

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with William Hudgins

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hudgins, William, 1907-2007
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with William Hudgins,
Dates:	April 15, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:43:18).
Abstract:	Bank chief executive and banker William Hudgins (1907 - 2007) is the founder of both Carver Bank and Freedom National Bank. After six years under Hudgin's presidency, Freedom National Bank grew to be the largest bank in the United States owned and operated by African Americans. Hudgin also formed another side-venture, Best Yet Hair Products mail order company for black women, in 1943. Hudgins was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 15, 2002, in Miami, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_057
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Banker William Hudgins was born on April 30, 1907, in Richmond, Virginia, and was adopted by Agnes and William Hudgins at the age of two. He attended John Pierce Academy in New York for real estate and bank management after high school. Hudgins then studied business and real estate at Columbia University, and later received an honorary L.H.D. from Shaw University in 1968.

Hudgins began his career in door-to-door sales and real estate in New York City. He and real estate rival Robert Bell formed B&H Realty Corporation and, with business soaring, formed another side-venture, Best Yet Hair Products mail order company for black women, in 1943. Best Yet Hair Products had an exclusive arrangement with China and specialized in the manufacture of human hair wigs. With the success of his business arrangements, Hudgins became the first African American in the merchant's division of the Uptown Chamber of Commerce.

Hudgins organized Carver Bank with seven other community leaders in Harlem in 1948. He served as president of Carver Bank for eighteen years before resigning to join a group that included baseball great Jackie Robinson in forming the Freedom National Bank to help meet the needs of the Harlem community by providing low-cost loans to home owners and small businesses who had difficulty obtaining loans from large banks. Hudgins was the first president of Freedom National Bank, which, after six years under Hudgin's presidency, grew to be the largest bank in the United States owned and operated by African Americans. He has served on numerous business and civic boards and has received various honors. He married his wife, Dorothy, in New York City in 1979. Hudgins passed away on August 31, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with William Hudgins was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on April 15, 2002, in Miami, Florida, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Bank chief executive and banker William Hudgins (1907 - 2007) is the founder of both Carver Bank and Freedom National Bank. After six years under Hudgin's presidency, Freedom National Bank grew to be the largest bank in the United States owned and operated by African Americans. Hudgin also formed another side-venture, Best Yet Hair Products mail order company for black women, in 1943.

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:

Hudgins, William, 1907-2007

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hudgins, William, 1907-2007--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Freedom National Bank (New York, N.Y.)

Occupations:

Banker

Bank Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 William Hudgins, April 15, 2002. 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 William Hudgins, Section A2002_057_001_001, TRT: 0:30:30 ?
William Hudgins discusses being adopted at an early age and his limited knowledge of his family background. Hudgins then talks about his religious upbringing and changes in the family dynamic after his mother's death. Lastly,

Hudgins details his early travels, marriage and career pursuits.

Video Oral History Interview with William Hudgins, Section A2002_057_001_002, TRT: 0:31:06 ?

William Hudgins talks about establishing the Model Beauty Salon, his first business enterprise. Hudgins then discusses the business of selling hair extensions and his relationship with businessmen in China. Lastly, he details his numerous business endeavors, and his decision to enter into the real estate business.

Video Oral History Interview with William Hudgins, Section A2002_057_001_003, TRT: 0:28:55 ?

William Hudgins talks about his profitable real estate and liquor retail endeavors. Hudgins then fondly remembers his accountant and a mentor who taught him the real estate business. He then details the co-founding of the Carver Federal Savings Bank, its business philosophy and success. Lastly, Hudgins discusses his business involvement with Freedom National Bank.

Video Oral History Interview with William Hudgins, Section A2002_057_001_004, TRT: 0:31:07 ?

William Hudgins details his experiences at Freedom National Bank, its difficulties and why it failed. Hudgins then talks briefly about the Freedman's Bank, a failed black-owned bank from the Civil War era. He talks about other black-owned business enterprises in addition to his daughter's. Lastly, Hudgins discusses his involvement with 100 Black Men of New York, Inc.

Video Oral History Interview with William Hudgins, Section A2002_057_001_005, TRT: 0:31:19 ?

William Hudgins discusses his family's educational and business pursuits. Hudgins comments on the legacy of wealth in African American families. He then reflects on political and religious leaders who have influenced him over the years. Hudgins reflects on the business developments of the African American community and how far it's come. Lastly, Hudgins fondly remembers his foster sister and ponders his life's course.

Video Oral History Interview with William Hudgins, Section A2002_057_001_006, TRT: 0:10:21 ?