

A Guide to the Martin L. Cook Photograph Collection, ca. 1930- ca.1945

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A Collection in the Thomas Balch Library VC 0022

Thomas Balch Library

2006

Author: Beth Schuster

History

Processed by: Beth Schuster

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

VC 0022

Language

English

Abstract

The five photographs in this collection depict Martin Cook at various stages in his life. Three of the photographs date from his training and service with the United States Army Air Corps

Collector

Doreen C. Hope

Extent

5 photographs

Repository

Thomas Balch Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open for research.

Use Restrictions

No physical characteristics affect use of this material.

Acquisition Information

Doreen C. Hope

Processing Information

Processed by Beth Schuster, 22 April 2008

Preferred Citation

Martin L. Cook Photograph Collection (VC 0022), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Accruals

2008.0033

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Bibliography

"Desegregation of the Armed Forces: Chronology," Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/desegregation/large/#1947, accessed 12 March 2008.

Hope, Doreen Cook, interview by Beth Schuster, 26 March 2008.

Moten, Deborah Cook, interview by Beth Schuster, 14 April 2008.

"Selective Training and Service Act of 1940,"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selective_Training_and_Service_Act_of_1940, accessed 12 March 2008.

Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., <http://www.tuskegeearmen.org/Home.html>, accessed 14 March 2008.

"Tuskegee Airmen," National Museum of the USAF,

<http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=1356>, accessed 12 March 2008.

Vertical File, Schools - Douglass High School, Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Location of Originals

originals retained by Doreen C. Hope

Other Finding Aid

Past Perfect catalog records

Technical Requirements

Electronic media

Biographical Information

Martin Leslie Cook was born on 1 April 1923, the second child of J. Leslie and Bertha Cook. Throughout his childhood in Purcellville, Virginia, he was fascinated with mechanics and airplanes. One of the most memorable events of his youth was a plane ride his grandfather, Joe Cook, paid for him and two sisters to take when he was five or six. Martin was valedictorian in the 1940 graduating class of Loudoun County Training School in Leesburg, the only African-American secondary school in Loudoun County. After graduation, he worked as a painter and carpenter with his father in Purcellville.

In November 1942, Cook enlisted in the army and passed the entrance examination for the U.S. Army Aviation Cadet Program, which allowed him to enroll in Tuskegee Army Flying School, the recently-created military aviation school for African-Americans. He graduated in April 1944, received his Army commission and was assigned to 477th Bombardment Group, 618th Bomb Squadron. However, Cook never saw combat. While en route to France in the spring of 1945, an armistice was signed and his services as a fighter pilot were no longer needed. He later remembered this as the biggest disappointment of his life.

Cook resigned from the Army Air Corp at the end of November 1945 to pursue a degree in aeronautical engineering from The Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington, D.C. While enrolled in school, he worked at Fluid Mechanics Division of the National Bureau of Standard. After graduating in 1953, Cook was employed for thirty-two years with the U.S. Navy in the Department of Defense as an aeronautical engineer. He retired at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel from the U.S. Air Force Reserve in 1976, and from the Department of Defense in 1983. In retirement, he continued to pursue his passion for mechanics, including working on his automobiles. Cook was an avid reader and, at the time of his death, was conducting research in the National Archives for a book on the careers of Tuskegee graduates.

While attending CUA, he boarded at the home of his future wife's sister. On 14 November 1953, he and Evelyn Alice Lucas married. They had four children: Daryl Andrew Cook, Deborah Leslie Cook Moten, Doreen Lynn Cook Hope, and Martin Leslie Cook, Jr. Cook was an active member of the Seventh Day Adventist church. Among the congregations to which he belonged were Brotherhood and Capital Memorial, both in Washington, D.C. Martin Leslie Cook died on 24 October 2002, and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery on 6 December 2002.

Scope and Content

The five photographs in this collection depict Martin Cook at various stages in his life. Three of the photographs date from his training and service with the United States Army Air Corps.

Contents List

VC 0021 Martin L. Cook Photograph Collection, ca. 1930- ca.1945

5 photographs of Martin L. Cook

Scope and Content

- Martin L. Cook childhood portrait, ca. 1930
- Martin L. Cook with model plane, 1939
- Tuskegee Airmen in class, ca. 1943
- Martin L. Cook in U.S. Army uniform, ca. 1943
- Martin L. Cook & unidentified man standing near plane, ca. 1943