

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Peter F. Hurst, Jr.

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Hurst, Peter F., 1955-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Peter F. Hurst, Jr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	February 15, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:58:00).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Bank executive Peter F. Hurst, Jr. (1955 - ) was the founder and chief executive officer of the Urban Financial Group, which controls the Community's Bank in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Hurst was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 15, 2005, in Bridgeport, Connecticut. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_049
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Peter Frederick Hurst, Jr., founder and chief executive officer of the Community's Bank in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was born on October 29, 1955, in Houston, Texas. Raised in the Third Ward of Houston by parents Peter and Ophelia Hurst, Sr., Hurst was an Eagle Scout at the Wheel Ave. Baptist Church. Attending E.L. Blackshear Elementary School and Sidney Lanier Junior High School, Hurst graduated from Mirabeau Lamar High School in 1974 as a member of the National Honor Society. Hurst earned his A.B. degree in accounting, magna cum laude, from Duke University in 1978, and his J.D. degree from Harvard Law School in 1981.

Hurst clerked for Judge Damon Keith of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in 1981, and a year later he joined the Steptoe and Johnson Law Firm in Washington, D.C. From 1984 to 1986, Hurst served in the General Counsel's Office of the Federal Reserve Bank. Moving to New York City, Hurst worked as an investment banker with E.F. Hutton, and in 1987, became senior vice president with Dean Witter. Going into business for himself in 1990, Hurst worked with smaller clients through Bahia Partners and Hurst Capital Partners. In 2001 Hurst created the Community's Bank, opening branches in the Connecticut cities of Hartford, Bridgeport, and Bloomfield. As founder, chairman of the board, chief executive officer, and president of the Urban Financial Group, the company which controls Community's Bank, Hurst runs the only independent, minority owned bank in Connecticut.

Hurst has served on the boards of the Republic New York Corporation; the Bridgeport Area Foundation; the Community Service Society of New York; Boy Scouts of America (Bronx Council); the University of Scranton; and the United American Healthcare Corporation. Hurst was honored in 2003 by the African American Affairs Commission of Connecticut, and in 2004 became the first African American to serve as grandmaster of the Phineas T. Barnum Parade and Festival in Bridgeport.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Peter F. Hurst, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 15, 2005, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Bank executive Peter F. Hurst, Jr. (1955 - ) was the founder and chief executive officer of the Urban Financial Group, which controls the Community's Bank in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Hurst, Peter F., 1955-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Hurst, Peter F., 1955---Interviews

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African American bankers--Interviews

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African American executives--Interviews

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## Organizations:

## HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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### Occupations:

Bank Executive

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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## 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 Peter F. Hurst, Jr., February 15, 2005. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Peter F. Hurst, Jr., Section A2005\_049\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:00  
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Peter F. Hurst, Jr. was born on October 29, 1955 in Houston, Texas. His mother, Ophelia Richardson Hurst, was born in 1910 in Pearlinton, Mississippi. Her family moved to Orange, Texas then settled in Houston when she was about ten.

Hurst's father, Peter Hurst, Sr., was born in 1902 in Jeanerette, Louisiana and moved to Houston, Texas in his youth. Hurst's mother was a maid and his father was a baker who was hard of hearing. Hurst was his parents' only child and was adopted after his mother endured three miscarriages. He was raised in a working-class black community in Houston where he played football in the street with other neighborhood children and built a snowman during a rare Texas snowfall. Hurst played the trumpet at Saint John Missionary Baptist Church. He attended the all-black Blackshear Elementary School but was bused to the newly integrated Sidney Lanier Junior High School where his English teacher gave him challenging books to read.

African American bankers--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Peter F. Hurst, Jr., Section A2005\_049\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:10  
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Peter F. Hurst, Jr. was a member of the Boy Scouts of America and eventually attained the rank of Eagle Scout. He attended the integrated Mirabeau Lamar High School in Houston, Texas, where he played on the football team and in the band and took a number of Advanced Placement courses. The first in his family to go to college, Hurst's guidance counselor helped him apply. Hurst chose Duke University in Durham, North Carolina because of its reputation and his desire to leave the state. At Duke, Hurst was the treasurer for the black student government, and held various work study jobs. His father's death the summer after his freshman year cemented his desire for a lucrative career, so he studied accounting. He also applied to law school and was accepted at Harvard Law School. After graduating with honors, he entered Harvard, which he found cold, though he formed lasting friendships with some classmates. Although a financial hurdle almost kept him from graduating, he was able to obtain his J.D. in 1981.

Video Oral History Interview with Peter F. Hurst, Jr., Section A2005\_049\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:40  
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Peter F. Hurst, Jr. began working as a law clerk for HistoryMaker Judge Damon Keith in Detroit, Michigan in 1981. Keith proved to be a mentor not just in law, but in life; Hurst was inspired by his consideration of others. Keith also gave Hurst the opportunity to attend the NAACP Fight for Freedom Fund Dinner. In 1982, Hurst joined Steptoe and Johnson LLP in Washington, D.C. where he remained until 1984 when he began working in the general counsel's office of the Federal Reserve Board. Hurst switched from law to investment banking in 1986. As an investment banker, he worked for E.F. Hutton & Co. in New York, New York and then Dean Witter Reynolds. In 1990, Hurst decided to go into business for himself, which eventually led to forming Hurst Capitol Partners. In February of 2001, Hurst opened The Community's Bank, Connecticut's only minority-owned bank. The bank started with three branches but downsized to one in Bridgeport, Connecticut where its goal was to promote community development in the diverse city.

Video Oral History Interview with Peter F. Hurst, Jr., Section A2005\_049\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:10  
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Peter F. Hurst, Jr. was the ringmaster for the 2004 Barnum Festival in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and was the first African American to fill that role in fifty-six years. Appearing as ringmaster was one of many efforts Hurst made to promote community involvement as the founder and leader of The Community's Bank. Hurst discusses shares two stories about customers he personally assisted to highlight The Community's Bank unique role in serving the highly diverse, mainly black and Hispanic community of Bridgeport. At the time of the

interview, Hurst was hoping to expand the bank's number of locations and its services. Hurst reflects upon his life, legacy and his mother seeing his success. He describes his concerns for the African American community and how he wants to be remembered. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.