



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:	Dr. James Bowman
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman,
Dates:	September 27, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	6 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:33:15).
Abstract:	Geneticist, medical professor, and pathologist Dr. James Bowman (1923 -) is an expert in genetic pathology and a world traveler. Bowman is professor emeritus in the departments of pathology and medicine at the University of Chicago. His daughter, Valerie Bowman Jarrett is a senior advisor to President Barack Obama. 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 Barry. Bowman and his wife, Barbara, raised one daughter, Valerie Bowman Jarrett.

Dr. James Bowman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers September 27, 2002.

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 Betacam SP videocassettes. Geneticist, medical professor, and pathologist Dr. James Bowman (1923 -) is an expert in genetic pathology and a world traveler. Bowman is professor emeritus in the departments of pathology and medicine at the University of Chicago. His daughter, Valerie Bowman Jarrett is a senior advisor to President Barack Obama.

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, Dr. James

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dr. James Bowman--Interviews

Pathologists--Interviews

Geneticists--Interviews

University of Chicago. College--Faculty--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Pritzker School of Medicine.

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

EducationMakers

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 8/23/2011 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, September 27, 2002

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman, Section A2002_192_001_001, TRT: 0:29:10 2002/09/27

Dr. James Bowman talks about his parents and childhood. Bowman was born on February 5, 1923 in Washington, D.C. to father, James E. Bowman, a dentist, and mother, Dorothy Bowman, a homemaker. He was the oldest of six children. Growing up in Washington, D.C. schools were segregated but the buses were not. In his youth, he enjoying reading, riding bikes, and playing tennis. Bowman liked his high school teachers and was in the Cadet Corps. He graduated with honors from Dunbar High School in 1939. Bowman describes college and medical school at Howard University. He earned his bachelor's degree in biology in 1943 and by attending medical school year round, graduated with his medical degree in 1946 as a first lieutenant. Though he had completed his officer training, the Armed Forces did not want Negro medical officers so Bowman was discharged, allowing him to continue graduate work in pathology.

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 2002/09/27

Dr. James Bowman was appointed to the Army's Medical Attrition Laboratory as a reservist. Bowman met his wife, Barbara, in Chicago, and they married after she graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1950. Tired of segregation and McCarthyism, Bowman and his wife looked for work abroad, and he was offered a position in Iran in 1955. In Iran, Bowman became interested in the disease favism and enzyme deficiencies. Bowman corresponded with University of Chicago Professor Alf Alving about these topics and soon wrote papers on favism with Derrick Walker, a biochemist. Bowman's daughter was born in Iran in 1956. Bowman then took a year to study genetics at the Galton Laboratory at the University College London. Later, Alf Alving hired him to work in the Malaria Research Unit at the University of Chicago. Bowman has been invited back to Iran to give lectures and is still widely respected, despite being an American.

African American physicians.

Pathologists.

University of Chicago--Faculty.

Disease susceptibility--Genetic aspects

Genetics.

Genetic disorders.

McCarthyism--1950-1960.

Segregation.

Blacks--Health.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Bowman, Section A2002_192_001_003, TRT:
0:28:25 2002/09/27

Dr. James Bowman talks about studying the enzyme deficiency glucose-6-dehydrogenase at the University of Chicago Malaria Research Unit. Funded by research grants, Bowman started doing population studies by travelling to Mexico, Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Uganda. The unit's first Africa trip in 1976 was tumultuous because Nigeria and Uganda had political uprisings with gun violence and nightly curfews. Despite this chaos, Bowman and his team were able to get quality research done during the day. Bowman worked in Ethiopia for several years, on and off, for two weeks at a time. Bowman was happy to learn that the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing upon his return to America in 1962. While in Iran, Bowman heard about the Little Rock Nine on the radio in several languages. He states that after going to forty countries he has learned that people everywhere are very similar.

Civil rights movement--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 2002/09/27

Dr. James Bowman and Robert Barry wrote a book called "Genetic Variation Disorders in Peoples of African Origin" in which they evaluated the literature and studies on human genetics, population genetics and diversity. Bowman is disappointed that some scientists have tried to use genetics to prove falsehoods or mistreat people. During the 1920s, many states of the U.S.A. had sterilization laws and they were all upheld by a Supreme Court case "Buck v. Bell" in 1927. American citizens were targeted if they had mental or physical disabilities and sometimes if they were minorities. Bowman feels that throughout history, religions, governments, theologians, presidents and dictators have tried to stop discoveries or different kinds of research, but nobody can stop progress. Scientists will find a way and a place to keep doing their research and making new discoveries.

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 2002/09/27

Dr. James Bowman expresses his disappointment that stem cell and embryo research have religious and political opposition when they might cure diseases. He thinks eventually genetic research will cure things like cancer. Poverty, education and health care encompass Bowman's main concerns for the black community. He believes that health care should be a right and that education

could help ameliorate poverty. Bowman discusses his father's untimely death. The greatest legacy Bowman will leave behind is his wife, Barbara, his daughter, Valerie Jarrett, and his granddaughter. He wants to be remembered as a good teacher and feels his students are also part of his legacy. Specifically, several of his former Iranian students are being invited back to Iran to lecture and do research. Bowman's advice to young people is to not spend time listening to everybody else but rather do what you want and do not be afraid to take a chance.

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 2002/09/27

James Bowman narrates his photos.