

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with George Jones

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jones, George, 1942-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with George Jones,
Dates:	April 12, 2011
Bulk Dates:	2011
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:01:11).
Abstract:	Biology professor and biologist George Jones (1942 -) researched RNA metabolism and the production of antibodies in bacteria. He was named the Goodrich C. White Professor in Biology at Emory University in 1996. Jones was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 12, 2011, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2011_021
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Biologist and biology professor George H. Jones was born February 21, 1942 in Muskogee, Oklahoma. He received his B.A. degree in biochemical sciences from Harvard University in 1963. Jones continued his education at the University of California, Berkeley, where he attained his Ph.D. degree in biochemistry under the tutelage of Dr. C. E. Ballou. Jones then worked for two years as a visiting scientist at the National Institutes of Health between 1968 and 1970. After this, he moved on to the University of Geneva in Switzerland, where he completed a postdoctoral fellowship in 1971. Upon returning to the United States, Jones was hired by the zoology department at the University of Michigan, and in 1975, he moved to the department of biology and chaired the department of cellular and molecular biology within the Division of Biological Sciences between 1980 and 1982.

In 1984, Jones assumed yet another post as professor and Associate Chairman for Space and Facilities at the University of Michigan; he also taught in the Division of Biological Sciences and served as Associate Dean at the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies. Between 1986 and 1989, Jones served as a professor in the department of biology at University of Michigan, and then in 1989, he moved to Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia to serve as its Dean in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. In 1990, he served as the college's acting dean. In 1996, Jones received the prestigious Goodrich C. White Professorship in Biology at Emory University.

Jones' numerous awards include the University of Michigan Excellence in Teaching Award (1989) and the Emory University Scholar/Teacher Award (1998), as well as membership in several distinguished professional societies, including the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and the American Society for Microbiology. His research concerns the mechanism and regulation of antibiotic synthesis in the bacteria *Streptomyces*. He received a three-year National Science Foundation Grant in 2003 to study RNA degradation and antibiotic synthesis in *Streptomyces*, and another in 2008 to study RNA degradation and the regulation of antibiotic production. He resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

George H. Jones was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 12, 2011.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with George Jones was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 12, 2011, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Biology professor and biologist George Jones (1942 -) researched RNA metabolism and the production of antibodies in bacteria. He was named the Goodrich C. White Professor in Biology at Emory University in 1996.

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:

Jones, George, 1942-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jones, George, 1942- --Interviews

African American biologists--Interviews.

Microbiologists--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

University of Michigan Emory University

Occupations:

Biologist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 George Jones, April 12, 2011. 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 George Jones, Section A2011_021_001_001, TRT: 1:30:02 ?

George Jones discusses his family background. His mother, Bernice Imonette Weaver, was born on September 19, 1903, outside of Waco, Texas to Elijah Bowman Weaver and Mary Jane Weaver. She was a high school music teacher by profession. Jones' father, George Henry Jones Sr., was born on December 4, 1886 in St. Charles Missouri. He was a postman by profession. Jones grew up in Muskogee, Oklahoma and was raised by a babysitter during the early years of his life. As a result, he learned to entertain himself. His neighborhood was relatively integrated and whites and blacks got along amicably, but Jones attended Dunbar Elementary School, which was segregated. He developed an interest in science at a young age and mentions an influential sixth grade science teacher named Mrs. Riley.

African American families--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

African American neighborhoods--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

Segregation in education--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

Video Oral History Interview with George Jones, Section A2011_021_001_002, TRT: 2:30:19 ?

George Jones continues to talk about the political activity of his parents and the atmosphere of the time. The Tulsa Race Riots took place near his town in 1921, but Jones didn't learn about them until high school. The black community that he grew up in was cohesive and always watched out for one another. Jones developed an interest in science early by reading science fiction books and watching television programs. He attended Muskogee Manual Training School, which started as an occupational school, but later offered academic course as well. Jones made good grades and also played the saxophone in high school. He talks about his decision to aim high and apply to Harvard University, although he was not the first black student from Muskogee to go there.

Race riots--Oklahoma--Tulsa.

Harvard University--Admission.

Tolson, Melvin Beaunorus.

University of Oklahoma.

Herbert, Don.

African American neighborhoods--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

Manual Training High School (Muskogee, Okla.).

Video Oral History Interview with George Jones, Section A2011_021_001_003, TRT: 3:28:36 ?

George Jones talks about the musical culture in Oklahoma and the race relations in Muskogee. There were many black businesses, but whites were not opposed to accepting business from blacks either. Jones began studying at Harvard University in 1959 where he struggled at first, especially with the interpretive frame of mind that was required in humanities courses. He later learned that he was one of nineteen black students admitted to Harvard in the class of 1963, the largest group of blacks admitted up to that point. Jones was at Harvard during Cold War events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, and civil rights events, but he was not politically active, saying that he went to Harvard to get an education only.

African American neighborhoods--Oklahoma--Muskogee.

Muskogee (Okla.)--Race relations.

College integration--Massachusetts--Cambridge--History.

Civil rights movements--United States--History--20th century.

Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962.

Video Oral History Interview with George Jones, Section A2011_021_001_004, TRT: 4:29:59 ?

George Jones talks about the teachers who served as his role models at Harvard University. He did well in his courses and graduated in 1963 with his B.S. in biochemical sciences. Jones describes the history of biochemistry as a field, and mentions Watson and Crick's discovery of the structure of DNA in 1953. Jones pursued graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Both his master's and doctoral research examined an enzyme that degraded the carbohydrates in yeast cell walls. He earned his Ph.D. degree in 1968 and published three papers between 1968 and 1969.

Harvard University--Faculty.

Harvard College (1780-). Class of 1963.

Watson, James D., 1928-Double helix.

Crick, Francis, 1916-2004.

University of California, Berkeley.

Biochemistry--History.

Video Oral History Interview with George Jones, Section A2011_021_001_005, TRT: 5:29:22 ?

George Jones talks about his post doctoral work at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland and at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. In 1971, Jones took a position as a professor in the zoology department at the University of Michigan, eventually becoming a full professor in 1986. In 1982, Jones had taken a sabbatical to study at the John Ennis Center in Norridge, England to learn how to do gene cloning in streptomyces bacteria. With the advent of genetic engineering techniques, Jones' work shifted towards understanding the genetic regulation of actinomycin production. In 1989, Jones left Michigan and became the dean of the graduate school at Emory University in Atlanta.

National Institutes of Health (U.S.).

Université de Genève.

John Innes Centre.

Molecular cloning.

University of Michigan. Dept. of Biology.

Genetics.

Emory University. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences .

Video Oral History Interview with George Jones, Section A2011_021_001_006, TRT: 6:32:53 ?

George Jones talks about the shift in his research focus to looking at how RNA degradation and antibiotic production are related. He served as department chair at Emory University from 2003 to 2007, but since he resigned as dean in 1996, he has been teaching and conducting research. Jones responds to questions about the interplay between science and religion, the problem of antibiotic resistance, his legacy, and his concerns for the black community.

RNA--Deterioration

Religion and science

Antibiotics

Drug resistance in microorganisms

Emory University