

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Flowers, Alfred K.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers,
Dates:	June 28, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:05:00).
Abstract:	Major general Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers (1947 -) served forty-six years in the United States Air Force and was the longest-serving airman in Air Force history when he retired in 2012. Flowers was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 28, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_148
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Major General Alfred K. Flowers was born on December 29, 1947 in Kinston, North Carolina to Annie Miller, a chef and Monroe Flowers, an industrial worker. He was raised by his grandparents who instilled in him a foundation of morals, ethical values and integrity. Flowers graduated from Jones High School in 1965 and enlisted in the United States Air Force at the age of seventeen.

After completing basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) in San Antonio, Texas, Flowers was assigned as a supply warehouseman at Grand Forks AFB in North Dakota. In 1967, he served as an air transportation specialist in Da Nang AB, Vietnam. Two years later, Flowers was reassigned to Norton AFB in California, where he met his wife, Ida, who was also serving in the Air Force. After they married, she was transferred to Clark AFB in the Philippines and Flowers secured a joint-spousal assignment to be with her. In 1971, he was appointed to accounting specialist and served seven years in this position. Flowers received his A.A. degree from Thomas Edison University and his B.S. degree from Southern Illinois University. He earned his M.A. degree in 1976 from Ball State University. In 1978, he attended officer training school at the Medina Annex, Lackland AFB and was then commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. He served as a budget officer at several Air Force bases before receiving his M.S. degree from Industrial College of the Armed Forces in 1994. Flowers served as Chief of Budget at Headquarters ACC on Langley AFB and in 1999, he served as director of Budget Programs for the Department of the Air Force. Flowers served as commander of the Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools at Air University on Maxwell AFB and commander of the Second Air Force on Keesler AFB. In 2009, he was appointed as the deputy assistant secretary of budget in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller in Washington, D.C. In 2012, after forty-six years of service, Flowers retired from the United States Air Force, making him the longest-serving airman in Air Force history and the longest serving African American in the history of the United States Department of Defense.

Throughout Flowers' long career with the United States Air Force, he received much recognition including the

Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. Flowers served on the board of directors for the Army Air Force Exchange Service, the Air Force Aid Society and the Air Force Services Agency. Major General (R) Flowers was inducted into the Air Education And Training Command Order of The Sword on April 6, 2012, making him the 244th Air Force inductee since 1967. Flowers is married to Ida M. Flowers and they have one son, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred K. Flowers, Jr.

Alfred K. Flowers was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 28, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 28, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Major general Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers (1947 -) served forty-six years in the United States Air Force and was the longest-serving airman in Air Force history when he retired in 2012.

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:

Flowers, Alfred K.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Flowers, Alfred K.--Interviews

United States--Armed Forces--African American Generals--Interviews.

African American generals--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Major General

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 Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers, June 28, 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 Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers, Section A2012_148_001_001, TRT: 1:30:15 ?

Alfred Flowers describes his family background. His mother's name was Annie Morrow Roberts Miller. She was born in 1929, in Jones County, North Carolina, to Lucy Rhodes Roberts and Shade Lane Roberts. Lucy Rhodes Roberts' father was John Wesley Rhodes and her mother was Isabella Rhodes; both of whom were born into slavery. Flowers' father was Monroe Flowers, Sr. and he was also born in Jones County, to Erma and Columbus Flowers. Flowers' parents were teenagers when he was born, so he was raised by his maternal grandparents, who were sharecroppers on the Phillips farm in North Carolina. He discusses his parents' divorce and remarriage, which yielded several half-siblings--none of whom Flowers had a close relationship with. Flowers describes his maternal grandparents and their work as sharecroppers. He recalls his earliest childhood memory; a photo he took at the age of two on the lawn of a neighboring landowning family's house, the Lowreys.

African American families--North Carolina.

African American mothers--North Carolina.

African American fathers--North Carolina.

African American grandparents--North Carolina.

Slavery--North Carolina.

Childhood--North Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers, Section A2012_148_001_002, TRT: 2:31:23 ?

Alfred Flowers continues discussing his earliest childhood memory, a photo he took on the lawn at the Lowreys' house--a Caucasian landowning family that allowed sharecroppers to farm their land. Flowers describes his experience as a sharecropper on the Phillips' family farm in North Carolina and compares the treatment of sharecroppers on the Lowreys' farm, to the Phillips' farm where he grew up. He describes the sights, sounds and smells of his childhood and discusses the death of his maternal grandfather. He also speaks about his decision to join the U.S. Air Force. Flowers attended Phillips Crossroad School, Trenton Elementary School and Jones High School--all located in North Carolina and all segregated. He discusses one of his favorite teacher, Ms. Franks and describes his early interest in arithmetic and mathematics.

Childhood--North Carolina.

Sharecroppers--North Carolina.

Segregation in education--North Carolina.

United States. Air Force.

Death and remembrance.

Video Oral History Interview with Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers, Section A2012_148_001_003, TRT: 3:30:02 ?

Alfred Flowers attended Jones High School in Trenton, North Carolina. He recalls several teachers who had a significant impact on him. He also discusses his extracurricular high school activities and his job as a school bus driver, when he was sixteen years old. Flowers describes his graduation from high school and

his interest in joining the military. He recalls his initial career goal being to retire as an E9, a chief master sergeant. Flowers describes his six weeks of basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas in 1965 and his technical training in air transportation at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas. He went on to serve in the Vietnam War and discusses how the Da Nang Air Base was attacked by rockets the first night he arrived in Vietnam.

Education, Secondary--North Carolina.

United States. Air Force.

Lackland Air Force Base (Tex.)

Sheppard Air Force Base (Tex.)

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

Video Oral History Interview with Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers, Section A2012_148_001_004, TRT: 4:32:26 ?

Alfred Flowers discusses his return to the U.S. from Vietnam where he worked in another area of the U.S. Air Force. He recalls his first accounting assignment, after being retrained in the area of finance. Additionally, he recalls his decision to join the U.S. Air Force after speaking with his cousins who served in the military. Flowers describes how he met his wife, Ida Hill Flowers and their move to Crete, Greece. Flowers earned his bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University; his first master's degree from Ball State University European Division in Crete, and his second master's degree from the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. He talks about being denied admission into the U.S. Air Force's Officer Training School three times before he was finally admitted. He also shares a story from his assignment at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

Southern Illinois University.

Ball State University.

National Defense University.

Maxwell Air Force Base (Ala.)

United States. Air Force.

Video Oral History Interview with Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers, Section A2012_148_001_005, TRT: 5:30:55 ?

Alfred Flowers talks about being First Lieutenant at Tactical Air Command Headquarters in Langley, Virginia in 1982. He also discusses his work at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. under Colonel Allen D. "Doug" Bunker, as well as his career as a Major and then Brigadier General in the U.S. Air Force. Flowers went to work for the U.S. Air Force Accession Command at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama in 2006 and was the first person in the history of the U.S. Air Force's controller community to command a numbered Air Force. In 2009, Flowers became the Air Force Budget Director. He reflects upon his career concerns and accomplishments, as well as his retirement and legacy. Flowers also explains his command philosophy and shares his views on how 9/11 impacted communication between the different branches of U.S. government.

Pentagon (Va.).

African American generals.

Maxwell Air Force Base (Ala.)

Reminiscing.

Leadership.

Video Oral History Interview with Maj. Gen. Alfred Flowers, Section A2012_148_001_006, TRT: 6:29:59 ?

Alfred Flowers discusses his views on race relations in 21st century America. He then talks about the military's pro-integration stance and goes on to name some famous African American military servicemen that he has had the chance to meet, including Tuskegee Airman, General Daniel "Chappie" James' son, Daniel James, Jr.; the Army's Vice Chief of Staff, General Lloyd Austin; and Vice Chief of staff of the Air Force, Lieutenant General Larry Spencer. Flowers also talks about his family, former classmates and son, Alfred Flowers, Jr. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and how he would like to be remembered. Flowers concludes his interview by sharing photographs of his family and career in the U.S. Air Force.

Race relations--United States.

United States Armed Forces--African Americans.

Reminiscing.

African American families.

Photographs.