

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Nancy Bowlin

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Bowlin, Nancy, 1927-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Nancy Bowlin,
Dates:	April 17, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:18:32).
Abstract:	Educator and public health nurse Nancy Bowlin (1927 -) worked as a nurse at Bellevue Hospital, and as a public health nurse for the State of New York. Bowlin was also appointed Supervisor of Nursing Education for the Central School for Practical Nursing. Bowlin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 17, 2007, in Bronx, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_144
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator and public health nurse Nancy Bowlin was born on August 8, 1927 in Harlem, New York to Harriet Seraphina Worgs and Phillip Worrell Douglas. Her parents met in Harlem in 1924. Bowlin attended P.S. #10, St. Thomas the Apostle Elementary School, Asbury Park High School and graduated from George Washington High School in 1945. She received her associate's degree from Brooklyn College in 1947 and graduated from Bellevue School of Nursing in 1952 as a registered nurse. Bowlin went on to earn her B.S. degree in home economics and M.S. degree in health education from Lehman College in the 1970s.

Bowlin worked as a nurse at Bellevue Hospital from 1952 to 1954. As a state public health nurse for the State of New York in Harlem from 1954 to 1958, Bowlin assessed family health and taught neo-natal care. Later, she was appointed Supervisor of Nursing Education for the federally funded Central School for Practical Nursing. In 1969, Bowlin joined the New York City Board of Education, where she taught home economics at P.S. #142 and later taught bio medical sciences, nursing and biology at the high school level until 1984.

Bowlin is a member of the United Negro College Fund, the NAACP and the Schomburg Center for Black Research. She lives in Bronx, New York.

Bowlin was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 17, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Nancy Bowlin was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 17, 2007, in Bronx, New York, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Educator and public health nurse Nancy Bowlin (1927 -) worked as a nurse at Bellevue Hospital, and as a public health nurse for the State of New York. Bowlin

was also appointed Supervisor of Nursing Education for the Central School for Practical Nursing.

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:

Bowlin, Nancy, 1927-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Bowlin, Nancy, 1927- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Public Health Nurse

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 Nancy Bowlin, April 17, 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 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 Nancy Bowlin, Section A2007_144_001_001, TRT: 0:29:13 ?

Nancy Bowlin was born on August 8, 1927 in New York City to Harriet Worghs Douglas and Philip Douglas. Bowlin's maternal grandfather was a tax collector as well as a banana and coconut oil merchant in Jamaica. Her mother was born there in the early 20th century, and moved to New York City as a teenager. Bowlin's paternal grandfather was kidnapped from Africa by slave traders, and brought to British Guiana, where Bowlin's father, a carpenter, lived until 1924. He then moved to New York City, where Bowlin's parents met. At an early age, Bowlin was sent to live with her maternal grandparents in Jamaica, where she was given a small garden. Bowlin remained in Jamaica until her grandmother's death in 1936, when she returned to her mother's home in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. Bowlin's mother died two years later, and Bowlin was taken in by her maternal aunt, Adina Worghs. At twelve years old, Bowlin styled hair at her home in Harlem, and was encouraged by her aunt to pursue a medical career.

Video Oral History Interview with Nancy Bowlin, Section A2007_144_001_002, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Nancy Bowlin was raised by her maternal aunt, Adina Worghs, in a strict Pentecostal household in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. There, she and her aunt attended the Refuge Temple church. Bowlin also learned to play piano, and read at the Harlem Library on 124th Street. She completed the eighth grade at the St. Thomas the Apostle School, where she was an inquisitive student, and excelled in biology. In 1942, Bowlin moved with her aunt to Neptune, New Jersey, and briefly attended Asbury Park High School in Asbury Park, New Jersey. Then, frustrated with her aunt's parenting, Bowlin returned to Harlem, where she lived with her father, Philip Douglas, who was also strict. Bowlin continued her education at the majority white George Washington High School in New York City's Washington Heights neighborhood. She focused on her studies; and, in her free time, did needlework. Upon graduating in 1945, Bowlin matriculated at Brooklyn College in Brooklyn, New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Nancy Bowlin, Section A2007_144_001_003, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Nancy Bowlin graduated from New York City's George Washington High School in 1945. While pursuing an associate's degree at Brooklyn College, Bowlin inquired about a nursing career at Maimonides Medical Center, and was advised to apply to New York City's Bellevue Schools of Nursing. She matriculated there in 1949, and was one of eleven black students in her class. Upon graduating in 1952, Bowlin worked for six months at the Bellevue Hospital. That year, she also met her husband, Ancel Bowlin, Sr., whom she married in 1953. Bowlin became the head nurse at Harlem's Knickerbocker Hospital, where she experienced discrimination from a white surgeon, who refused to work with her. Then, she joined the New York City Department of Health, and began her career as a public health nurse. In this role, she served as a caseworker for families in the Harlem community. Bowlin also recalls the influence of public speakers like Reverend Major Jealous Divine in Harlem during the 1940s.

Video Oral History Interview with Nancy Bowlin, Section A2007_144_001_004, TRT: 0:29:24 ?

Nancy Bowlin worked as a public health nurse at the New York City Department of Health. In this role, she assessed the living conditions of homes, and advised families accordingly. She recalls the public health concerns of the time, including tuberculosis, typhoid and syphilis. At this point in the interview, Bowlin talks about the development of psychiatric care, and the health concerns that affect the black community. In the late 1960s, Bowlin joined the faculty of New York City's Central School for Practical Nursing. When the school's director, Marion Cooper, decided against renewing its federal grant, Bowlin obtained a position through the New York City Board of Education, and taught home economics, biology, chemistry and physics at John Philip Sousa Junior High School in the Bronx, New York. After being laid off in the 1970s, Bowlin traveled to Senegal with her sons, David Bowlin and Ancel Bowlin, Jr. She talks about the public health conditions in Senegal and the United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Nancy Bowlin, Section A2007_144_001_005, TRT: 0:20:55 ?

Nancy Bowlin completed her graduate studies in health education in the 1970s at Lehman College in the Bronx, New York. During this time, she also taught home economics and biomedical sciences in New York City's public schools. Bowlin was a member of the NAACP, and donated to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the United Negro College Fund. She had two sons, David Bowlin and Ancel Bowlin, Jr., with her husband, Ancel Bowlin, Sr. Bowlin reflects upon her life and philosophy, her hopes for the African American community and how she would like to be remembered. She also talks

about her family's legacy in healthcare, which she traced to her great-grandfather, who was a medicine man. Bowlin concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.