

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. James Bowman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Bowman, James E.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman,
Dates:	September 27, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:33:15).
Abstract:	Medical professor, pathologist, and geneticist Dr. James Bowman (1923 - 2011) was an expert in genetic pathology and a world traveler. Bowman was professor emeritus in the departments of pathology and medicine at the University of Chicago. Bowman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 27, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_192
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Geneticist, medical professor and pathologist Dr. James Bowman was born on February 5, 1923 in Washington, D.C. to James E. Bowman, a dentist and Dorothy Bowman, a homemaker. Bowman graduated with honors from Dunbar High School in 1939 and went on to study biology at Howard University where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1943. By attending medical school as part of the U.S. Army Medical Corps at Howard University, Bowman was able to obtain his medical degree in 1946. His intention was to become an Army medical officer, but at the time, segregation prevented it, so Bowman continued his studies in pathology. After an internship at Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C., Bowman did his residency in pathology at St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago from 1947 to 1952.

In 1955, Bowman accepted a position in Iran where he studied favism, a disease which relates to the deficiency of glucose-6-dehydrogenase. From 1961 to 1962, Bowman studied genetics at the Galton Laboratory at the University College London. After returning from London, University of Chicago professor Alf Alving invited Bowman to take a faculty position there in the malaria research unit. His research on enzyme deficiency at the University of Chicago sent him abroad to do population studies. Bowman traveled to Mexico, Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Uganda among other places. From 1981 to 1982, Bowman studied under the Henry J. Kaiser Senior Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University.

An expert in the fields of pathology and genetics and professor emeritus in the departments of pathology and medicine at the University of Chicago, Bowman also served on the Committee on Genetics; the Committee on African and African American Studies; and as a senior scholar for the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics. He also published more than ninety works in the fields of general human genetics; hematological population genetics; genetic variation among diverse peoples; and ethical, legal and public policy issues in human genetics. One of his most notable books entitled, "Genetic Variation Disorders in People of African Origin," was co-authored with Robert Murray. Bowman and his wife, Barbara, raised one daughter, Valerie Bowman Jarrett.

Bowman passed away on September 28, 2011 at age 88.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. James Bowman was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 27, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Medical professor, pathologist, and geneticist Dr. James Bowman (1923 - 2011) was an expert in genetic pathology and a world traveler. Bowman was professor emeritus in the departments of pathology and medicine at the University of Chicago.

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:

Bowman, James E.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Bowman, James E.--Interviews

Pathologists--Interviews

Geneticists--Interviews

University of Chicago. College--Faculty--Interviews

Bowman, James E.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Pritzker School of Medicine.

Occupations:

Pathologist

HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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 Dr. James Bowman, September 27, 2002. 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 Dr. James Bowman, Section A2002_192_001_001, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Dr. James Bowman describes his childhood in Washington, D.C. He was born to James E. and Dorothy Bowman on February 5, 1923 in Washington, D.C. James E. Bowman attended Howard University College of Dentistry and was a practicing dentist, while Dorothy Bowman was a homemaker. Though Washington, D.C. was segregated during Bowman's childhood, the city's busses were not. As a youth, Bowman enjoyed riding his bike and reading books at the public library. He was also a champion tennis player, and won the District of Columbia Negro singles tennis champion. In 1935, Bowman enrolled at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. After graduating in 1939, Bowman enrolled at Howard University, where he studied under Howard Thurman, Raeford Logan, E. Franklin Frasier, and Ralph J. Bunche. Bowman graduated with his B.S. degree in biology in 1943, and subsequently enrolled in Howard University College of Medicine, and graduated from there in 1946.

African American families--Washington (D.C.).

African American children--Washington (D.C.).

African American students--Education (Secondary).

African American students--Education (Higher).

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman, Section A2002_192_001_002, TRT: 0:30:15 ?

In 1946, Dr. James Bowman was drafted to serve in the U.S. Army. He was assigned to serve as a researcher at Medical Attrition Laboratory in Chicago, Illinois, and transferred to Denver, Colorado after the laboratory changed locations. In 1950, Bowman married his wife, HistoryMaker Barbara Bowman. Dr. Bowman left the U.S. Army between 1954 and 1955, and moved to Iran with his wife. Here, Bowman helped establish Namazi Hospital in Shiraz, Iran, and worked on a pioneering study of the genetic disease glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase, or favism. In 1956, the Bowmans gave birth to their daughter, HistoryMaker Valerie Bowman Jarrett. The family embraced Iranian culture, and traveled throughout the Middle East and Europe. In 1961, the Bowmans moved to London, England, where Bowman studied genetics at the Galton Laboratory at the University College of London until 1962. In 1962, Dr. Alf Alving invited Bowman to join the faculty at the University of Chicago's Malaria Research Unit, which he accepted.

African American physicians.

Pathologists.

University of Chicago--Faculty.

Disease susceptibility--Genetic aspects.

Genetics.

Genetic disorders.

African Americans--Health and hygiene.

Segregation.

Blacks--Health.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman, Section A2002_192_001_003, TRT: 0:28:25 ?

Dr. James Bowman lived in Iran from 1955 to 1961. Bowman describes how American CIA secrets were common knowledge amongst those living in Iran. Bowman moved to London, England to perform genetic research at the Galton Laboratory at the University College of London from 1961 to 1962. He then accepted a position at the University of Chicago in 1962 with the university's Malaria Research Unit. He describes his first research trip to Africa in 1976, where he travelled to Lagos, Nigeria with his family and researchers. Given the tensions surrounding the breakdown of colonialism, Bowman initially had trouble getting into the country. When the Bowmans travelled to Uganda weeks later, they experienced the war-torn atmosphere of the country. Bowman also travelled with his family to Ghana, Cameroon, and Ethiopia. Bowman learned of the Civil Rights activities of the 1960s in America on the radio. Bowman also describes how he reacted to foreigners' perceptions of the United States.

Civil rights movements--United States.

School integration--Arkansas--Little Rock--History--20th century.

Central High School (Little Rock, Ark.)--History--20th century.

Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency.

Peasant uprisings--Africa.

Genetic disorders.

Blacks--Health.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman, Section A2002_192_001_004, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Dr. James Bowman talks about his book, Genetic Variation Disorders in Peoples of African Origin, and comments on diversity from a genetics standpoint. Bowen also shares his perspective on the "nature vs. nurture" debate as it relates to power. According to Bowen, Eskimos and Australian Aborigines are the only groups that have not started wars, as they have never possessed power. Most other ancestral groups that have initiated wars, uprisings and rebellions have possessed power at some point. Bowman talks about the Model Sterilization Law, which prompted some U.S. states to pass forced sterilization laws. The law also played a major role in the 1927 Buck v. Bell ruling, in which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld an act of force sterilization. Bowman also talks about eugenicist and physicist William Shockley, and eugenics over time and across the world. He also comments on the research of Dr. Frances C. Welsing. Bowman also shares his thoughts on "the ideal society," religion, and scientific progress.

Genetic disorders.

Genetics.

Involuntary sterilization--United States.

Involuntary sterilization--United States--History--20th century.

Eugenics.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman, Section A2002_192_001_005, TRT: 0:30:15 ?

Dr. James Bowman shares a story about Dr. Joycelyn Elders, the first African American appointed as the Surgeon General of the United States, the politics surrounding stem cell research, and the future of genetic research. Dr. Bowman notes that cancer, and perhaps death, will be eradicated one day. Bowman's

father, James E. Bowman, was murdered in 1955, and his mother, Dorothy Bowman, died of hypertension. Bowman shares his hopes and concerns for the African American community, which included establishing a socialized healthcare system in the U.S. to help African Americans and the underprivileged. Bowman reflects upon his legacy, as well as his contributions in research and his teaching in Iran. Bowman also talks about how he would like to be remembered. He closes the interview by sharing advice for young people, talking about his wife, HistoryMaker Barbara Bowman, and narrating his photographs.

African American fathers.

Embryonic stem cells--Research.

Human embryo--Research.

Human embryo--Research--Government policy

Embryonic stem cells--Research--Government policy.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman, Section A2002_192_001_006, TRT: 0:06:30 ?

James Bowman narrates his photos.