

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Col. Eugene Scott

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Scott, Eugene, 1939-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott,
Dates:	December 1, 2003 and May 25, 2022
Bulk Dates:	2003 and 2022
Physical Description:	11 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:10:41).
Abstract:	Military officer and newspaper publisher Colonel Eugene Scott (1939 -) served as a post commander for two major U.S. Army installations and later joined Sengstacke Enterprises as general manager and publisher of the Chicago Daily Defender. Scott was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 1, 2003 and May 25, 2022, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_282
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Military officer and newspaper publisher Colonel Eugene Scott was born October 14, 1939 in Miami, Florida to Bertha Mae Jones and Eugene Franklin Scott. Raised in Chicago, he attended A. O. Sexton Elementary School and Englewood High School where he was a sharpshooter in the ROTC. Scott graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Miami, Florida in 1957. He continued in ROTC at Florida A&M University where he graduated with a B.A. degree in political science in 1961.

Scott entered the United States Army as a Second Lieutenant in 1962 and served as a tank commander at Fort Riley, Kansas. He then served two tours of duty in Vietnam from 1965 to 1966 and from 1969 to 1971. He also commanded tank forces in Germany, started the ROTC program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, and was a tank instructor at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Scott then was the principal staff officer for training and operations for the 8th Infantry Division Combat Ready Forces in Germany, where he was responsible for the training of 23,000 soldiers. Scott completed his twenty-eight year military career as a post commander for Fort Stewart in Georgia and Fort Monroe in Virginia, two major U.S. Army installations with budgets in excess of \$200 million. Scott, a favorite of General Norman Swartzkopf, retired from the Army just prior to the Gulf War in 1990.

After retirement, Scott joined Sengstacke Enterprises as executive assistant to John H. H. Sengstacke for three years. Scott then managed the company's five newspapers and for more than ten years served as general manager and publisher of the *Chicago Daily Defender*. In this capacity and in retirement, Scott has served on a number of boards and committees including the Bronzeville Military Academy, the Illinois Military Flags Commission, the Governor's Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes, the Attorney General's African American Advisory Committee, the National Advisory Committee of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois, the Chicago Area Boy Scouts, and as chairman of the National African American Military Museum.

Scott and his wife, Beverly Reed Scott, live in Chicago. They share eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Colonel Eugene Scott was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 1, 2003 and May 25 2022.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Col. Eugene Scott was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 1, 2003 and May 25, 2022, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 11 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Military officer and newspaper publisher Colonel Eugene Scott (1939 -) served as a post commander for two major U.S. Army installations and later joined Sengstacke Enterprises as general manager and publisher of the Chicago Daily Defender.

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:

Scott, Eugene, 1939-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Scott, Eugene, 1939- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Army.

Occupations:

Colonel (Retired)

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 Col. Eugene Scott, December 1, 2003 and May 25, 2022. 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 Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_001_001, TRT: 0:30:17
?

Col. Eugene Scott was born on October 14, 1939 in Miami, Florida to Bertha Mae Jones Scott and Eugene Scott. After the Civil War, Scott's maternal ancestors migrated from Fitzgerald, Georgia to Florida where they worked on the Florida East Coast Railway. Scott's great grandmother, Sarah Miller, was the first licensed nurse at Provident Hospital in Miami. Many of Scott's mother's relatives went to college in the 1930s and became schoolteachers. Scott's paternal grandfather, John Scott was from Barbados. After the birth of Scott's father, the family migrated from Mobile, Alabama to Miami where Scott's grandfather practiced dentistry without a license. Scott's father was a schoolteacher and principal. Education was important in the Scott family and Scott grew up knowing that he was expected to go to college. In fifth grade, his family moved to Chicago, Illinois where he attended A. O. Sexton Elementary and Englewood High School. Scott describes his upbringing and the sounds he remembers from his childhood like the voices of Lena Horne and Ella Fitzgerald drifting to his home from the Miami's Harlem Square Club.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_001_002, TRT: 0:29:56
?

Col. Eugene Scott recalls his experience of racial discrimination as a child in Miami, Florida. Scott moved to Chicago, Illinois in the fifth grade at the behest of his uncle who wanted a better education for his nephew. Scott's uncle was married to Mary Florence Sengstacke, sister of John H.H. Sengstacke. After the move, Scott spent his weekends at Chicago museums and also participated in the 1952 Democratic and Republic National Conventions as a banner carrier for W. Averell Harriman and Harold Stassen. Scott attended A. O. Sexton Elementary School before entering Chicago's Englewood High School where he joined the ROTC and made the rifle team as a freshman. In 1956, Scott moved back to Miami, transferring to Booker T. Washington High School where he graduated from in 1957. Inspired by Thurgood Marshall, Scott entered Florida A&M University, his father's alma mater, as a political science major with dreams of becoming a lawyer. In college, Scott participated in the ROTC, civil rights demonstrations and also got married. By the time he graduated in 1961, he had three children with Patricia Scott. In 1962, Scott joined the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant. He was stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas as a tank platoon leader before being sent to Vietnam.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_001_003, TRT: 0:28:30
?

Col. Eugene Scott was stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas as a tank platoon commander in the U.S. Army from 1962 to 1965. In 1965, he was sent on his first tour of duty in Vietnam as an infantryman. Scott recounts his first encounter with enemy fire in the Vietnam War as well as his interactions with the Vietnamese people. Although his service was recognized with a Combat Infantry Badge, Scott did not receive other commendations typically given to white soldiers. The lack of proper medal recognition often impeded the ability of black soldiers to attain promotions. Scott returned to the U.S. in 1966 and took a yearlong training course for tank officers before joining a tank battalion in Germany in 1967. He then worked to recruit black officers to the Army by starting an ROTC program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff before returning to Vietnam as a major for a second tour of duty in 1969. Scott describes fraggings, indiscipline, and general unrest amongst soldiers during the Vietnam War. He also talks about the outstanding contributions of black soldiers who won twenty Medals of Honor in the Vietnam War.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_001_004, TRT: 0:30:36
?

Col. Eugene Scott talks about the politics of the Vietnam War and his return to the United States after completing his second tour of duty in 1971. Scott was then stationed at the United States Army Armor School in Fort Knox, Kentucky as an instructor, where General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., Wesley Clark, Carl E. Vuono, and Dennis J. Reimer attended classes on leadership. Scott describes the relationship between General Schwarzkopf and HistoryMaker Colin Powell as mediated through Calvin Waller. With the influence of General Schwarzkopf, Scott became the post commander of Fort Stewart in Georgia and of Fort Monroe in Virginia. Scott reflects upon the highlights from his twenty-eight year career in the military, his retirement in 1990 on the eve of the Gulf War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. After retiring from the military, Scott was hired as John H.H. Sengstacke's assistant at the Chicago Defender. After three years as an operations officer for the Michigan Chronicle, the New Pittsburgh Courier, and the Tri-State Defender, Scott was promoted to general manager, learning about the Defender's operations from Fred Sengstacke. Scott describes his interactions with John H.H. Sengstacke and the financial health of the Chicago Defender.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_001_005, TRT: 0:32:18
?

Col. Eugene Scott served as the general manager and publisher of the Chicago Defender for over ten years. During his tenure, the Defender lost talented editorial staff because the newspaper was unable to offer competitive pay. Scott hired freelancers to maintain the newspaper's quality. The Defender's daily distribution model compounded with John H.H. Sengstacke's decision to outsource printing after a standoff with the Printers Union exacerbated the paper's financial issues. Scott describes the challenge of securing appropriate advertising revenue in black newspapers. To cut costs and manage profits, Scott implemented various reforms at the paper including standardized computer equipment across the Defender's national offices and securing corporate sponsorships for the paper. Scott talks about the Defender's coverage of the Becker-Gould police brutality case. Pressure from the Chicago Defender contributed to the re-opening of the case after the election of Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine. Scott also talks about the messiness of endorsing political candidates and his partnership with grassroots organizations in the community.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_001_006, TRT: 0:29:07
?

Col. Eugene Scott worked with notable journalists like LaTicia Greggs, Ethan Michaeli, Ken Green, and HistoryMaker Vernon Jarrett while general manager and publisher of the Chicago Defender. He talks about the status of the newspaper and the Sengstacke estate after the death of John H.H. Sengstacke in 1997. Scott reflects upon what business practices he would change at the Defender as well as the most rewarding aspect of working at the paper. After retiring from the paper in 2000, Scott became the president of the Chicago Defender Charities primarily raises money for the needy through its annual Bud Billiken Day Parade. He is also the chairman of the National African American Military Museum. Scott talks about his hopes and concerns for the African American community, his legacy, and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_002_007, TRT: 7:31:09
?

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_002_008, TRT: 8:29:43

?

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_002_009, TRT: 9:28:27
?

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_002_010, TRT:
10:30:25 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Eugene Scott, Section A2003_282_002_011, TRT:
11:10:13 ?