

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dawson, Horace G. (Horace Greeley), 1926-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson,
Dates:	June 6, 2003 and May 11, 2022
Bulk Dates:	2003 and 2022
Physical Description:	11 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:00:57).
Abstract:	Ambassador The Honorable Horace G. Dawson (1926 -) served as the U.S. Ambassador to Botswana from 1979 to 1983 and as the United States Information Agency's Director of African Affairs from 1973 to 1977. He also held diplomatic roles in Uganda, Nigeria, Liberia, and the Philippines and directed public and international affairs programs at Howard University. Dawson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 6, 2003 and May 11, 2022, in Washington, D.C. and Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_122
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Ambassador The Honorable Horace G. Dawson was born on January 30, 1926 in Augusta, Georgia to Mary Bell Smith and Horace Greeley Dawson, Sr. Dawson attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania for two years before being drafted into the Army, where he served a two-year tour of duty in Europe and the Philippines. Dawson then returned to Lincoln University to finish his studies, receiving his B.A. degree in English in 1949. He went on to study English and comparative literature at Columbia University, where he received his M.A. degree in 1950. Dawson received his Ph.D. degree in mass communications from the University of Iowa in 1961.

After receiving his M.A. degree, Dawson was hired as an English teacher at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he taught for three years. He then went on to teach at North Carolina Central University, where he worked as an associate professor of English and the director of public relations. After receiving his Ph.D. degree, Dawson was hired by the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1962 and worked as a cultural affairs officer in Uganda until 1964 and Nigeria until 1967 and then as a public affairs officer in Liberia until 1971. He then returned to the United States, where he was appointed cultural advisor for the USIA. From 1973 to 1977, Dawson served as Director of African Affairs for the USIA before being named the USIA's minister of information and government in the Philippines. In 1979, he was appointed the ambassador to Botswana by President Jimmy Carter. As ambassador, he worked to improve Botswana's education system and end apartheid in South Africa. Returning to the United States in 1983, Dawson worked in the recruitment division of the State Department, special assistant to the director of the USIA, and director of the USIA's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity until his retirement in 1989. He then joined the faculty at Howard University and was appointed director of its Patricia Roberts Harris Public Affairs Program. In 1993, Dawson established the Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center at Howard University, and in 1997 became the director of that program as well.

Dawson has served as a member of the Peace Corps Advisory Board, chairman of the Selection Committee for the Franklin H. Williams Memorial Internship Program of the Council on Foreign Relations, chairman of the Association of Black American Ambassadors, and chairman emeritus of the Senior Board of Stewards of Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Washington, D.C.

Dawson lives in Washington, D.C. He has two sons.

Horace Dawson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 6, 2003 and May 11, 2022.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 6, 2003 and May 11, 2022, in Washington, D.C. and Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 11 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Ambassador The Honorable Horace G. Dawson (1926 -) served as the U.S. Ambassador to Botswana from 1979 to 1983 and as the United States Information Agency's Director of African Affairs from 1973 to 1977. He also held diplomatic roles in Uganda, Nigeria, Liberia, and the Philippines and directed public and international affairs programs at Howard 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:

Dawson, Horace G. (Horace Greeley), 1926-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Dawson, Horace G. (Horace Greeley), 1926- --Interviews

Ambassadors--United States--Interviews

Universities and colleges--Faculty--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Dept. of State

Occupations:

Foreign Ambassador

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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 The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, June 6, 2003 and May 11, 2022. 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 The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Horace G. Dawson narrates his photographs.

Ambassadors--United States--Interviews

Universities and colleges--Faculty--Interviews

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Horace G. Dawson narrates his photographs. Dawson also describes his family background. Dawson was born on January 30, 1926 in Augusta, Georgia. His mother, Mary Bell Smith Dawson, was born in Norwood, Georgia and was one of Spelman College's earliest students until she married his father in 1918. Dawson describes his mother as mild-mannered and loving. His father, Horace Greeley Dawson, Sr., was born in 1894 and worked for Railway Express Company with a brief interruption to serve in World War I. Dawson's paternal grandfather was born a slave on the Wicker Plantation in Norwood, Georgia. After being freed as a teenager, he changed his name from Wicker to Joseph Henry Dawson and moved to Augusta, Georgia. Dawson describes his father as formidable and devoted to the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Dawson recalls being involved with the community center, attending Bible School and selling newspapers while growing up in Augusta, Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_001_003, TRT: 0:29:42 ?

Horace G. Dawson delivered the "Pittsburgh Courier" and was involved in the Boy Scouts. He speaks of how black Boy Scouts could not become first class scouts because they did not have access to a pool in order to pass the swimming test. Dawson attended kindergarten at the Bethlehem Community Center and grade school at Maude Street School in Augusta, Georgia. His favorite subject was English, and he worked on the school's newspaper and yearbook. Dawson was elected class president in high school and graduated in 1943. Dawson talks about his famous cousin, Louis Lomax. Dawson chose to attend Lincoln University in Pennsylvania over the local college after promising his father to earn money as a bellhop in Naragansett, Rhode Island to pay for school. Dawson completed one semester before he joined the U.S. Armed Services during World War II. He later returned to Lincoln to finish his degree. He talks about Horace Mann Bond and Walter Turpin.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_001_004, TRT: 0:29:17 ?

Horace G. Dawson recalls his professors at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania including James B. McRae who encouraged his interest in journalism and Horace Mann Bond who was Lincoln University's first black president. He

spoke of the African students who went on to be African political leaders the notable students from Africa who went on to be political leaders like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah, president of Ghana. Dawson attended school with Edward Wilmot Blyden, III of the famous Blyden family in Sierra Leone. After graduating in 1949, Dawson attended Columbia University in New York City for his M.A. degree in comparative literature. He lived with an uncle in Harlem and served as a delegate to political conventions. Dawson then was hired by Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where he met his wife, HistoryMaker Lula Cole Dawson, who was a student there. Dawson describes meeting Douglas Elaine Moore, a radical who sponsored the early sit-in movement and was sent to the Congo as a missionary.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_001_005, TRT: 0:30:17 ?

Horace G. Dawson recalls how he became involved with the U.S. Foreign Service. While teaching at North Carolina College in Durham, North Carolina, John Hope Franklin encouraged Dawson to earn his Ph.D. Dawson's dissertation on foreigners' attitudes toward America and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa in 1961. Famed CBS-TV journalist Edward R. Murrow read his study and flew to Durham to convince Dawson to join the United States Information Agency (USIA). In 1962, Dawson began his foreign service in Uganda where Milton Obote was struggling to unite other ethnic majorities. Dawson comments on Idi Amin and the political tensions that Uganda faced. Dawson was then assigned to be the Cultural Affairs Officer in Nigeria and got to know Nigerian President Nnamdi Azikiwe who faced a series of coups. Dawson next served as Public Affairs Officer in Liberia which was founded by an American slave for three years and comments on Liberian Presidents William Tubman and William Tolbert.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_001_006, TRT: 0:29:49 ?

Horace G. Dawson describes his time in the U.S. Foreign Service. From 1973 to 1976, Dawson served in Liberia as Director of African Affairs and visited every country in Africa. In 1976, Dawson became the Minister of Information and Culture in the Philippines during Ferdinand Marcos presidency. From 1979 to 1983, Dawson was the Ambassador to Botswana which was a former British colony and rich with diamonds. Dawson talks about the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and the role of the U.S. in "constructive engagement." Dawson worked in the U.S. State Department until his retirement in 1989 and then joined the faculty at Howard University in Washington, D.C. and was appointed director of the public affairs program. In 1993, Dawson established the International Affairs Center and in 1997 became its director. Dawson comments on how prominent African Americans in government such as HistoryMaker Colin Powell affect foreigners' views on the U.S.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_001_007, TRT: 0:05:20 ?

Horace G. Dawson describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community which include the criminal justice system and AIDS. Dawson sees his legacy as educating young people and advocating for more African Americans to go into foreign service.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_002_008, TRT: 8:29:21 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section A2003_122_002_009, TRT: 9:29:22 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section
A2003_122_002_010, TRT: 10:29:20 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Horace G. Dawson, Section
A2003_122_002_011, TRT: 11:29:29 ?