

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Henry "Hank" Thomas

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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>	Thomas, Hank, 1941-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas,
<b>Dates:</b>	October 2, 2016
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2016
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:55:07).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Civil rights activist and entrepreneur Henry "Hank" Thomas (1941 - ) was a founding member the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and of a Freedom Riders. Later, he became the president of Victoria Hospitality, Inc., the vice president of Hayon, Inc. and a McDonald's franchisee. Thomas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 2, 2016, in Stone Mountain, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2016_066
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civil rights activist and entrepreneur Henry “Hank” Thomas was born on August 29, 1941 in Jacksonville, Florida to Tina R. Heggs and James Cobb. Thomas graduated from Richard J. Murray High School in St. Augustine, Florida in 1959, and received a scholarship to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C. At Howard, Thomas participated in lunch counter sit-ins, and was a founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In May of 1961, Thomas and the other Freedom Riders travelled to the South to protest segregation laws. Thomas was first arrested in Winnsboro, South Carolina, but was soon released. He then survived a firebombing in Anniston, Alabama. Arriving in Jackson, Mississippi, Thomas and the other Freedom Riders were arrested; and upon his release from Parchman State Prison Farm, Thomas was the first Freedom Rider to appeal his conviction, which was upheld by the Mississippi Supreme Court in 1964, but reversed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 195. Thomas was arrested twenty-two times over the course of his civil rights activism.

In 1965, Thomas served in the Vietnam War as a U.S. Army Medic, and was awarded the Purple Heart for his service. After his tour ended in 1966, Thomas moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where he and a business partner purchased and operated a Laundromat. After selling his share of the Laundromat, Thomas acquired a Dairy Queen franchise, and then a Burger King franchise, before becoming the franchisee of six McDonald's restaurants. Thomas went on to own four Marriott Hotels, two Fairfield Inns, and two TownePlace Suites. He was the president of Victoria Hospitality Properties, Inc. and vice-president of Hayon, Inc., which owned and operated McDonald's restaurants in the Atlanta area. In 1993, Thomas was one of three U.S. veterans to travel to Vietnam for a reconciliation meeting with North Vietnamese soldiers.

Thomas received numerous awards for his civil rights activism and his business achievements. In 2010, he was inducted into the Atlanta Business League Men of Influence Hall of Fame and received the 365black Award given by McDonald's Inc. In 2011, he was inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame. He was a lifetime

member of the NAACP, and served on the board of trustees for Morehouse School of Medicine.

Thomas and his wife, Yvonne Thomas, have two children and four grandchildren.

Henry “Hank” Thomas was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 1, 2016.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 2, 2016, in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Civil rights activist and entrepreneur Henry "Hank" Thomas (1941 - ) was a founding member the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and of a Freedom Riders. Later, he became the president of Victoria Hospitality, Inc., the vice president of Hayon, Inc. and a McDonald's franchisee.

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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:

Thomas, Hank, 1941-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Thomas, Hank, 1941- --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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## Occupations:

Civil Rights Activist

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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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 Henry "Hank" Thomas, October 2, 2016. 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 Henry "Hank" Thomas, Section A2016\_066\_001\_001, TRT:

1:32:27 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas, Section A2016\_066\_001\_002, TRT:  
2:28:21 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas, Section A2016\_066\_001\_003, TRT:  
3:27:10 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas, Section A2016\_066\_001\_004, TRT:  
4:28:49 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas, Section A2016\_066\_001\_005, TRT:  
5:32:32 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas, Section A2016\_066\_001\_006, TRT:  
6:28:54 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas, Section A2016\_066\_001\_007, TRT:  
7:29:06 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Henry "Hank" Thomas, Section A2016\_066\_001\_008, TRT:  
8:27:48 ?