

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bobby Rogers

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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>	Rogers, Bobby
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bobby Rogers,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 7, 2010
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2010
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:47:30).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Songwriter and singer Bobby Rogers (1940 - ) was a second tenor with the legendary Motown group, The Miracles. Rogers was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 7, 2010, in Detroit, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2010_047
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Bobby Rogers, a second tenor with The Miracles, was born on February 19, 1940 in Detroit, Michigan. Coincidentally, he was born on the same day and in the same hospital as Miracles lead singer Smokey Robinson. At the age of fifteen, Rogers joined Robinson's group, The Matadors, with his cousin, Claudette Rogers. In 1959, he, along with Robinson, Rogers, Ronald White and Pete Moore, joined Berry Gordy's new Motown label, with the new name, The Miracles.

Aside from being a key background vocalist, Rogers helped write several songs for both The Miracles and other Motown acts. These include "The Way You Do The Thing You Do," by the Temptations, and The Miracles own hit, "Going to A Go-Go." After Smokey Robinson's departure in 1972, Rogers stayed with the group, helping to recruit new lead singer Billy Griffin. With Griffin, the Miracles recorded three additional hits, notably 1975's "Love Machine." It is Rogers who offers the song's signature deep growls. After Griffin and Moore departed, Rogers has kept The Miracles brand alive, by adding various new members to the lineup.

In 1983, Rogers joined Robinson and other band mates for the Motown's 25th anniversary special. He, Robinson, and the rest of the Miracles were inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of fame in 2001. The Miracles received a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame in 2009. Rogers continues to tour with The Miracles, and is the only original member left in the group.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Bobby Rogers was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 7, 2010, in Detroit, Michigan, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. Songwriter and singer Bobby Rogers (1940 - ) was a second tenor with the legendary Motown group, The Miracles.

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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:

Rogers, Bobby

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Rogers, Bobby--Interviews

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African American singers--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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The Miracles

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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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 Bobby Rogers, June 7, 2010. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/14/2013 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, June 7, 2010

Video Oral History Interview with Bobby Rogers, Section A2010\_047\_001\_001, TRT:

0:31:18 ?

Bobby Rogers gives his favorites and talks about his family history. His mother, Lois Winifred Rogers was born in Marietta, Georgia in 1924. She attended Northern High School in Detroit, Michigan; where she learned how to sew and become a seamstress. His father, Robert Edward Rogers, Sr. was also from Marietta, Georgia. He worked for Ford Motors Company in Detroit. Rogers grew up on the East Side of Detroit in Black Bottom, a predominantly African American neighborhood. However, his family moved to St. Aubin Street later during his childhood. Rogers shares the sights, sounds and smells of growing up in Detroit, as well one of his earliest childhood memories. African American families--Michigan.

African American grandmothers.

African American fathers.

Black Bottom (Detroit, Mich.)

Video Oral History Interview with Bobby Rogers, Section A2010\_047\_001\_002, TRT: 0:31:08 ?

Bobby Rogers liked music a lot growing up. He listened to songs like "Caledonia" and to singers like Ella Fitzgerald and Della Reese. He also enjoyed listening to music from the live shows that would come into town. Rogers attended grade school on the East Side of Detroit and played the trumpet. He did not attend high school with his friend, Smokey Robinson. Rogers went to Northeastern High School; however, he was born on the same day as Robinson and in the same hospital. Rodgers talks about how he got involved with The Miracles. When a friend of his had to stop singing with the group because his girlfriend was pregnant, Rogers took his place. In 1959, when Rogers was nineteen years old, Berry Gordy formed Motown and The Miracles became part of the company's family of musicians. "Shop Around" was the group's first hit with Motown. The record went gold.

African American singers.

Vocal groups.

Robinson, Smokey, 1940-

Gordy, Berry.

Chess Records (Firm).

Motown Record Corporation.

Video Oral History Interview with Bobby Rogers, Section A2010\_047\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:16 ?

Bobby Rogers talks about The Miracle's commercial success and increasing popularity in the early 1960s. In 1961, the group appeared on Dick Clark's American Bandstand and was one of the first African American groups to perform on the show. Smokey Robinson, Berry Gordy and Rogers all contributed to writing songs for The Miracles and other Motown singing groups. In addition to co-writing songs, Rogers liked to choreograph dance steps for The Miracles. In 1964, The Miracles went to England/Europe on a Motown artists' tour. This was the group's first tour outside of the United States. While on tour, The

Miracles met with The Beatles and spoke with the British rock group about their music. The Beatles were a nice and courteous group of people and Rogers enjoyed getting to know them.

Popular music--United States.

Copyright infringement--United States--Prevention.

Concert tours.

Beatles--Friends and associates.

Temptations (Musical Group).

Whitfield, Norman.

Video Oral History Interview with Bobby Rogers, Section A2010\_047\_001\_004, TRT: 0:14:48 ?

Bobby Rogers reflects on contemporary black music. He talks about his legacy in the context of Motown music. He is proud that he and The Miracles made it and they were a success. Rogers speaks about his first and second wife, and his three children. He has been married to his second wife Joan for thirty years. Rodgers explains that his first wife abused alcohol and that her behavior became increasingly volatile.

Rogers would like for people to remember him as a nice person that did good things to help others and as someone who surrounded himself with good and positive people. Rogers talks about how he avoided the pitfalls of success. He admits that he was around a lot of bad stuff but he knew how to leave negative situations alone. Rogers is happy with his life, family, children and friends. He enjoys having nice things and wants to keep it that way.

Popular music--United States.

African American music.

African American families--Michigan.

Success.

Wives--Family relationships--United States.