

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Yancey, Asa G., 1916-2013
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr.,
Dates:	March 19, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:35:09).
Abstract:	Surgeon, medical professor, and medical director Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr. (1916 - 2013) served as the medical director of Grady Memorial Hospital and dean at the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. He also created the first accredited surgical training program for black doctors in Georgia. Yancey was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 19, 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_056
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Surgeon, professor, medical director, and contributor to community service, Asa G. Yancey, Sr., M.D. was born to Daisy L. Sherard Yancey and Arthur H. Yancey on August 19, 1916 in Atlanta, Georgia. Daisy was a housewife, and Arthur worked as a U.S. Post Office mail carrier. Mr. Arthur H. Yancey wrote an autobiographical book in 1959 entitled *Interpositionulification: What the Negro May Expect*. In 1933, Asa G. Yancey graduated as valedictorian from Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta. He earned his B.S. degree with honors four

years later from Morehouse College. Yancey was one of four African American students in his class at the University of Michigan Medical School where his elder brother, Bernise, graduated from medical school in 1930.

Upon receiving his M.D. degree from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1941, Yancey first completed a general rotating internship from 1941 to 1942 at what is now Metropolitan General Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. It was from this experience that he decided to pursue general surgery training. He served as First Lieutenant in The United States Army Medical Corp. before he returned to complete his residency in surgery at Freedmen's Hospital, Howard University, where he trained under the guidance of Dr. Charles R. Drew. In 1945, he was a surgical fellow at the U.S. Marine Hospital in Boston and then became an instructor of surgery at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. Also about this time, Yancey started his involvement with the National Medical Association (NMA), the largest and oldest national organization for African American physicians.

Following his time in Boston and Nashville, he served as the Chief of Surgery at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Tuskegee, Alabama and then the Hughes Spalding Pavilion of Grady Memorial Hospital, Emory University where he established the first accredited general surgery training program for black surgeons. With his return to Atlanta in 1958, Yancey was invited to join the faculty at Emory University School of Medicine where he became an Instructor of Surgery in 1964. In 1972, Yancey was appointed medical director of Grady Memorial Hospital and associate dean at Emory University Medical School. He was appointed full Professor of Surgery at Emory University Medical School in 1975. He continued to work at the Emory University Clinic and Grady Memorial Hospital until his retirement in 1989.

Yancey has contributed numerous articles to the academic surgical community, and he has been recognized with many awards His article, "A Modification of the Swenson Operation for Congenital Megacolon," published in a 1952 issue of *The Journal of the National Medical Association*, describes a surgical procedure that preceded Soave's publication by ten years. Yancey has also written articles exploring issues of medical care, health care, and poverty including "Medical Education in Atlanta and Health Care of Black Minority and Low Income People," and "The Challenge of Providing Health Care for the Poor: Public Hospital Perspective". His book *Portrayal of a Lifespan* describes life as it was for him in the 21st Century. Yancey received the Bennie Service Award, in 1990 and he received an Honorary Doctor of Science from Morehouse College and Howard University. . The Society of Black Academic Surgeons established a lectureship in the name of Asa G. Yancey, Sr., M.D. The Emory University Health System

recognized his professional contributions over the years by naming a healthcare facility, The Asa G. Yancey Health Clinic, in northwest Atlanta. Yancey was married to the late Carolyn “Marge” E. Dunbar and they have four children: Arthur H. Yancey II, M.D, Carolyn L. Yancey, M.D., Caren L Yancey-Covington (deceased), and Asa G. Yancey, Jr., M.D.

Dr. Asa G. Yancey was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 19, 2012.

Dr. Asa Yancey passed away on March 9, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 19, 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Surgeon, medical professor, and medical director Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr. (1916 - 2013) served as the medical director of Grady Memorial Hospital and dean at the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. He also created the first accredited surgical training program for black doctors in Georgia.

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:

Yancey, Asa G., 1916-2013

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Yancey, Asa G., 1916-2013--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Tuskegee Veterans Administration Hospital, Grady Memorial Hospital

Emory University

Grady Memorial Hospital

Occupations:

Surgeon

Medical Professor

Medical Director

HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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 Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr., March 19, 2012. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

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).

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 Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr., Section A2012_056_001_001, TRT: 1:28:00 2012/03/19

Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr. was born on August 19, 1916 in Atlanta, Georgia to Daisy Sherard Yancey and Arthur H. Yancey. His mother was raised by farmers in Iva, South Carolina, and studied at the Atlanta University Normal School. Yancey's father was born in Macedonia, Georgia, and attended the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. After one year, he returned home to care for his siblings following the death of their father, Albert G. Yancey. Yancey's father later worked as a carpenter and letter carrier, and published the book 'Interpositionulification: What the Negro May Expect,' which was referenced in Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s I Have a Dream speech. Yancey and his six siblings grew up on Beckwith Street, near Atlanta University. He began his education at the segregated Edmund Asa Ware Elementary School, and went on to attend Booker T. Washington High School, where he excelled academically and graduated one year early as valedictorian.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr., Section A2012_056_001_002, TRT: 2:30:20 2012/03/19

Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr.'s father was an avid voter, and joined the NAACP at the invitation of activist Walter Francis White. Despite strict segregation, Yancey played with the white children near his home until they were dissuaded from socializing with him. He also befriended Alfred "Tup" Holmes, who desegregated Atlanta's public golf courses. From an early age, Yancey delivered the Atlanta Constitution and Atlanta Daily World to his neighbors, including scholar W.E.B. Du Bois. Upon graduating from Booker T. Washington High School in 1933, Yancey matriculated at Morehouse College in Atlanta, where he

studied chemistry under Professor K.A. Huggins. He also joined Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and the science and mathematics club. While visiting family in Detroit, Michigan, Yancey decided to enroll at the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, where his brother, Bernise A. Yancey, was already a student. Even though he had not applied in advance, Yancey was admitted by Dean A.C. Furstenberg.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr., Section
A2012_056_001_003, TRT: 3:28:35 2012/03/19

Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr. attended the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, where he studied neuroanatomy under Professor Elizabeth C. Crosby. He had three African American classmates: Maggie Laura Walker Lewis, Charles W. Scott and Martin R. Sutler. In 1941, Yancey joined the medical ROTC. He hoped to serve at the Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania, but his request was denied because of the prevalence of discrimination there. During this time, Yancey met Carolyn Dunbar Yancey, whom he married in 1944. He interned at the Forest City Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, and completed a surgical residency at Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C. under Charles R. Drew. He also received surgical training at the U.S. Marine Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1945, Yancey became an instructor of surgery at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. From there, he moved to Mound Bayou, Mississippi, where he succeeded civil rights leader T.R.M. Howard as the chief surgeon at Taborian Hospital.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr., Section
A2012_056_001_004, TRT: 4:29:42 2012/03/19

Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr. left Mound Bayou, Mississippi to move to Tuskegee, Alabama, where he became the chief of surgery at the Tuskegee Veterans Administration Hospital. He also worked with Eugene H. Dibble, Jr., who was the medical director of the John A. Andrew Memorial Hospital and founder of the John A. Andrew Clinical Society. At this point in the interview, Yancey remembers the death of his mentor, Charles R. Drew, in 1950. In 1958, Yancey moved to Atlanta, Georgia to head the Hughes Spalding Pavilion at the request of Fulton DeKalb

Hospital Authority Chairman Hughes Spalding. While there, he published articles in the Journal of the National Medical Association about surgical techniques as well as the poor conditions at Atlanta's Grady Memorial Hospital. Yancey later established an accredited surgical training program at the Hughes Spalding Pavilion; and, in 1964, became the first African American board certified surgeon in Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr., Section
A2012_056_001_005, TRT: 5:27:56 2012/03/19

Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr. developed the first accredited surgical training program for African American doctors in Georgia and Alabama. In 1967, he was appointed to the Atlanta Board of Education after the death of board member and Atlanta University President Rufus Early Clement. During Yancey's six year tenure, the board addressed issues like instituting Memorial Day as an official holiday for all Atlanta Public Schools, and ensuring a smooth transition for teachers and students during desegregation. In 1972, Yancey was named the medical director of Grady Memorial Hospital and a dean at the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. With his wife, Carolyn Dunbar Yancey, he had four children: Arthur H. Yancey, II, Asa G. Yancey, Jr., Caren Yancey Covington and Carolyn L. Yancey. He talks about the closure of black hospitals like the Hughes Spalding Pavilion, and shares his views on public healthcare. Yancey concludes this part of the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr., Section
A2012_056_001_006, TRT: 6:10:36 2012/03/19

Dr. Asa Yancey, Sr. narrates his photographs.