

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with John E. Oxendine

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Oxendine, John E.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with John E. Oxendine,
Dates:	September 9, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:01:30).
Abstract:	Media executive and entrepreneur John E. Oxendine (1943 -) was founder, president and CEO of Blackstar, LLC, and owner, chairman and CEO of Broadcast Capital, Inc. Oxendine was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 9, 2014, in Boca Raton, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_207
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Media executive and entrepreneur John Edward Oxendine was born on January 20, 1943 in New York City, New York. He graduated from the Bronx High School of Science in 1959 and then received his B.A. degree in political science and sociology from Hunter College in 1965. Oxendine went on to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1967 to 1973, and, in 1971, earned his M.B.A. degree from Harvard University's Graduate School of Business, where he was awarded the John Hay Whitney Fellowship.

Oxendine worked first as a teacher for the New York City Board of Education, and

then as a management advisor for the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. In 1971, he became a management consultant for Fry Consultants in San Francisco, California, and in 1972, was hired as a senior associate by Korn Ferry Associates in Los Angeles, California. From 1974 to 1979, Oxendine worked as an assistant manager at the First National Bank of Chicago, and from 1979 to 1981, served as assistant chief in the Finance Assistant Division of the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation. Then, in 1981, Oxendine was named president and chief executive officer of Broadcast Capital Fund, Inc., a venture capital organization that provided assistance to minority controlled communications businesses.

In 1987, Oxendine founded and became chairman and chief executive officer of Blackstar Communications, Inc., a company that acquired, owned and operated commercial television stations. He then formed Blackstar, LLC with Fox Broadcasting in 1994, and purchased Broadcast Capital, Inc. in 1999. Oxendine went on to serve as chairman, president and CEO of both Blackstar, LLC and Broadcast Capital, Inc.

Oxendine served as interim CEO and a member of the board of directors of Equity Media Holdings Corporation from June 2008 until January of 2009. He also served on the boards of Paxson Communications Corporation; Lockhart Companies, Inc.; Medlantic Healthcare Group; Family and Child Services of Washington, D.C.; the Interracial Council for Business Opportunity; the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council; the Monterey Institute of International Studies; the National Capitol Area YMCA; HSN, Inc.; Black Student Fund; the Palm Beach International Film Festival; Adopt-A-Classroom; and the Palm Beach County Film and Television Institute. In addition, he has authored several articles on venture capital and media investing that have been published in the *Bar Association Law Journal*, *Duke University Law Review*, *Journal of Minority Business Finance*, and *Sound Management*.

Oxendine was inducted into the Hunter College Alumni Hall of Fame in 1987 and the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council Hall of Fame in 2001. He lives in Boca Raton, Florida.

John E. Oxendine was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 9, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with John E. Oxendine was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 9, 2014, in Boca Raton, Florida, and was recorded on 8

uncompressed MOV digital video files. Media executive and entrepreneur John E. Oxendine (1943 -) was founder, president and CEO of Blackstar, LLC, and owner, chairman and CEO of Broadcast Capital, Inc.

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:

Oxendine, John E.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Champagne, Curt (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Oxendine, John E.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Media Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 John E. Oxendine, September 9, 2014. 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 John E. Oxendine, Section A2014_207_001_001, TRT: 1:28:55 2014/09/09

John E. Oxendine was born on January 20, 1943 in New York City to Beulah Kent Oxendine and Edward Oxendine, Jr. Oxendine's paternal family is descended from the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina, who are a prominent group in Pembroke, North Carolina. His paternal grandfather, Edward Oxendine, Sr., migrated from North Carolina to Florida, where Oxendine's father was born in 1903. Oxendine's maternal family were fishermen, cooks and farmers in Burgess, Virginia, where his mother was born in 1913. After graduating high school, she moved to New York City to live with her sister in Sugar Hill, and met his Oxendine's father through their siblings, who were friends. The two were married and moved to the city's Harlem neighborhood. His mother worked as a nurse, and his father worked for the New York City Transit Authority in the powerhouse, and later in the token booths. Oxendine describes his parents' personalities, and remembers taking road trips to Virginia to visit his mother's family.

Video Oral History Interview with John E. Oxendine, Section
A2014_207_001_002, TRT: 2:29:55 2014/09/09

John E. Oxendine's older brother, James Oxendine was fourteen years older than him, and acted as his father figure. His brother was a member of a gang called the Sportsmen, and managed New York's Playboy Club, where the two brothers often socialized before Oxendine left for the Peace Corps in 1965. Oxendine also had a twin sister, Joan Oxendine, and two younger siblings, Michael Oxendine and Hazel Oxendine, who were ten years younger than him. Oxendine grew up with his siblings in the Sugar Hill area of Harlem, New York, and moved to the Bronx, New York at eleven years old. Oxendine remembers learning to walk; having to sleep on a fold out bed in the family's living room; and going to the movies. He was influenced by the successful African American professionals who lived in his all-black neighborhood. Oxendine skipped the fifth grade at P.S. 46, and later went on to The Bronx High School of Science.

Video Oral History Interview with John E. Oxendine, Section
A2014_207_001_003, TRT: 3:30:03 2014/09/09

John E. Oxendine attended P.S. 46 in New York City, where he developed a childhood crush on his teacher, and was heartbroken when he overheard her flirting with a male teacher. After skipping the fifth grade, Oxendine felt out of place among his classmates at J.H.S. 123, and joined the Sportsmen, a local gang. As a member, Oxendine stole from local churches; forcibly recruited new members; and was involved in fights. When the gang's leader noticed Oxendine's intelligence, he became the gang's second-in-command, and organized its activities. Oxendine attended The Bronx High School of Science in New York City, and was influenced by his English teacher to become a teacher himself. He was offered a full scholarship to Howard University, but did not have the money to travel to Washington, D.C. He enrolled instead at New York City's Hunter College, and planned to study English. Though he enjoyed the movies, Oxendine did not have any aspirations to pursue a career in media at the time.

Video Oral History Interview with John E. Oxendine, Section

A2014_207_001_004, TRT: 4:28:50 2014/09/09

John E. Oxendine dropped out of Hunter College in New York City. He worked part time serving ice cream at Crumbs on the Concourse, and at Alexander's Department Store's warehouse. Unhappy with his limited opportunities, Oxendine decided to return to Hunter College to pursue a degree in political science. While at Hunter College, Oxendine participated in the March on Washington, and supported Malcolm X. Upon graduation, Oxendine joined the Peace Corps with the hope of working in Africa. However, after completing his training in Albuquerque, New Mexico, he was sent to Santiago, Chile, where he taught English, and worked in urban community development. Dissatisfied with the Peace Corps policies that catered to wealthy Chileans, Oxendine left the organization and returned to New York City, where he taught English classes. Expecting to be drafted to the U.S. Army, he opted to enlist voluntarily in the U.S. Marine Corps instead, and was trained at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island in South Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with John E. Oxendine, Section
A2014_207_001_005, TRT: 5:28:35 2014/09/09

John E. Oxendine was trained at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island in South Carolina. His test results showed he had a proficiency for language acquisition, and he was placed in the 20th Interrogation and Translation Team, and learned to speak Russian. His language training, which lasted one year, included both military vocabulary and classic Russian literature. Six years later, Oxendine left the U.S. Marine Corps, and applied to the Federal Bureau of Investigations. However, he refused the position during his interview, after being told that his missions would include infiltrating the Black Panthers. Instead, Oxendine joined the staff of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in New York City, where he became the assistant to manager Alvin N. Puryear. Oxendine wanted to further his career, and Puryear encouraged him to apply to Harvard Business School. Oxendine was admitted, and became involved with the school's African American Student Union. He graduated with an M.B.A. degree in 1971.

Video Oral History Interview with John E. Oxendine, Section
A2014_207_001_006, TRT: 6:32:11 2014/09/09

John E. Oxendine's classmates at the Harvard Business School in Boston, Massachusetts included Herbert P. Wilkins, Sr., who became Oxendine's mentor in the broadcasting industry. Oxendine was disadvantaged compared to his classmates, whose families taught them about business, so he took private lessons with a professor, S.K. Bhattacharya. He earned his M.B.A. degree from the Harvard Business School in 1971. Oxendine spent the next ten years in apprenticeships at various firms, including Fry Consultants Inc., Korn Ferry and the First National Bank of Chicago, where he worked in real estate investment throughout Europe and the United States under Jay Allan Dawson. After his apprenticeships, Oxendine became president and CEO of the venture capital firm Broadcast Capital Fund Inc. As president, Oxendine increased the number of black-owned broadcast stations, but discouraged owners from using the Minority Tax Certificate Program, through which some were exploited.

Video Oral History Interview with John E. Oxendine, Section
A2014_207_001_007, TRT: 7:30:16 2014/09/09

John E. Oxendine continued to run Broadcast Capital Fund Inc. when he started his company, Blackstar Communications Inc., in 1987. He purchased his first two stations with Blackstar, LLC in 1988 for ten million dollars. He then bought stations in Ann Arbor, Michigan and Rapid City, South Dakota; and began a business relationship with Fox Broadcasting Company. At one point, Oxendine owned five stations through Blackstar Communications Inc. In 1995, he stepped down as president of Broadcast Capital Fund Inc., although he remain on the board. Oxendine's successor as president did poorly, and Oxendine decided to purchase Broadcast Capital Fund, Inc. to make it successful once again. He suffered losses in the economic collapse of 2008, when many firms lost 30 to 75 percent of what they owned. Although Oxendine was retired at the time of the interview, he hoped to return to the media industry. He reflects upon his career, and future opportunities for black entrepreneurs in broadcasting and software development.

Video Oral History Interview with John E. Oxendine, Section
A2014_207_001_008, TRT: 8:32:45 2014/09/09

John E. Oxendine describes his business philosophy and his strategy for making decisions. Oxendine shares his thoughts on the sale of the Black Entertainment Television company, and his hope that more African Americans will be drawn to the media and broadcasting industry. In his retirement from broadcasting, Oxendine served on the board of organizations such as the Paragon Foundation Inc., the Palm Beach International Film Festival and Adopt-A-Classroom. At the time of the interview, Oxendine intended to end his retirement, and to become involved in either the fiber-optics industry or the International Executive Service Corps. Oxendine describes his four children; his legacy; and how he would like to be remembered. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.