

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

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hill, James
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with James Hill,
Dates:	January 15, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:05:20).
Abstract:	Business chief executive James Hill (1941 -) owns 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 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 is 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 accounting firm. In 1975 he took on a partner to become Hill, Taylor, Certified Public Accountants where he presides today as chairman and CEO.

Hill has 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 is also a council member to the graduate business schools at both the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois.

Hill married Sheree in 1995. He is father to two adult sons, James III and Brian.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with James Hill was conducted by Crowe, Larry on January 15, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Business chief executive James Hill (1941 -) owns 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:

James Hill

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

James Hill--Interviews

African American executives.

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

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Hill, Taylor, Certified Public Accountants

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, 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 7/9/2012 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, January 15, 2003

Video Oral History Interview with James Hill, Section A2003_007_001_001, TRT: 0:29:45
2003/01/15

James Hill, Jr. slates his interview and lists his favorites. Hill was born August 20, 1941 from James Hill, Sr. and Joyce Lee Hill. His parents originated from South Carolina farms but met in Baltimore, Maryland. Hill's maternal grandparents were deceased before he was born but his paternal grandparents lived with his family in Baltimore for a time. Hill's great-grandmother was born a slave and recalled being told she was free by a Union Soldier. Baltimore was an ugly, racist place but Hill fondly remembers playing and watching the Colts and the Orioles in the late 1950s. Hill enjoyed math and the sciences but nearly

dropped out after his mother died when he was fourteen. Hill enjoyed partying. He nearly joined the army but ended up working as a dishwasher instead. The managers of the restaurant gave him a qualifying test just for fun; they were surprised at how good Hill performed whereas Hill was surprised how easy it was.

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, Section A2003_007_001_002, TRT: 0:29:25
2003/01/15

James Hill, Jr. realized that he was as smart as his managers and his limited education held him back. His interest in accounting began when he read about their typical salaries. Hill enrolled in Central State University to get away from his destructive influences in Baltimore. Hill enjoyed the camaraderie and academic dedication of his fraternity Kappa Alpha Psi. Hill recognized the importance of accounting in business administration and graduated at the top of his class in an atypical career program at CSU. After graduation he worked at Union Carbide in Niagara Falls, New York but was frustrated by the promotional structure and was determined to get an MBA. He enrolled at the University of Chicago in 1965 where he double majored in accounting and personnel management as the only black student in the program.

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, Section A2003_007_001_003, TRT: 0:30:10
2003/01/15

James Hill, Jr. graduated from the University of Chicago in 1967. During that time, he lived separately from his wife and children and eventually divorced. Hill worked for CPA firm Alexander Thornton (later Grant Thornton) and the Chicago Economic Development Corporation but left because advancement was unlikely. He joined a group of investors who purchased self-service car washes but sold them after they were denied financing. Hill lived off his savings and studied for a second CPA test and passed. In February 1972 he opened his own firm and remarried. The firm, named Hill, Taylor CPA, moved to a downtown office in 1976. Market pressures forced Hill to find a niche auditing pensions and non-profits. Hill is involved various associations, committees, and organizations. Hill believes that the demise of Arthur Anderson in the wake of the Enron scandal unfairly punished an entire company for the actions of two dozen people and tarnished the profession.

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, Section A2003_007_001_004, TRT: 0:25:00
2003/01/15

James Hill, Jr. talks about workplace automation and other changes that occurred in the profession during the 1980s into the 2000s. His ethical philosophy is for accountants to obey existing ethical guidelines. However, he believes these should include rules about potential conflicts of interest when firms audit companies that have former employees at high administration levels.

Hill would like to see more black owned businesses in the country but sees positive omens for changes in colleges and civic organizations like his own. Hill believes good administrators need to have technical, sales, and administrative skills or talent to succeed and that non-profits should focus less on programming and more on finances.

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, Section A2003_007_001_005, TRT: 0:11:00
2003/01/15