

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Honore, Russel L.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore,
Dates:	February 29, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:29:30).
Abstract:	Lieutenant general (retired) Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore (1947 -) is an expert on emergency preparedness and is widely credited for turning around the U.S. government's response to Hurricane Katrina as the commander of Joint Task Force Katrina. Honore was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 29, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_091
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

United States Army Lieutenant General (Retired) Russel L. Honoré, was born in September 15, 1947 to Udell and Lloyd Honoré in Lakeland, Louisiana. Honoré was the eighth of twelve children. Raised on a subsistence farm in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana, Honoré was taught to value hard work. Honoré attended Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he earned his B.S. degree in vocational agriculture. After completing ROTC training at Southern University, Honoré entered the U.S. Army as an Infantry Officer for the United States Army Combat Development Command in 1971.

During his 37 year career in the United States military, Honoré held a variety of positions and served in a number of commanding and supervisory positions, including Instructor at the United States Army Armor School; Commander for the C Company, 4th Battalion, 5th Infantry; and Assistant G-1 (Personnel) for the 1st Infantry Division (Forward), United States Army Europe and Seventh Army. In 1989, Honoré became the commander for the 4th Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division (Forward) in support of Operations Desert Shield/Storm. Between 1999 and 2000, Honoré served as the Vice Director for Operations for the Joint Staff, where he supported the Department of Defense planning and response for Hurricane Floyd, as well as the United States' military response to the devastating flooding in Venezuela (1999) and Mozambique (2000).

In 2004, Honoré became the 33rd commanding general of the U.S. First Army at Fort Gillem, Georgia. In this position, Honoré coordinated the U.S. military's preparedness and response to Hurricane Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne. When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in 2005, Honoré was designated commander of Joint Task Force Katrina. Honoré's arrival in New Orleans came after what was widely believed to be a poor performance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Honoré gained media celebrity and accolades for his apparent turning around of the situation in the city as well as his gruff management style which contrasted with what many felt were the empty platitude of civilian officials.

Following his retirement from the military on January 11, 2008, Honoré declared that he would spend the second half of his life committed to creating a culture of preparedness in America. In this regard, Honoré joined The Gallup Organization as a Senior Scientist; the faculties of Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health and Nell Hodgson School of Nursing. Honoré also served as a CNN Preparedness contributor. Since 2008, Honoré has worked as a public speaker with Keppler Speakers out of Arlington, Virginia. In 2009 he wrote a popular radio segment entitled "Work is a Blessing" for National Public Radio (NPR)'s program, *This I Believe*. Honoré has published many written works including his 2009 book, *Survival: How a Culture of Preparedness Can Save You and Your Family from Disasters* and soon to be published, *War Stories: Leadership in the New Normal*.

Honoré is the recipient of numerous military and civilian awards, including six honorary doctorates from schools such as Stillman College and the United States Army War College. He received the 2006 NAACP Humanitarian Award, National Newspaper Publishers Association Newsmaker of the Year Award; Defense Distinguished Service Medal; and Army Distinguished Service Medal; as well as Keys to the City for Chrisholm, Minnesota, Riverdale, Georgia, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

Honoré lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with his wife Beverly.

Russel Honoré was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 29, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 29, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Lieutenant general (retired) Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore (1947 -) is an expert on emergency preparedness and is widely credited for turning around the U.S. government's response to Hurricane Katrina as the commander of Joint Task Force Katrina.

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:

- Honore, Russel L.
- Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)
- Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

- African Americans--Interviews
- Honore, Russel L.--Interviews

African American generals--Interviews.

Organizations:

- HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)
- The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection
- U.S. Army

Occupations:

- Lieutenant General (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 Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, February 29, 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 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. Gen. Russel L. Honore, Section A2012_091_001_001, TRT: 1:32:10 ?

Lieutenant General Russel Honoré slates the interview and lists his favorites. His mother, Udell Marie St. Amant, was born around 1921 in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana. Though she was not well educated, she could read. Honoré's maternal grandfather was a carpenter who did repair work for the community. Honoré's father, Lloyd Charles Honoré, was born around 1912 in Point Coupee. He was a farmer. He could not read, because he had not attended school past a couple of grades. Some of his father's relatives went to New Orleans and passed as white, cutting themselves off from the rest of the family. Honoré describes the Creole culture of his family and the impact of floods in Louisiana.

African American families--Louisiana.

African American parents--Education.

Creoles--Louisiana.

Passing (Identity).

African American grandparents.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, Section A2012_091_001_002, TRT: 2:29:35 ?

Lieutenant General Russel Honoré talks about his parents, Lloyd Charles Honoré and Udell Marie St. Amant, and his eleven siblings. Honoré attended grade school at St. Alma School, named for the St. Alma sugar cane plantation in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana. He describes the differences between Creole and African American as a child, before the two communities integrated. Honoré remembers the 1957 Hurricane Audrey which came through his community. He had to attend Rosenwald High School, which was thirteen miles away from his home, because of segregation. During high school, Honoré worked at a dairy farm and kept a herd of livestock as part of his involvement in the 4-H Club.

African American parents.

Segregation in education--Louisiana.

African Americans--Education--Louisiana.

Hurricane Audrey, 1957.

4-H clubs.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, Section A2012_091_001_003, TRT: 3:30:34 ?

Lieutenant General Russel Honoré continues to talk about his involvement in the 4-H Club and his lack of athletic ability. In high school, Honoré took many leadership positions, including being the president of his high school class. Thomas Smith, Honoré's 4-H leader, Roland Roberts, his New Farmers of America (now integrated with the Future Farmers of America) leader, and his mother Udell Marie St. Amant encouraged Honoré to attend college after high school. He chose to attend Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, because a community member discouraged him from applying to West Point. Honoré talks about his peers who did not attend college. He also discusses his father's, Lloyd Charles Honore, and grandfather's work ethic.

4-H clubs.

Mentoring.

Southern University (Baton Rouge, La.)

African American fathers--Louisiana.

African American grandparents.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, Section A2012_091_001_004, TRT: 4:28:47 ?

Lieutenant General Russel Honoré talks about his distant cousin, Raymond Honoré, who owned a drive-thru restaurant and employed Honoré while he was attending Southern University. Honoré became the assistant manager and learned many aspects of leadership in the position. He also talks about Big Dan, the horse his cousin gave him and he kept at on campus. While at Southern University, Honoré learned discipline from Dr. Booker T. Whatley, a tough horticulture professor whose class he had to drop twice, and his Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) teachers. Honoré also discusses Dr. Pope, who taught him poultry science, and the president of Southern at that time, Felton G. Clark.

College students--Employment.

Horses.

Mentoring in education.

Southern University (Baton Rouge, La.)

United States. Army. Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

Video Oral History Interview with Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, Section A2012_091_001_005, TRT: 5:28:24 ?

Lieutenant General Russel Honoré talks about Philip D. Clark, the infamous president of Southern University who closed the school due to the student's involvement in sit-ins. He also describes the sit-ins and the impact they had on Southern University. Honoré was in the Reserve Officers' Training Corp (ROTC) while at Southern University during the Vietnam War. He remembers being heckled and critiqued by the opponents of the United States' involvement in the war. Honoré discusses the Vietnam War and the complexity of warfare in general. He graduated from Southern University in 1971 as the only Distinguished Military Graduate in his class. After graduation he served his obligated four years in the Army but decided to remain, because his career in the Army had become a way of life.

Southern University (Baton Rouge, La.)

Civil rights demonstrations--Louisiana--Baton Rouge.

United States. Army. Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

United States. Army--African Americans.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.