Guide to the Papers of

Chester Higgins JR.

Prepared by Mary-Margaret Ollivierre & Jala Robertson, 2023

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**Tuskegee University National Center of**

**Archives and Museums**

**Tuskegee, AL 36088**

A joint project of Tuskegee University National Center of Archives and Museums and History Department, Auburn University, Alabama

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**Collection Summary**

**Creator:** Chester Higgins JR. (1946-Present)

**Title:** Papers of Chester Higgins JR.

**Dates:**

**Quantity:**

**Identification:**

**Abstract:**

The collection of these documents and photographs serves as an overview of Chester Higgins' JR early life and the pivotal events that ignited his passion for photography. Raised in a culturally diverse environment, Higgins developed a keen eye for observing the intricate nuances that define human experiences. He embarked on a journey to capture and preserve the essence of these experiences, transforming them into powerful visual narratives that reflect the richness of human diversity.

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**Administrative Information**

**Preferred Citation**

Chester Higgins JR. Collection

**Acquisition Information**

No information available

**Processing Information**

The prints, pamplets, magazines, et al. were received for processing in boxes, in what was assumed to be their original folders and condition. From their arrangement in the boxes it was assumed that all content was not arranged in any particular order. The processors decided to separate the content into folders based on the type of material and given titles – if not pre-assigned by Chester Higgins JR, or featured contributors.

In processing the collection, original folders were replaced with acid-free folders. Folders were labeled, either following the original labeling, or in the case of missing or incorrect labels were assigned folder titles. All metal fasteners were removed, and original plastic coverings were kept—and assigned–to maintain the printed images.

**Index Terms**

The papers are indexed under the following headings in the Tuskegee University Library’s online catalog. Researchers seeking materials about related subjects, persons, organizations, or places should search the catalog using these headings.

**Subjects:**

N/A

**Person (s):** Chester Higgins JR

Harold McDougall

Marshall Efron

Nikki Giovanni

Verta Mae

**Biography**

Chester Higgins, the visionary photographer, has left an indelible mark on the world of visual storytelling with his captivating images that transcend cultural boundaries. Born and raised in a diverse environment, Higgins developed a keen eye for capturing the intricate nuances that define human experiences. Through his masterful compositions and skillful use of light, he breathes life into his photographs, vividly portraying cultural identities and traditions, from the vibrant tapestry of African heritage to poignant reflections on the African-American experience. Beyond aesthetics, his photography serves as a powerful instrument of social consciousness, shedding light on issues of injustice and inequality while celebrating the beauty and resilience of marginalized communities. As an educator and mentor, Higgins has also dedicated himself to preserving cultural narratives and inspiring the next generation of artists. His photographic legacy continues to resonate, reminding us of the transformative power of art in shaping our understanding of humanity's shared heritage.

**Scope and Contents**

The collection comprises a range of documents, magazines, pamplets, photo prints, and tokens from 1950s to present day 2023. These documents presented a diverse range of history, archeology, and storytelling in the lens of photography. The collection includes secondary source documents, such as prints.

**Arrangement**

The papers are arranged into folders.

**Restrictions**

**Restrictions on Access**

There are no restrictions on access to these papers.

**Restrictions on Use**

Researchers are responsible for addressing copyright issues on materials not in the public domain.

**Inventory**

Chester Higgins JR.

**Box Folder**

1 1 Chester Higgins JR Book “Drums of Life”

1 2 Black Woman by Chester A. Higgins JR Text by Harold McDougall III Part I

1 3 Black Woman by Chester A. Higgins JR Text by Harold McDougall III Part 2

1 4 Drums of Life Photography by Chester Higgins JR Text By Orde Coombs

1 5 Black Woman by Chester A. Higgins JR Text by Harold McDougall Part 2

1 6 Black Woman by Chester A. Higgins JR Text by Harold McDougall Part 2

1 7 Drums of Life Photographs By Chester Higgins JR Text by Orde Coombs

1 8 Black Woman Manuscript

2 1 Published Works – Single Items

2 2 Newspaper

2 3 Colorized Newspaper Clippings

2 4 Newspaper Images

2 5 “I’ve Gone on My Own…”

3 1 “Ellis Haizlip” by Chester Higgins, JR.

3 2 Photos by: Chester Higgins, JR.

3 3 Photos by Chester Higgins, JR

3 4 “We’re Waging War in West Africa. – war against famine.”

3 5 Learning in Black College/ Wilson Library Bulletin (September 1969)  
3 6 Essence: June pages 37-38; 43-44

3 7 Photos by Chester Higgins , JR

3 8 Photos by Chester Higgins, JR

3 9 Photos by Chester Higgins. JR

3 10 Eva Rubinsten Photography 1972-1974

3 11 “Harlem As It Is – A Very Careful Tour”  Section 10 Sunday/October 13, 1974

3 12 Black Woman: a 1970 Closeup

3 13 The Photography of Chester Higgins JR

3 14 The New York Times Jan 17, 1991 & Feb. 2 1871

3 15 The Media “Dream Machine’s” Marshall Efron

3 16 Published Works Single Items

3 17 Soul Impressions by Nikki Giovanni

3 18 B-Q News Vol. 1, No. 11 May 14th 1971

3 19 Chester Higgins Jr. Vandee Smith Publish New Book “The Black Woman”

3 20 Photo 209 Gallery – Chester Higgins JR.

3 21 Doubleday Book Log July 1974

3 22 Wednesday, March 3, 1971 Photo

3 23 Studio Museum In Harlme Brochure

3 24 A Letter From Vandell Cobb to Chester Higgins JR

3 25 Photos by Chester Higgins JR  
3 26 Photograph by Chester Higgins JR Dr.

3 27 Negro Digst August 1969 “Southern Soul Series” by Chester Higgins JR

3 28 Poetess Nikki Giovanni and Verta Mae

3 29 Photos and Design by Chester Higgins, JR

3 30 Article: “Warm and Gentle, But Incomplete”  The New York Times Sunday, June 16, 1974

3 31 The New York Times : “ Arts and Leisure Section 2 Sunday, December 27, 1970

3 32 The New York Times Tuesday, November 10, 1970

3 33 IFCO News Volume IV, Issue VI November, December 1973

3 34 The New York Times , Sunday Janurary 1971: “Soul in Motion” by Chester Higgins JR

3 35 Chester Higgins, JR – Drums of Life

3 36 A Note to Chester

3 37 Suggestion of the Devil: The Origins of Madness by Judith S. Neaman

3 38 Published Works – Sing Le Items

3 39 Photos by Chester Higgins JR

3 40 New York Times

3 41 The New York Times: Hi–FI Recordings Section 13 Sunday, March 7, 1971

3 42 Chester Higgins JR  
3 43 “Drums of Life” by Chester Higgins

3 44 Invintation from Chester Higgins JR

3 45 Chapter Two Photography – Chester Higgins JR Photographer

3 46 “Chester Higgins JR Sees Life’s Story…” Amsterdam News Vol. 64–No. 23 Sat. June 8, 1974

3 47 “Michael Levin Presides Over A Collection of 70,000 LP’s and 8,000s Tapes”

3 48 “What We Use For Bird Seed, She Eats To Stay Alive”

3 49 “Photography: Chester Higgins, JR. At The Acts of Art Gallery” Saturday, June 15th, 1974 VOL. LXXV No. 9

3 50 JET: The Ordeal of Walfare. Mother In A White College Town Nov. 20, 1969

4 1 Biographical Information

4 2 Chester Higgins, Misc.

4 3 “Chronicle of Blacks in Black and White”

4 4 Black Cenema Magazine, 1982

4 5 “Bridges of Passage” Chester Higgins, Jr.

4 6 “Focusing Past The Stereotypes,” Article about Chester Higgins JR. The – Washington Post August 8 1974 E5

4 7 Anchor Press, Press Release, “Drums of Life.”

4 8 “The Positive Eye By Chester Higgins Jr.”

4 9 Poster by Higgins

4 10 “Some Time Ago Edits”

4 11 The Moderator, “Chester Higgins, Tuskegee Institution’

4 12 Teaching Guide, Scholastic’s Black Culture Program, Dorothy Matlock, 1973

4 13 Photos Taken On A Train, New York Times, Chester Higgins, Jr.

4 14 “Book Provides Visual Record Of Black American Experience

4 15 11 Visions of Black America Freed At Last”

4 16 Pictures Keep Black History Alive

4 17 “In This Corner, Algren”

4 18 “Chester Higgins And The Photographic Archives of American Blacks.”

4 19 “People–Watching Pastime Pays Off For Photographer.”

4 20 “Prevailing Images”

4 21 Misc. Photo Slides

4 22 Correspondence, The New York Times To Chester Higgins, JR.

4 23 “Young Photographer’s First Book Portrays The Beauty & Pride of Black Women”

4 24 Advertisement For Book  
4 25 Misc. Newspaper Clippings

5 1 Financial Records

5 2 Exhibition

5 3 Personal Biographical

5 4 Conversation With The Photographer Chester Higgins JR.

5 5 Cards

5 6 Exhibitions

5 7 Exhibitions

5 8 Tape (Reel to Reel)

5 9 Archaeology January - February 2000

5 10 Archaeology March - April 1996

5 11 Postcards’ Sheikh Hussein Mortuary Temple Bale

5 12 Postcard: Bete Giyorgis (Church of St. George) Lalibela Ethiopia

5 13 Postcards: Tankwa (Papyrus Reed Boat) on Lake Tana

5 14 The Caves of SOF Omar, Bale Province Ethiopia

6 1 Postcards by Chester Higgins JR

6 2 Magazines; Photo Essays by Chester Higgins JR

6 3 “My Name is Black” An Anthology of Black Poets” by Amanda Ambrose, ed.

6 4 “The Explorers Journal” – Vol. 100 NO. 3 Fall 2022

6 5 Stars of Ethiopia by Chester Higgins JR 2011

6 6 SacredNile.com

6 7 Nubian Dreams; Images of Sudan

6 8 Uncovering Our Ancestors

6 9 Magazines featuring Chester Higgins JR photographs

7 1 “Kulaka” Ancient Egyptian Game of Challenge

7 2 Feeling the Spirit; Searching The World for The People of Africa

7 3 B&W Feeling the Spirit; Searching The World for The People of Africa

7 4 Feeling the Spirit; Searching The World for The People of Africa

7 5 Feeling the Spirit; Searching The World for The People of Africa

7 6 Elder Grace: The Nobility of Aging

7 7 Elder Grace: The Nobility of Aging

7 8 Elder Grace: The Nobility of Aging

7 9 A Day with Photographer Chester Higgins JR

7 10 The African Burial Ground: Cover by Chester Higgins JR

7 11 Landscapes of the Soul: Women of the African Diasporia

7 12 Calendar. Elder Grace: The Nobility of Aging

8 1 Prints