

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Walter A. Hill

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hill, Walter A., 1946-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Walter A. Hill,
Dates:	December 15, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:25:33).
Abstract:	Agricultural engineer Walter A. Hill (1946 -) is the dean of the College of Agriculture, Environment & Nutrition Sciences at Tuskegee University. Hill was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 15, 2012, in Tuskegee, Alabama. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_248
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Agricultural engineer Walter A. Hill was born on August 9, 1946 in New Brunswick, New Jersey. His mother was a school teacher, and his father, a minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Hill's high academic performance in high school earned him a scholarship to attend Lake Forest College in Illinois, where he received his B.S. degree in chemistry in 1968. He continued his studies on a Ford Foundation fellowship at the University of Chicago, where he received his M.A. degree in chemistry in 1970. Hill went on to earn his M.S. in soil chemistry at the University of Arizona in 1973, and his Ph.D. degree in agronomy and environmental chemistry from the University of Illinois College of Agriculture in 1978.

Upon receiving his M.A. degree, Hill spent several years teaching chemistry and general science in the Chicago Public School system. Following the completion of his Ph.D. degree, Hill moved to Alabama to teach soil science at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University). There, he encouraged his students to engage in research projects, and, in 1980, his teaching was honored when he was named a Danforth Associate. Hill has served in several positions at Tuskegee, including director of 1890 Land Grant Research and Extension Programs, the George Washington Carver Agricultural Experiment Station, founder and director of the Carver Integrative Sustainability Center and project director of the Wal-Mart Foundation-sponsored Sustainable Agriculture Consortium for Historically Disadvantaged Farmers. In 2012, Hill was appointed dean of the College of Agriculture, Environment & Nutrition Sciences at Tuskegee University.

Hill has authored journal articles, books and academic conference proceedings on plant-environment relationships for sustainable agriculture and advanced life support systems, and on small and historically disadvantaged farmer and rural community development at. In 2008, he served as the co-editor of *Access & Equity Issues in Agricultural & Rural Development*. Hill has also been active in the local farming community. He is founder and co-leader of the Alabama Agricultural Land Grant Alliance, and the Black Belt Family Farm Fruit & Vegetable Marketing and Innovation Center. In 2001, he received an honorary doctorate from Lake Forest College.

Walter Andrew Hill was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 15, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Walter A. Hill was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 15, 2012, in Tuskegee, Alabama, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Agricultural engineer Walter A. Hill (1946 -) is the dean of the College of Agriculture, Environment & Nutrition Sciences at Tuskegee University.

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:

Hill, Walter A., 1946-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hill, Walter A., 1946- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Agricultural Engineer

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 Walter A. Hill, December 15, 2012. 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 Walter A. Hill, Section A2012_248_001_001, TRT: 1:29:07 ?
Walter A. Hill describes his family background. His mother, Tessie Paisley-Hill, was born in July of 1915 in Greensboro, North Carolina. She was an excellent student and after graduating from high school, she attended Wilberforce University in Ohio and went on to receive her M.A. degree in childhood education from Columbia University. She later worked as a teacher and has been

a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority for over eighty years. Hill's father, Reverend Henry Solomon Hill, was born in 1905 in Little Rock, Arkansas. His family are descendants of the Hill Plantation in South Carolina. He worked as a musician before he became a minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

African American families--Southern States.

Wilberforce University--Alumni and alumnae.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Plantations--South Carolina.

African Methodist Episcopal Church--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter A. Hill, Section A2012_248_001_002, TRT: 2:28:50 ?

Walter A. Hill's father, Reverend Henry Solomon Hill, grew up in North Little Rock, Arkansas, where he attended Shorter College. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, he attended Payne Theological School in Wilberforce, Ohio. There, he met Hill's mother, Tessie Paisley-Hill, and after having their first two children, the family moved to New Brunswick, New Jersey where Hill was born in 1946. At the age of two, Hill's family moved to Oakland, California, where he attended Durant Elementary School and Westlake Junior High School. Hill talks about growing up in Oakland, his favorite teachers, and his interest in science.

African American fathers--Education.

Payne Theological Seminary.

Wilberforce University--Alumni and alumnae.

Childhood--Oakland (Calif.).

Video Oral History Interview with Walter A. Hill, Section A2012_248_001_003, TRT: 3:30:50 ?

Walter A. Hill's family moved to North Little Rock, Arkansas, where he attended Scipio A. Jones High School. Hill talks about his favorite teachers and his experience there. In 1964, he graduated second in his class and received a scholarship to attend Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois. He positioned himself as a leader among the black community on campus, and served as a volunteer and tutor during his free time. In his senior year of college, Hill studied in Germany at the Freie Universität Berlin. He reflects on his memories of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, which occurred during his time in Germany. After receiving his B.A. degree in chemistry in 1968, Hill went on to attend the University of Chicago.

African American high school students--Arkansas.

Lake Forest College--Students, Black.

Freie Universität Berlin.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination.

Chemistry--Study and teaching (Higher).

Video Oral History Interview with Walter A. Hill, Section A2012_248_001_004, TRT: 4:29:36 ?

Walter A. Hill graduated from the University of Chicago in 1971 with his M.A.T. degree in chemistry. After graduating, Hill began teaching chemistry and general science at Forestville High School in Chicago, Illinois. Hill was soon inspired to go into agriculture due to his involvement with the Nation of Islam and other political movements, as well as his growing interest in Africa. He entered the University of Arizona, initially to pursue a B.S. degree, but was recruited into the Master's degree program after impressing the faculty. Hill received his M.S. degree in soil chemistry in 1973. He then attended the

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he pursued his Ph.D. degree in Environmental Chemistry and Agronomy. After graduating from UIUC in 1978, Hill joined the faculty at Tuskegee University.

Chemistry--Study and teaching.

Black Muslims--Food habits.

Agricultural engineers--Education.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter A. Hill, Section A2012_248_001_005, TRT: 5:29:43 ?

Walter A. Hill received his Ph.D. degree in Agronomy and Environmental Chemistry from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1977. After completing his Ph.D. degree, Hill joined the faculty of the Department of Agriculture at Tuskegee University, where he worked in George Washington Carver's lab. Hill talks about his experience at Tuskegee and his research on sweet potatoes, which later produced two patents. In 1987, Hill served as a visiting scientist with NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

Tuskegee University. Department of Agricultural Sciences--Faculty.

Carver, George Washington, 1864?-1943.

Sweet potatoes--Experiments.

Agriculture--Patents--United States.

John F. Kennedy Space Center.

Video Oral History Interview with Walter A. Hill, Section A2012_248_001_006, TRT: 6:29:30 ?

Walter A. Hill talks about the politics of farming, particularly as it relates to the economic perils facing African American farmers in the South. Hill also talks about his hopes and concerns for the African American community and his involvement with volunteer organizations.

Farming--Political aspects.

African American farmers--Southern States--Economic conditions.

Volunteer workers in community development--Black Belt (Ala. and Miss.).

Video Oral History Interview with Walter A. Hill, Section A2012_248_001_007, TRT: 7:27:57 ?

Walter A. Hill provided leadership for the NASA sponsored Center for Food and Environmental Systems. He also served as director of NASA's Life Sciences Advisory Subcommittee from 1994 to 2004. In that role, Hill oversaw the Southern Food Systems Education Consortium (SOFSEC), which was focused on building sustainable partnerships that would serve small, underserved farmers, rural communities and schools. Hill talks about his family and the impact that he has made on his students at Tuskegee University. He also reflects on his career and talks about how he would like to be remembered.

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (U.S.).

United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Life Sciences Division.

Food Services--organization & administration--United States, Southern.

African American families.

African Americans--Farming.