



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Robert J. Bacon

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dr. Robert J. Bacon
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon,
Dates:	February 9, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	7 Betacam SP videocassettes (3:09:00).
Abstract:	Urologist Dr. Robert J. Bacon (1923 - 2009) entered Fisk University in 1941 and later received his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in 1947. He started a private practice with a number of other physicians and together they built the Lockwood Professional Group. Bacon served on the Board of Directors for the State Department of Corrections for six years and as a reviewer for the State Board of Medical Examiners also for six years. Bacon had a nineteen year tenure with Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas as a full-time faculty member. Upon retirement, he worked in an STD clinic in Houston and was on the front lines of the HIV epidemic in the black population. Bacon died March 19, 2009. Bacon was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 9, 2007, in Houston, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_057
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Dr. Robert John Bacon, Sr. was born on March 9, 1923 on the Taylor Plantation in Como, Mississippi to Minnie and Frank Bacon. The family moved to Sardis, Mississippi where they lived in a log cabin when Bacon was age three or four. Later, the family migrated to Lake Forest, Illinois. In 1933, his parents took a “couples” job and had living quarters with the family they worked with. Bacon was left in the care of family friends, Sherman and Alice Black, who raised him from age ten until he graduated from high school. Bacon was introduced to art, literature, dance and music while in grade school. He attended Lake Forest High School with only four other African American students and graduated in 1941.

Bacon entered Fisk University in the fall of 1941. In 1944, during World War II, he accepted an early admission offer to attend Meharry Medical College through the U.S. Army Student Training Program where he received his medical degree in 1947. Bacon also served in the Korean War as a First Lieutenant Medic. He did his internship at Provident Hospital in Chicago, Illinois and his residency at Hover G. Phillips Hospital where he specialized in urology. In 1953, Bacon relocated to Houston, Texas, where he began his own private practice. It was not until other African American physicians came to Houston, however, that his practice began to thrive. Along with a number of other physicians with different specialties, he built the Lockwood Professional Group.

Bacon served on the Board of Directors for the State Department of Corrections for six years and served as a reviewer for the State Board of Medical Examiners also for six years. In 1975, Bacon began his nineteen year tenure with Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas where he served as a full-time faculty member. He is a diplomat of the American Board of Urology and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the International College of Surgeons. Upon retirement, he worked in an STD clinic in Houston and was on the front lines of the HIV epidemic in the black population. Bacon was married to the late Bernice Bacon for fifty-eight years. They have two adult sons: Dr. Robert John Bacon, Jr., a practicing psychiatrist in Houston, Texas, and Kenneth Bacon, an Executive Vice President for Fannie Mae in Washington, D.C. Bacon passed away on March 19, 2009.

Dr. Robert John Bacon was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 9, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon was conducted by Denise Gines on February 9, 2007, in Houston, Texas, and was recorded on 7 Betacam SP videocassettes. Urologist Dr. Robert J. Bacon (1923 - 2009) entered Fisk University in 1941 and later received his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in 1947. He started a private practice with a number of other physicians and together they built the Lockwood Professional Group. Bacon served on the Board of Directors for the State Department of Corrections for six years and as a reviewer for the State Board of Medical Examiners also for six years. Bacon had a nineteen year tenure with Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas as a full-time faculty member. Upon retirement, he worked in an STD clinic in Houston and was on the front lines of the HIV epidemic in the black population. Bacon died March 19, 2009.

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:

Bacon, Robert

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Dr. Robert J. Bacon--Interviews

African American physicians--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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. Robert J. Bacon, February 9, 2007. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/15/2011 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, February 9, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon, Section A2007_057_001_001, TRT: 0:30:30 2007/02/09

Dr. Robert Bacon describes his family background. Bacon's mother, Minnie Lee, grew up on a sharecropping cotton farm. She went to school for eight or nine years, but only for four or five months during the year. Her time in school was above average for that time. Bacon's father, Frank, met Minnie during a church revival and they married at age eighteen. Bacon discusses his family's migration story when he was young. Frank left Mississippi in the fall of 1928 for Lake Forest, Illinois in the first Great Migration. Bacon and his mother followed the following March. Bacon talks about the prominence of his grandfather, Horace. He was a mason, a member of the shiners, a deacon, and a successful farmer. Horace worked for cash and became a land owner. He was one of three African Americans in the Northern Mississippi County that owned a car.

African American families--Illinois

African Americans--Migrations--History--20th century

African American families--Mississippi

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon, Section A2007_057_001_002, TRT: 0:30:20 2007/02/09

Dr. Robert Bacon shares his elementary school experiences. He initially attended a Rosenwald school in Mississippi, which was the only place blacks could attend. Upon his family's migration to Illinois, he attended a school that was integrated and generally accepting of blacks and Jews. Bacon describes the Lake Forest school system as one of the most advanced system of schools in the country at that time. Bacon discusses his childhood in Lake Forest, Illinois, an upper middle class community where many of Chicago's millionaires lived. Bacon emphasizes that the few African Americans there were well educated, and there was little to no segregation. Bacon talks about his experiences at Gordon School and Halsey School, both integrated schools. Bacon recalls introducing Negro spirituals and jazz to the entire school during the music program. Bacon notes the teacher taught the children how the black music was molded by slavery, and was related to classical music.

African American children--Illinois--Lake Forest

African American education--Illinois

Chicago (Ill.)

Julius Rosenwald Fund--Buildings--Mississippi

African American education--Mississippi

Spirituals (Songs)

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon, Section A2007_057_001_003, TRT: 0:30:10 2007/02/09

Dr. Robert Bacon discusses his high school days at Lake Forest High School. He excelled as a student and graduated second in his high school class. Bacon's class was the first class to attend Lake Forest High School for four years, and it was the top high school in the state. Bacon recalls receiving a letter for football

and track. Bacon notes that each member of the faculty had Master degrees. He was an honor student and was able to take five courses a year while most students only enrolled in four. Bacon talks about his mentors from Lake Forest High School. Bacon talks about Mr. Swan, a teacher who encouraged Bacon academically and mentored him. Bacon talks about Mr. Iker, a history and civics teacher who introduced him to the idea of attending Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.

African American education--Illinois--Lake Forest

Mentoring

Fisk University

African Americans--Education, Secondary

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon, Section A2007_057_001_004, TRT: 0:29:20 2007/02/09

Dr. Robert Bacon discusses his experiences at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. He had declined offers to play college football for the University of Minnesota and other schools because he felt he would not be accepted on the campus by his peers. Bacon decided he would have a better experience at a black college where he would not be looked down upon. He became the class president and played football at Fisk University where he majored in chemistry and per-med. Bacon mentions research grants in science. Bacon talks about joining the U.S. Army as a means to fund his medical school education through the Army Specialized Training Program. Bacon describes the Army's boot camp and describes witnessing the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. Bacon was granted early admission to Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee.

Fisk University

United States. Army--African Americans

Korean War, 1950-1953--United States

Tuskegee Syphilis Study

Meharry Medical College

Nashville (Tenn.)

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon, Section A2007_057_001_005, TRT: 0:30:10 2007/02/09

Dr. Robert Bacon discusses his experiences at Meharry Medical College and his graduation in 1947. Bacon recalls having to reduce his anatomy course from nine to six months due to the Korean War. Bacon talks about his internship at Provident Hospital in Chicago, Illinois and his residency at Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri for urology. Bacon shares his experiences of being drafted into the U.S. Army serving in the Korean War and his relocation to Houston, Texas where he became the second certified African American specialist. Bacon remembers people often refusing to be treated by him due to his race. These actions motivated Bacon to start a medical group with other new African American physicians in Houston called the Lockwood Professional Group.

Meharry Medical College

Korean War, 1950-1953--United States

United States. Army--African Americans

African American physicians--Social conditions--Texas--Houston

Education, (Higher)--Tennessee--Nashville

Homer G. Phillips Hospital

Provident Hospital (Chicago, Ill.)

Medicine--Practice--Texas--Houston

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon, Section A2007_057_001_006, TRT:
0:30:20 2007/02/09

Dr. Robert Bacon discusses his involvement with the Houston Medical Forum, an association of African American physicians, which financed bail for students participating in sit-ins of the civil right movement in Houston. He later became president. Bacon further details his career path and talks about his role as the Finance Chairman for Barbara Jordan's run for the U.S. Congress. Bacon was appointed to the Board of Directors for the State Department of Corrections, in 1973, where he helped to ensure that African American security guards were properly promoted. In 1975, Bacon became the first African American member of the Houston Urological Society, and later became its President. Bacon describes his nineteen year tenure at Baylor University's College of Medicine, and his determination to increase African American and Hispanic enrollment. Bacon describes his work for the City of Houston in an STD clinic.

African American physicians--Texas-Houston

Civil rights movements--Texas--Houston

African American physicians--Texas--Houston

Baylor University. College of Medicine

Education, (Higher)--Texas--Houston

African Americans--Employment

Houston Medical Forum

Sexually transmitted diseases--Texas--Houston

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert J. Bacon, Section A2007_057_001_007, TRT:
0:08:10 2007/02/09

Dr. Robert Bacon shares and describes personal photographs.

Photographs