

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Hugh C. Burroughs

---

## 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>	Burroughs, Hugh C.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hugh C. Burroughs,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 4, 2006
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2006
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:45:30).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Foundation executive Hugh C. Burroughs (1940 - ) has worked for the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, the Berry Gordy Family Foundation, and others during his philanthropic career. He has also served as a member and chair of the Association of Black Foundation Executives. Burroughs was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 4, 2006, in San Mateo, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2006_060
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Hugh C. Burroughs was born on February 6, 1940, in Trinidad & Tobago. His father, Vernon Burroughs, was a shoemaker and shoe repairman. His mother, Evalina, was a homemaker. Burroughs is the eldest of five children. He attended elementary and high school in Trinidad, graduating from high school at the age of sixteen. Between 1957 and 1962, Burroughs worked as a civil servant. He moved to New York City in 1962 to study economics at Columbia University. Burroughs received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Columbia. In 1967, he began work at the university as an assistant dean of students. In this position, Burroughs gained experience speaking with various foundations that donated funds to the university.

Burroughs was then hired as the Associate Director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Fellowship Program at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. In 1971, he worked as an executive staff member at the John Hay Whitney Foundation. He was invited to California in 1977 to be a Program Officer at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. While working at the Hewlett Foundation, he created a series of grants that encouraged the development of the City of East Palo Alto in California. Burroughs later became vice-president of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. He left the Kaiser Foundation to work for the David & Lucile Packard Foundation as Director of External Affairs. Burroughs managed the relationships with government officials, the public at large and other nonprofit leaders.

In 2000, music legend Berry Gordy asked Burroughs to head the Berry Gordy Family Foundation. In 2003, Burroughs decided to work as a part-time foundation management consultant. During his thirty-five year long philanthropic career, he has been a member and chair of the Association of Black Foundation Executives and served as a board member of the Council on Foundations, Northern California Grantmakers, Hispanics in Philanthropy, and Women in Philanthropy.

---

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Hugh C. Burroughs was conducted by Loretta Henry on April 4, 2006, in San Mateo, California, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Foundation executive Hugh C. Burroughs (1940 - ) has worked for the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, the Berry Gordy Family Foundation, and others during his philanthropic career. He has also served as a member and chair of the Association of Black Foundation Executives.

---

## 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:

Burroughs, Hugh C.

Henry, Loretta (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Burroughs, Hugh C. --Interviews

---

Endowments--Officials and employees--Interviews

---

African American executives--Interviews

---

## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

Association of Black Foundation Executives

---

## Occupations:

Foundation Executive

---

## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

---

## 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 Hugh C. Burroughs, April 4, 2006. 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).

---

## 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 Hugh C. Burroughs, Section A2006\_060\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Hugh C. Burroughs was born on February 6, 1940 to Carol Evalina Crawford Whittington and Vernon Burroughs in Trinidad and Tobago. When his maternal great-grandmother passed away, several of her children followed their father from Antigua to Trinidad. Burroughs' maternal grandmother was Antiguan, while his grandfather, a sugarcane farmer, was Trinidadian, and they raised Burroughs' mother in Trinidad. His father was born to Barbadian parents, and later worked as a shoemaker in Arouca, where Burroughs grew up. As a child, he had three half-brothers and an adopted sister, and often played outdoors with his friends. He attended Arouca E.C. School, which, despite being an Episcopalian school, did not include religious teachings in its curriculum. There, he was in a gifted class, where he learned three languages, trigonometry and English literature. Burroughs describes Trinidad and Tobago's sugarcane plantation industry and the impact of British colonial rule upon his community, as well as his outlook on life.

Endowments--Officials and employees--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Hugh C. Burroughs, Section A2006\_060\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Hugh C. Burroughs was a diligent student, graduating first in his class at a private high school in Trinidad and Tobago. Despite colonial rule, his teachers imparted a message that he and his classmates could succeed as teachers or civil servants. As the school was poor, few extracurricular activities were available. After high school, he worked as a correspondence clerk, helping to support his family. Inspired by Kwame Nkrumah, he moved to the United States. He lived with his maternal uncle's family in Brooklyn, New York while studying economics at Columbia University, and worked as a messenger for Seventeen magazine. Upon graduating in 1967, he obtained a position in the dean's office, and became assistant dean by 1970. He later served as an associate program director at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and in 1971, joined the John Hay Whitney Foundation's staff, facilitating grants for historically black colleges until 1977. Burroughs describes his attitude towards church, and transportation in Trinidad.

Video Oral History Interview with Hugh C. Burroughs, Section A2006\_060\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Hugh C. Burroughs began his foundation career at the John Hay Whitney Foundation in 1971. In 1977, Roger W. Heyns appointed him program officer of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. He contributed to the development of East Palo Alto, which was unincorporated until the 1980s, and enabled private foundations to support community foundations. Burroughs met Barbara Jordan as vice president of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. After an administrative change there, he directed the David and Lucile Packard Foundation's communications department. In 2000, he became president of the Berry Gordy Family Foundation. Since retiring in 2003, Burroughs worked as a foundation consultant. He describes the principles that guided his career, the importance of networking and the history of foundations since the 1970s. He explains the low percentage of minority foundation executives, and the differences between types of foundations. He also recalls the impact of Malcolm X and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

Video Oral History Interview with Hugh C. Burroughs, Section A2006\_060\_001\_004, TRT: 0:17:00 ?

Hugh C. Burroughs worked in the foundation sector for over thirty-five years. During this time, he developed numerous professional relationships, including with his mentors, Franklin A. Thomas, James A. Joseph, Roger W. Heyns and Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. Burroughs describes the role of foundations in medical study funding. He reflects upon his values, especially helpfulness, as well as his life. Burroughs identifies his proudest accomplishments, including his children's successes. He concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered by his family and colleagues.