated from the Advanced Management Program at Harvard University Business School; and, in 1979, he became vice president and director of National Public Affairs and vice president of governmental relations at Citibank/Citicorp. In 1985, Gregg served as vice president of public affairs for the New York Daily News before moving to Los Angeles upon being named vice president of corporate communications at the Hughes Aircraft Company/Hughes Electronics. In 1999, Gregg founded the Foundation for the Study of America's Technology Leadership in Marina Del Rey, California. The foundation seeks to understand and raise awareness of the factors that led to America's technology leadership—from the role of innovation to the assimilation of women and minorities into the technology leadership arena.

Gregg served on numerous technological and scientific boards including the Fermi (AEC) National Accelerator Laboratory, the Academic Board of the U.S. Naval Academy and the National Academy of Science Foundation Commission on Human Resources.

Gregg resided in Compton, California with his wife, Beverly.

Gregg passed away on December 28, 2019.

Lucius Perry Gregg, Jr. was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 17, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg was conducted by Paul Brock on April 17, 2007 and April 20, 2007, in Marina Del Rey, California, and was recorded on 11 Betacame SP videocasettes. Aircraft commander Lucius Perry Gregg, Jr. (1933-2019) founded the Foundation for the Study of America's Technology Leadership in Marina Del Rey, California.

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:

Gregg, Lucius Perry, 1933-

Brock, Paul (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Gregg, Lucius Perry, 1933---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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United States. Air Force.

Occupations:

Aircraft Commander

HistoryMakers® Category:

MilitaryMakers

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. Lucius P. Gregg, April 17, 2007 and April 20, 2007. 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 Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_001_001, TRT: 0:27:49 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg was born on January 16, 1933 in Henderson, North Carolina to Rachel Jackson Gregg and Lucius P. Gregg, Sr. Gregg's paternal grandfather pastored the Macedonia Baptist Church in Darlington, South Carolina, where Gregg's father was born in 1895. A graduate of the Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth in Savannah, Gregg's father went on to attend Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the University of Chicago Divinity School. Gregg's mother was born in 1900 in Columbus, Georgia, and attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. Later, his maternal grandmother moved to the South Side of Chicago, where her husband worked at the roundhouse of the Illinois Central Railroad. Gregg's mother managed a nursery school in Henderson, until the family moved to Topeka, Kansas for his father's ministerial work. They eventually relocated to Chicago, where his parents separated. His mother found work at Mrs. Snyder's Candy Shop, and Gregg joined the Baptist Young People's Union.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_001_002, TRT: 0:29:29 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg grew up on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois, where he lived with his mother and two sisters in his maternal grandmother's home on Calumet Avenue. His grandmother worked as a laundress, while his grandfather worked at the Illinois Central Railroad roundhouse. At this point in the interview, Gregg recalls his mother's discipline and high standards of behavior. Upon completing the eighth grade at Douglas Elementary School in Chicago, Gregg enrolled at Wendell Phillips High School, where he developed his interests in physics, chemistry and mathematics. He joined the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and was promoted to lieutenant colonel commander of a unit of two hundred students. He also worked as a delivery boy for the Chicago Sun-Times and Burnett Flowers, a flower shop in the Loop. Gregg compares the resources at Wendell Phillips High School with the city's all-white schools, and talks about the migration of African Americans from the South to northern cities like Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_001_003, TRT: 0:28:25 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg attended Wendell Phillips High School in Chicago, Illinois, where he participated in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps upon graduating in 1950, at the start of the Korean War; and completed his training at the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in San Diego County, California. As he was too young to be deployed to Korea, he was assigned to serve as a military police officer at the Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow in Barstow, California. In 1951, Gregg told his mother, Rachel Jackson Gregg, about a fellow officer's suggestion that he apply to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; and she secured the support of Congressman William L. Dawson, who named Gregg his principal appointee to the school. Gregg traveled by train to Newport, Rhode Island, where he passed the entrance examination, and was formally admitted to the academy. He was the sole African American among his class of 1,200 students.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_001_004, TRT: 0:30:39 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg was the only African American student in his class at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. There, he joined the

crew team, and obtained the position of stroke rower. Although he was roommates with his white teammate, Donald Martin, Gregg mostly socialized with the African American community in Annapolis, which was segregated at the time. He also recalls foregoing the 1953 Sugar Bowl, a rowing competition between the United States Naval Academy and the University of Mississippi, to visit his mother, Rachel Jackson Gregg. At this point in the interview, Gregg talks about Wesley A. Brown, the first African American graduate of the United States Naval Academy, who completed his training in the late 1940s. Gregg also describes the actions of Brown's classmate, future President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr., who intervened when a group of students attempted to have Brown expelled.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_001_005, TRT: 0:29:39 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg attended the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland during the era of segregation. Gregg mostly socialized with members of Annapolis' African American community, many of whom were employed by the academy. After his graduation in 1955, Gregg became a commissioned officer of the U.S. Air Force. He completed his training at the Malden Air Base in Missouri and Vance Air Force Base in Oklahoma, and then joined the U.S. military air command, which was the transport service for officers and their families. He also participated in the airlift for Operation Safe Haven, the refugee relocation effort in Hungary. After two years as a copilot, Gregg was promoted to first lieutenant. At the time of the interview, Gregg was a member of the United States Naval Academy's advisory board, alongside alumni like Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Jr. and Admiral Robert Carney. He talks about the academy's admissions policies, including the increase in students of color and the arrival of female students.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_002_006, TRT: 0:28:37 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg was promoted to first lieutenant of the U.S. Air Force when he was twenty-five years old. Following the launch of Sputnik 1 in 1957, he was selected for the aeronautics and astronautics program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where his classmates included Buzz Aldrin and Sheila Widnall. Upon earning a master's degree in 1959, Gregg was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Office of Aerospace Research and Office of Scientific Research in Washington, D.C., where he contributed to thirty research projects in areas like hypersonic flight and orbital mechanics. During this period, he met his wife, Doris Jefferson Gregg, who gave birth to their son, Lucius P. Gregg, III, at the Chelsea Naval Hospital in 1959. Then, in 1965, Gregg decided to leave the U.S. Air Force, and moved with his family to Evanston, Illinois, where he served on the faculty and as the associate dean of sciences at Northwestern University.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_002_007, TRT: 0:30:09 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg served as a faculty member and as the associate dean of sciences at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois from 1965 to 1969. During this period, he became a founding board member of the National Accelerator Laboratory in Illinois. He also remembers the student demonstrations at the university, which led to improved diversity practices. In 1969, Gregg joined the staff of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, a nonprofit granting institution in New York City. The organization supported science education; and, during Gregg's tenure, expanded its outreach to African

American students. In the early 1970s, Gregg accepted the vice presidency of the First National Bank of Chicago, where he was initially the sole African American executive. He directed the bank's First Chicago University Finance Corporation, which became obsolete with the creation of the SLM Corporation in 1973. Gregg moved to the public finance division, and later served as the chief of staff under CEO A. Robert Abboud.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_002_008, TRT: 0:29:19 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg was the chief of staff at the First National Bank of Chicago under CEO A. Robert Abboud. While working at the bank, Gregg integrated the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the University Club of Chicago. He served on the boards of Chicago's Roosevelt University and the National Accelerator Laboratory, and on the advisory committee for the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. He also chaired the board of visitors at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana from 1975 to 1979. Gregg completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard University, where he received training in corporate strategy development; which, from 1979, informed his work as the vice president for strategic planning at the Bristol-Myers pharmaceutical company. In 1983, Gregg became the vice president for national public affairs at Citibank, N.A., and joined a team of lobbyists that was working to overturn the interstate banking regulations established by the Glass-Steagall Act in 1933.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_002_009, TRT: 0:28:24 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg served as the vice president of national public relations at Citibank, N.A. until 1987. He was then recruited by James F. Hoge, Jr., the editor and publisher of the New York Daily News, to become the newspaper's vice president of public affairs. In this position, Gregg developed the publisher's forum, which held debates on timely issues like education and religion. In 1988, the publisher's forum hosted a debate between Democratic presidential candidates Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Michael Dukakis and Al Gore at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Gregg also talks about the history of the New York Daily News, including its accessibility to the city's immigrant population. After eighteen months with the New York Daily News, Gregg moved to Los Angeles, California; where, in 1989, he became the vice president for corporate communications at the Hughes Electronics Corporation, a radar engineering firm owned by the General Motors Corporation.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_002_010, TRT: 0:31:14 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg served as a board member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in the 1970s, and of WNET-TV from 1980 to 1988. That year, he became the vice president of corporate relations for the Hughes Electronics Corporation in Los Angeles, California. Gregg went on to serve as the speechwriter for C. Michael Alexander, who became CEO of the Hughes Electronics Corporation after leaving IBM. Gregg wrote over fifty-five of Alexander's major speeches; and also helped develop a partnership with historically black universities, where the firm's employees served as adjunct faculty to supplement the science curriculum. Gregg's first wife, Doris Jefferson Gregg, passed away in the early 1980s. Later, he met his second wife, Beverly Carmichael Gregg, at a company event near Anaheim, California. He talks about his interest in boating, and the United States' standing in science and technology research. He also recalls the riots of 1992 in Los Angeles.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg, Section A2007_143_002_011, TRT: 0:22:30 ?

Lt. Col. Lucius P. Gregg and his wife, Beverly Ward Gregg, established the Foundation for the Study of America's Technology Leadership in Marina del Rey, California. Under their leadership, the organization worked to support education in science and technology. In conjunction with the U.S. Department of Commerce, the foundation organized the Student Technology Roundtable, a conference that provided an opportunity for student leaders to share their research and achievements. Gregg reflects upon his life, and the United States' standing in science and technology research. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.