

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with James Hill, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hill, James, 1941-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with James Hill, Jr.,
Dates:	January 15, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:05:20).
Abstract:	Business chief executive James Hill, Jr. (1941 - 2021) owned the accounting firm Hill, Taylor, Certified Public Accountants. Hill was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 15, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_007
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Accountant James Hill, Jr. was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on August 20, 1941, to Joyce and James Hill, Sr. Hill graduated from Central State University with a B.S. in accounting in 1964 and received his M.B.A. in personnel administration and accounting in 1967 from the University of Chicago. He was CPA-licensed in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

In 1964, Hill began his career as a cost accountant for Union Carbide in New York, where he stayed for one year. After receiving his M.B.A., he began working as a Chicago staff auditor for Alexander Grant & Company. Between 1968 and 1970, Hill worked as the deputy director of the Chicago Economic Development Corporation. In February 1972, he founded his own eponymous accounting firm. In 1975 he took on a partner to become Hill, Taylor, Certified Public Accountants, where he presided as chairman and CEO.

Hill received numerous awards and honors for both his professional and community work. His professional affiliations include the American Institute of CPAs, the Illinois CPA Society, the National Black Association of Accountants, and the National Black MBA Association. He is a board member of various community and nonprofit organizations, including the Illinois Institute of Technology, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, the Better Government Association, Citizen Information Service, the Chicago Commons Association, the Economic Club of Chicago, the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, and the Chicago Economic Advisory Committee. He also was a council member to the graduate business schools at both the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois.

Hill married Sheree in 1995. They had two sons, James III and Brian.

Hill was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 5, 2003.

Hill passed away on December 23, 2021.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with James Hill, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 15, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Business chief executive James Hill, Jr. (1941 - 2021) owned the accounting firm Hill, Taylor, Certified Public Accountants.

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:

Hill, James, 1941-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hill, James, 1941---Interviews

African American executives.

African American accountants--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Accountant

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 James Hill, Jr., January 15, 2003. 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 James Hill, Jr., Section A2003_007_001_001, TRT: 0:29:45 ?

James Hill was born August 20, 1941 to James Hill, Sr. and Joyce Lee Hill in Baltimore, Maryland. His mother, a devout woman, was born in Spartanburg, South Carolina and raised her children until she passed away when Hill was fourteen years old. Hill's maternal grandparents were deceased before he was

born. His paternal great-grandmother was born a slave and recalled being told she was free by a Union Soldier. Hill's father, James Hill, Sr. was born in Chester, South Carolina in 1917 and worked for Bethlehem Steel for forty-five years where he organized its first union in the 1930s. His parents were introduced by his uncle in Baltimore. Hill remembers Baltimore as a dismal, racist place although he fondly remembers watching the Colts and the Orioles in the late 1950s. Hill attended PS 135 and PS 143 for elementary school and graduated from Dunbar High School in 1959. After a failed attempt to enlist in the armed services, Hill worked at Hot Shoppes restaurant as a dishwasher before deciding to attend college.

Baltimore (Md.)--Race Relations--History--20th century.

Racism--Maryland--Baltimore--History--20th century.

Quality of life--Maryland--Baltimore.

Video Oral History Interview with James Hill, Jr., Section A2003_007_001_002, TRT: 0:29:25 ?

James Hill talks about his education and early career. Hill enrolled in Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio to pursue a degree in accounting. Hill recalls its charismatic president Charles Wesley, his accounting professor Herb Willis as well as the friendships and dedication of his fellow Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity members. Hill graduated at the top of his class in 1964 and took a job at Union Carbide in Niagara Falls, New York where he married his first wife and had two children. After becoming frustrated by the lack of promotion at Union Carbide, Hill enrolled at the University of Chicago in Chicago, Illinois where he pursued his MBA in 1965. He double majored in accounting and personnel management and was the only black student in the program. After graduating, he had twenty-two job offers, including all of the Big Eight firms. He decided to take a position at a CPA firm.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

University of Chicago--Alumni and alumnae.

Central State University (Wilberforce, Ohio)--Alumni and alumnae.

Video Oral History Interview with James Hill, Jr., Section A2003_007_001_003, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

James Hill talks about his career and starting his own accounting firm. After graduating from the University of Chicago in 1967, Hill worked for the CPA firm Alexander Thornton and the Chicago Economic Development Corporation but left because advancement was unlikely. He joined a group of investors and purchased self-service car washes near Chicago but sold them in 1971 after being denied financing. Hill lived off his savings and studied for a second CPA test and passed. In 1972 he opened his own firm, Hill, Taylor CPA with David Taylor. They later moved to a downtown office in 1976. Market pressures then forced Hill to find a niche auditing pensions and non-profits. Hill, Taylor was the first minority accounting firm to audit the state of Illinois and work for major corporations in Illinois. Hill is involved various associations, committees, and organizations and headed the task force on deciding whether Illinois' auditors would be peer reviewed. Hill also comments on Arthur Andersen and Enron scandals.

Education, Higher--Social aspects--United States.

Accounting--Study and teaching (Higher)--United States.

Accountants--Professional ethics--United States.

Accounting--Moral and ethical aspects--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with James Hill, Jr., Section A2003_007_001_004, TRT: 0:25:00 ?

James Hill reflects upon his thirty year accounting career. He talks about

workplace automation and other changes that occurred in the profession during the 1980s through the 2000s. Accountants should obey existing ethical guidelines, including rules about potential conflicts of interest when firms audit companies that have former employees in senior level positions. Hill would like to see more black owned businesses in this country and wants to encourage entrepreneurship. In order to be successful, a person needs to excel at two out of three aspects—sales, technology, and administration—and hire talent that compensates for whatever aspect is the weakest. Hill is a founding member of the Alliance of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs (ABLE) which is a consortium of black business leaders that includes HistoryMakers Don Jackson, John Rogers, Jr. and Ralph Moore. Hill reflects upon his legacy as a successful black accountant.

Information technology--United States.

Corporations--Moral and ethical aspects.

Accounting--Moral and ethical aspects--United States.

Accountants--Professional ethics--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with James Hill, Jr., Section A2003_007_001_005, TRT: 0:11:00 ?
James Hill narrates his photographs.