

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Walter Cooper

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cooper, Walter, 1928-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper,
Dates:	April 19, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2018
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:31:08).
Abstract:	Nonprofit executive Walter Cooper (1928-) the first African American to earn a Ph.D degree in physical chemistry from the University of Rochester in 1957, was co-founder of the Rochester branch of the National Urban League in 1965. Cooper was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 19, 2018, in Rochester, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2018_071
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Nonprofit executive Walter Cooper was born on July 18, 1928 in Clairton, Pennsylvania to Alonzo and Luda Cooper. After graduating as salutatorian from Clairton High School in 1946, Cooper received his B.S. degree in chemistry from Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania in 1950.

Hired as a research scientist at Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, New York in 1956, Cooper became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. degree in physical chemistry from the University of Rochester in 1957. At Kodak, he was promoted successively to senior research chemist, research associate and technical associate. During his career at Kodak, Cooper published a wide array of scholarly papers in the fields of chemistry and physical chemistry and became the holder of three patents.

Cooper served as chairman of the education committee of the NAACP from 1959 to 1965. In Rochester, he was heavily involved in community development and civil rights issues. Cooper took a leave of absence in 1964 from Eastman Kodak to help form an anti-poverty agency in Rochester called Action for a Better Community, Incorporated. He co-founded the Rochester branch of the Urban League in 1965, continuing to serve on the Board of Directors into the 1970s. He established Rochester's Sister City program with Bamako, Mali in 1975.

Returning to Eastman-Kodak, Cooper was named manager of the office of technical communications, overseeing the publications and technical reports by 2,300 scientific and research personnel in 1985. Cooper retired from Eastman Kodak Company in 1986.

Cooper was elected to the Board of Trustees of Washington and Jefferson College in 1975, and named a Knight of the National Order of Mali in 1981. Cooper was named to the New York State Board of Regents in 1988, and he became Regent Emeritus in 2003. State University of New York at Geneseo awarded Cooper an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, and he also received the Rotary Award, the oldest civic honor in Rochester, New York in 2005. He received the Frederick Douglass Medal from the University of Rochester in recognition of his lifetime

involvement in civil rights in 2008. Rochester City School No. 10 was named the Dr. Walter Cooper Academy School #10 in his honor in 2010. The Rochester Area Community Foundation presented Walter Cooper with the Joe U. Posner Founders Award, its highest honor, in recognition of his many charitable contributions in 2013. Dr. Walter Cooper Papers are archived and housed at the River Campus Libraries, at the University of Rochester, in Rochester, New York in 2018.

His wife, Helen, who was also a scientist and worked for Kodak prior to Cooper joining, passed away in January, 2005. They have two adult sons.

Walter Cooper was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 19, 2018.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Walter Cooper was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 19, 2018, in Rochester, New York, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Nonprofit executive Walter Cooper (1928-) the first African American to earn a Ph.D degree in physical chemistry from the University of Rochester in 1957, was co-founder of the Rochester branch of the National Urban League in 1965.

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:

Cooper, Walter, 1928-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Cooper, Walter, 1928- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Nonprofit Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Walter Cooper, April 19, 2018. 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 Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_001, TRT: 1:28:48 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_002, TRT: 2:29:05 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_003, TRT: 3:29:29 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_004, TRT: 4:29:20 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_005, TRT: 5:28:33 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_006, TRT: 6:28:43 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_007, TRT: 7:31:57 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_008, TRT: 8:30:41 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Walter Cooper, Section A2018_071_001_009, TRT: 9:34:32 ?