

# 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 uncompressed MOV digital video files (1:47:30).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Songwriter and singer Bobby Rogers (1940 - 2013 ) 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 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 passed away on March 3, 2013.

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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 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Songwriter and singer Bobby Rogers (1940 - 2013 ) 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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The Miracles

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## Occupations:

Songwriter

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Singer

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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 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 Bobby Rogers, Section A2010\_047\_001\_001, TRT: 0:31:18 ?

Bobby Rogers was born on February 19, 1940 in Detroit, Michigan to Lois Wilson Rogers and Robert Rogers, Sr., both of whom migrated to Detroit from Marietta, Georgia. His mother was born in Marietta in 1924; and came to Detroit at a young age with Rogers' maternal grandmother, Azzie Wilson. In Detroit, his grandmother worked as an elevator operator at the J.L. Hudson Department Store. Rogers' mother attended Detroit's Northern High School, and worked as a seamstress. After Rogers' father moved to Detroit, he befriended Rogers'

maternal uncle, Edward Wilson, through whom he met Rogers' mother. Rogers was the oldest of his parents' six children, and grew up in the Black Bottom neighborhood on East Side of Detroit. There, they lived on St. Aubin Street, and usually spent the holidays with Rogers' maternal grandmother, who resided a few blocks away on Edwin Street. Rogers was first introduced to music by his father, who often played the guitar with his friends.

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 grew up in the Black Bottom neighborhood of Detroit, Michigan. He and his friends often visited Detroit's Belle Isle Park, where they pretended to be gangsters like the local Shakers gang. On one occasion, Rogers drew a knife in the presence of his father, Robert Rogers, Sr., and was severely disciplined. Rogers was also interested in music from an early age. He often sat outside Detroit's Flame Show Bar to listen to the acts, and joined a singing group while attending Northeastern High School. Around that time, his cousins, Emerson Rogers and Claudette Robinson, began performing with The Five Chimes, who were led by Smokey Robinson. The group was renamed The Matadors, and eventually became The Miracles. They were joined by Rogers after his cousin left for the U.S. military. The Miracles recorded their first song, 'Got A Job,' with producer Berry Gordy on Chess Records. Soon after, Gordy founded Tamla Records, which released The Miracles' first hit, 'Shop Around,' in 1959.

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 joined vocalists Smokey Robinson, Ronald White, Pete Moore and Claudette Robinson as the second tenor of The Miracles; and the group quickly became famous in Detroit, Michigan and throughout the country. Along with performing, Rogers co-wrote songs for The Miracles and other Motown Records artists, including The Temptations and The Contours, whose song 'First I Look at the Purse' was inspired by a conversation between Rogers and Smokey Robinson. Rogers experienced little tension with his bandmates, as he had no desire to take Robinson's place as the lead singer, which was a conflict that led to the disbandment of many other groups of the time. The Miracles made their television debut in 1961 on Dick Clark's 'American Bandstand.' Around that time, Rogers and White registered The Miracles name, giving them future rights to its use. In 1964, The Miracles began their first European tour; and, while there, became acquainted with British bands like The Rolling Stones and The Beatles.

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 married Wanda Young, a member of Motown Records' The Marvelettes, in 1963. They had two children; and divorced in 1975, after Young succumbed to alcoholism. In 1981, Rogers married Joan Hughes Rogers, with whom he had three more children. Rogers reflects upon the state of contemporary African American music, and describes how he would like to be remembered. He also reflects upon his life, legacy and success as a member of The Miracles.

Popular music--United States.

African American music.

African American families--Michigan.

Success.

Wives--Family relationships--United States.