

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Roger Gore

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Gore, Roger, 1966-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Roger Gore,
Dates:	August 18, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:09:01).
Abstract:	Personal care entrepreneur Roger Gore (1966 -) was the co-founder of The Hair Gangsters, a group of stylists who traveled around the country teaching classes and hair styling techniques. Gore was also the developer of two lines of styling products geared towards African American users: G'Natural Herbal Products, and HipHopz. Additionally, Gore authored books on hair care and how to become a successful stylist. Gore was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 18, 2004, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_131
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Roger George Gore was born on December 23, 1966, in Washington, D.C.; his mother worked as a school bus driver and his father worked as a driver for Greyhound and later Miller Beer. As a child, Gore suffered from sickle cell disease.

In 1984 Gore earned his high school diploma from Crossland High School in Maryland; upon his graduation, he received a scholarship to Frostburg State University, but discovered during orientation that he felt that college was not for him. Gore decided to attend beauty school instead; he had previous experience because an uncle had taught him to barber, or cut hair, when he was sixteen. Gore graduated from Robert Lewis Beauty School in Washington, D.C., in 1987. From 1986 until 1993, Gore worked for famed Washington, D.C., hair stylist Barry Fletcher at his salon *Avant Garde Hair Gallery*.

By 1991, at age twenty-five, Gore had won more than five first place finishes in national hair competitions and major trade shows. In 1992, Gore organized a cosmetologist and barber association called UACE, which provided insurance, retirement plans, and health benefits to hair stylists. While still working for Fletcher, Gore helped co-found a group called *The Hair Gangsters*, which consisted of four male stylists who traveled around the country teaching classes and hair styling techniques. In 1994, Gore developed a product line called G'Natural Herbal Products; his product line began with two hair and scalp products and eventually grew to include nearly twenty skin and hair care products, sold in more than sixteen states.

In 1992, Gore published his first book, *No More Weave Please*, a guide on how to repair damaged hair. Gore's book was controversial among some professionals in the field, but a best seller with African American customers concerned about their personal hair care. In 2004, Gore wrote and published his second book, *Hair Gangster*, which was a step-by-step guide to succeeding in the beauty industry. During that same year, Gore launched a second hair care product, called *HipHopz*, geared toward teenagers and young adults.

Gore was the recipient of the 2000 The Measurement of a Man award from Budweiser. His products are used by a number of celebrities, including Eddie and Gerald Levert, The Dells, and Jamie Foster Brown, editor of *Sister 2 Sister* magazine.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Roger Gore was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on August 18, 2004, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Personal care entrepreneur Roger Gore (1966 -) was the co-founder of The Hair Gangsters, a group of stylists who traveled around the country teaching classes and hair styling techniques. Gore was also the

developer of two lines of styling products geared towards African American users: G'Natural Herbal Products, and HipHopz. Additionally, Gore authored books on hair care and how to become a successful stylist.

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:

Gore, Roger, 1966-

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Gore, Roger, 1966---Interviews

African American businesspeople--Interviews

African American barbers--Interviews

African American beauty operators--Interviews

African American authors--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Personal Care Entrepreneur

HistoryMakers® Category:

StyleMakers

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 Roger Gore, August 18, 2004. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Roger Gore, Section
A2004_131_001_001, TRT: 0:30:16 2004/08/18

Roger Gore was born on December 23, 1966 in Washington, D.C. His mother, Lillian Hill Gore, was raised on a rural farm in Amherst, Virginia where her father was a landowner. At nineteen, she moved to Washington, D.C. and was employed as a domestic worker; she later became a school bus driver and bus supervisor in Prince George's County. Gore's father, George Gore, Sr. was raised in Dalton, Georgia where his ancestors were enslaved and inherited land from their slave owner. Gore's father served as a Master Sergeant in

the U.S. Armed Forces for thirty years. He later became a driver for the Greyhound Bus Company and for Miller Genuine Draft. As a boy, Gore spent summers with his maternal grandparents in the country; he never met his paternal grandparents. Gore describes his parents' personalities and his siblings. He also shares his childhood memories of growing up in Holly Park, Maryland. Gore attended Oak Crest Elementary School before he was bused to Berwyn Heights Elementary School in the sixth grade.

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

African American barbers--Interviews.

African American beauty operators--Interviews.

African American authors--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Roger Gore, Section
A2004_131_001_002, TRT: 0:30:47 2004/08/18

Roger Gore appeared on a cooking show around the age of six after a teacher selected him as his class's black representative. Gore suffered from sickle cell disease as a child. Although he was an adventurous child, the disease limited his participation in sports. He remembers his mother's protectiveness and his parents telling him how to be a strong person. Gore describes his experience at Benjamin Tasker Junior High in Bowie, Maryland. Here, he was encouraged by a black vice principal, Mr. Banks, to excel academically. He also recounts an experience of racial discrimination in junior high. Gore remembers attending a Rick James concert with his older sister. He also talks about his religious upbringing in the Baptist church and his experience at Crossland High School in Temple Hills, Maryland. Gore describes fist fights and bullying during his years at Crossland High School.

Video Oral History Interview with Roger Gore, Section
A2004_131_001_003, TRT: 0:30:15 2004/08/18

Roger Gore continues to describe his experience at Crossland High School in Temple Hills, Maryland where he excelled in English and computer programming at the encouragement of school counselors who helped him secure a job at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during his senior year. Gore

remembers his high school prom and learning to barber during trips with his father to Seat Pleasant Barber Shop where his uncle was a part-owner. He graduated from high school in 1984 and was accepted to Frostburg State University in Frostburg, Maryland, but decided to enlist in the U.S. Air Force until his father intervened. Gore then enrolled at the Robert Lewis Beauty School in Silver Spring, Maryland to his mother's displeasure. Six months into beauty school, he won a hair competition at the Bronner Bros. International Beauty Show in Atlanta, Georgia where he met hairstylist Barry Fletcher. Gore describes navigating beauty school as a heterosexual male.

Video Oral History Interview with Roger Gore, Section
A2004_131_001_004, TRT: 0:29:54 2004/08/18

Robert Gore worked as a hairstylist from 1986 to 1993 at Barry Fletcher's Avant Garde Hair Gallery where he co-founded the Hair Gangsters, a team of male hairstylists who taught hair cutting techniques around the country. During the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, Gore and other heterosexual stylists experienced an influx of new clientele. Relationships with HistoryMaker Marion Barry and financial executive Mel Calloway helped Gore establish the United Association of Cosmetological Entrepreneurs in 1992. In 1994, Gore started his own company, G'Natural Herbal Products at the age of twenty-eight. Gore describes the company's early years, product testing, and why he developed products for African American hair. He also talks about his two books on hair, 'No More Weave Please' and 'Hair Gangster.' Gore describes the decline of men in the hair industry, changing hair styles in the black community, and the development of HipHopz, a product line for children. He describes how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Roger Gore, Section
A2004_131_001_005, TRT: 0:07:49 2004/08/18

Roger Gore narrates his photographs.