



# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Hiram Little

---

## 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>	Hiram Little
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hiram Little,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 10, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:56:10).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Post office manager and tuskegee airman Hiram Little (1919 - ) was a member of the 477th Bombardment Group. In April of 1945, Little was one of the African American enlistees who attempted to desegregate the officers' club at Freeman Field. He along with the other surviving Tuskegee Airmen received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2007. Little was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 10, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_252
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Post office manager and Tuskegee Airman Hiram Emory Little, Sr. was born on March 31, 1919 in Eatonton, Georgia. When Little was young, his family moved from the rural town of Eatonton to Atlanta, Georgia where he attended David T. Howard Elementary and Junior High Schools. While in junior high school, Little was a charter member of Troop 94, the very first Boy Scout Troop in an African American school in Atlanta.

In 1941, Little enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was trained at the Chanute Air Force Base located in Rantoul, Illinois, as an aircraft armorer in the Tuskegee Aviation Program. Little also served as a part-time instructor at the Cadet Ground School of the Tuskegee Army Air Base in Tuskegee, Alabama. Little served at the Tuskegee Army Air Base until December of 1943, when he applied for flight training. In 1944, Little graduated from bombardier school and in January of the following year, he was assigned to the 477th Bombardment Group as a crew member on a B-25 bomber. By late 1944, the 477th Bombardment Group was assigned to conduct combat training missions, but winter conditions reduced their flying time. They faced constant instances of racism from white officers.

In March of 1945, the 477th Bombardment Group was moved to Freeman Field, Indiana. Although the 477th trained with both the B-25 and the P-47 aircraft, the war ended before the 477th could be deployed overseas into combat. At Freeman Field, tension between white and black personnel increased due to strict segregationist policies. When Little, along with other black aviators, entered the whites' only officers' club, they were arrested. They had defied an illegal order issued by the commander of the 477th Bombardment Group. The commander had classified all black officers as trainees and decreed they were not allowed to use the staff officers' club. Instead,

the trainees, who had already graduated from flight school, were required to use a second former NCO club, housed in a run-down building. This event became known as the Freeman Field Mutiny.

On December 1, 1945, Little was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army Air Corps and enrolled at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia to complete his academic studies. While attending Morehouse College, Little was hired to work for the Atlanta U. S. Postal Service. In 1955, he became one of the first African American supervisors in the Atlanta area. Little worked for the U.S. post office until he retired in 1978 as a mid-level manager. In 2005, at the age of eighty, he received a certificate in carpentry from the Atlanta Technical College. Little, along with the remaining Tuskegee Airmen, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President George W. Bush in 2007.

Hiram Little was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 10, 2007.

---

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Hiram Little was conducted by Denise Gines on September 10, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. Post office manager and tuskegee airman Hiram Little (1919 - ) was a member of the 477th Bombardment Group. In April of 1945, Little was one of the African American enlistees who attempted to desegregate the officers' club at Freeman Field. He along with the other surviving Tuskegee Airmen received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2007.

---

## 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:

Little, Hiram

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Hiram Little--Interviews

---

African American air pilots--Interviews

---

## Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

---

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

United States Postal Service.

---

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

---

## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

---

BusinessMakers

---

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 Hiram Little, September 10, 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 8/15/2011 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History

## 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, September 10, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Hiram Little, Section A2007\_252\_001\_001, TRT: 0:27:50  
2007/09/10

Hiram Little discusses his family background, including his mother, father, and grandparents. Little does not remember how his parents met, but, recalls that his father teased his mother about her ex-boyfriend; it was just fun for him. Little talks about his two paternal grandmothers. He talks about his childhood and the community in which he was raised. Little recalls most people used lamps, instead of electricity. Little shares his memories and experiences of the Jeannie Green Spivey plantation where his family lived. Little worked on the farm milking the cows, planting cotton, and vegetables.

African American families--Georgia--Atlanta

Plantation life--Georgia--History

Video Oral History Interview with Hiram Little, Section A2007\_252\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:40  
2007/09/10

Hiram Little recalls his early memories in Atlanta, Georgia and discussed his parents. His father worked as a cook, while his mother worked as a laundress. Little also examines life on the farm where cotton was the main crop. Little mentions his brother and discusses their family's move to Atlanta when he was twelve years old. He shares his school experiences, including a discussion on joining the Boy Scouts in 1904. Little also remembers his neighborhood and the first time they began using electricity in his home. He remembered whites lived up the street, while blacks lived down the street. Little talks about his decision to join the U.S. Army, after high school.

Atlanta (Ga.)--Social life and customs

African American families--Georgia

African American students--Georgia--Atlanta

United States. Army--African Americans

Video Oral History Interview with Hiram Little, Section A2007\_252\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:30  
2007/09/10

Hiram Little discusses his college life. He wanted to attend Clark College because of the beautiful campus, but went to Morehouse College. Little explained his decision to join the U.S. Army when the U. S. Army began accepting blacks for flight training. In 1941, Little took classes and trained at the Chanute Air Force Base located in Rantoul, Illinois as part of the Tuskegee Aviation programs. Little served as an armorer and part-time instructor and later applied for flight training. Little talked about Charles Alfred Anderson, his flight instructor. Little details his life after bombardier navigation school at

Freeman Field in Indiana. Little provides a detailed account of the Freeman Field incident caused by increased tensions between whites and blacks due to strict segregationist policies. Little refused to sign onto the policy on segregation, resulting in his arrest and honorable discharge in 1945.

Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.)

United States. Army AirForces. Composite Group, 477th--History

Freeman Field Mutiny, Freeman Field, Ind., 1945

United States. Army--African Americans--Social conditions--20th century

Video Oral History Interview with Hiram Little, Section A2007\_252\_001\_004, TRT: 0:31:10  
2007/09/10

Hiram Little remembers life after 1945. Little returned to Morehouse College to major in chemistry. Little talks about his marriage to Marien Harpen in 1948 and his three children. Little began working at the U.S. post office in 1955, where he felt some segregation. Blacks had limited opportunities within the post office, but salaries were high. Little recalls only four black managers at that time. He talks about meeting Martin Luther King Jr. on the Morehouse campus, and details his involvement in Civil Rights Movement. He was not very much involved in the Freedom March in 1965, but in 1966, he went to Alabama to register to vote; it took sixteen weeks. Little wants his legacy to be that he did the best he could. Little shares a message for future generations.

Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.)

Voter registration--Alabama

African American families--Georgia

Civil rights movements--Georgia

Postal service--Employees--Georgia

King, Martin Luther,--Jr.,--1929-1968