

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Grant Venerable

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Venerable, Grant, 1942-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Grant Venerable,
Dates:	April 9, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:23:20).
Abstract:	Chemist and academic administrator Grant Venerable (1942 -) taught chemistry and cultural studies in California universities, worked in Silicon Valley industry, and served as senior academic officer and as professor-at-large of science, technology, and civilization higher education institutions in Illinois, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. Venerable was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 9, 2013, in Tyrone, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_100
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chemist, artist, and author Grant D. Venerable was born on August 31, 1942 in Los Angeles, California. After receiving his B.S. degree in chemistry from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1965, Venerable enrolled at the the University of Chicago and graduated from there with his M.S. degree in physical chemistry in 1967, and Ph.D. degree in physical chemistry in 1970. He completed the research for his doctoral dissertation as a Resident Research Associate in the Radiation Chemistry Section of the Argonne National Laboratory. Upon graduation, he was awarded the United States Atomic Energy Commission Fellowship for postdoctoral studies in radiation biology at UCLA's Laboratory of Nuclear medicine.

In 1971, Venerable was appointed as a high school chemistry and biology instructor with the Duarte Unified School District. He then taught chemistry at California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo from 1972 to 1978, and the University of California, Santa Cruz in Oakes College from 1978 to 1980. During the 1980s, he was as a systems scientist in the Silicon Valley industry. From 1982 to 1989, Venerable served as the executive vice president of Omnitrom Associates while simultaneously serving as a partner in the Coral and Courtland Groups. From 1992 to 1999, he was president and CEO of Ventek Software, Inc. Venerable has also consulted for several other California companies including Banks Brown, Inc.

From 1989 to 1996, he served on the faculty at San Francisco State University in the College of Ethnic Studies where he developed and taught a new field blending history of science and ethnic studies. Venerable was also integral to the development of the "Step To College." In addition, Venerable served at Chicago State University as the Associate Provost and as a professor of chemistry and African American studies (1996-1999), at Morris Brown College as the Dean of Faculty, interim Dean of the College, Provost, and professor-at-large of science and civilization (1999-2002), as chair of the Council of Chief Academic Officers for the Atlanta University Center (1999-2002), and as the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (2010-2011) and the

Vice President for Academic Affairs (2002-2010) at Lincoln University (Pennsylvania). He held adjunct teaching appointments at the California Institute of Integral Studies in the MBA degree program in information and technology, and in the chemistry departments of Laney College of Oakland and California State University, Los Angeles.

His publications include six books, forty commissioned oil paintings on molecular structure, dozens of academic articles and editorials in such places as the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Venerable's honors and awards include the National Educational Leadership Award from the JGT Foundation, the Step To College Distinguished Teaching Award from San Francisco State University, the California Alliance for Arts Education Outstanding Achievement Award, and the Alpha Chi Sigma Chemistry Fraternity Molecular Art Appreciation Award, and the Distinguished Teaching Award of Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo.

Grant D. Venerable, II was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 9, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Grant Venerable was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 9, 2013, in Tyrone, Georgia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Chemist and academic administrator Grant Venerable (1942 -) taught chemistry and cultural studies in California universities, worked in Silicon Valley industry, and served as senior academic officer and as professor-at-large of science, technology, and civilization higher education institutions in Illinois, Georgia, and Pennsylvania.

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:

Venerable, Grant, 1942-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Venerable, Grant, 1942- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Lincoln University (Pa.) Morris Brown College Chicago State University San Francisco State University
University of California-Santa Cruz California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo

Occupations:

Chemist

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 Grant Venerable, April 9, 2013. 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 Grant Venerable, Section A2013_100_001_001, TRT: 1:29:43 ?

Grant Venerable describes his family background. Venerable’s mother, Thelma Lorraine Scott Venerable, was born in Topeka, Kansas in 1916. Venerable describes his maternal family’s migration from Kentucky to Kansas, and his grandparents’ decision to move to Los Angeles, California in 1919. Venerable’s mother’s family lived in the Boyle Heights neighborhood in Los Angeles which he describes as a multi-ethnic “Cultural Eden.” His mother attended John Francis Polytechnic High School and Los Angeles Junior College, where she studied book-keeping and pipe organ. She went on to spend her career as a bookkeeper for Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company. Venerable’s father, Grant Venerable, was born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1904. He attended Crispus Attucks Elementary School and went on to study civil engineering at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). Venerable discusses his paternal family’s history under slavery, and their cultural inheritance from the family of the slave-owners.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Grant Venerable, Section A2013_100_001_002, TRT: 2:29:57 ?

Grant Venerable traced his paternal ancestry to the Venable family of Virginia. He discusses the change in his family name from “Venable” to “Venerable.” Venerable’s father attended Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1919, he moved to San Bernardino, California, where he attended San Bernardino High School. He went on to attend college at several institutions in Southern California, before enrolling at Caltech in the late 1920s. Venerable describes his father’s experience in school and in college, where he took a course taught by Albert Einstein. In 1932, he graduated with a degree in civil engineering, but due to the limited job opportunities during the Depression, he worked as an insurance salesman at Golden Gate Mutual Life Insurance Company. Venerable describes his father’s trip to Chicago to meet chemist, Lloyd Hall, how his parents met and married in 1939, and his father’s career in manufacturing durable blackboard erasers.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Grant Venerable, Section A2013_100_001_003, TRT: 3:28:31 ?

Grant Venerable grew up in Los Angeles, California, where he lived in the multicultural Boyle Heights neighborhood. In this section of the interview, Venerable describes his childhood memories. He lost his mother at the age of eight, and regarded his paternal aunt, Neosha Venerable Tatum, as his closest female relative. He describes his parents' personalities, and talks about his step mother, Ida Wells Lee. Venerable and his family attended Bethel AME Church, which was pastored by his great uncle, Thomas Lesley Scott. Venerable also describes his experience in elementary school, and his interest in music and painting. Lastly, he reflects upon growing up as a young boy without being conscience of the issues of race.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Grant Venerable, Section A2013_100_001_004, TRT: 4:29:21 ?

Grant Venerable was raised in Los Angeles, California, where he attended Manuel Arts High School. He describes his experience in high school, the influence of his teachers, and his leadership roles. Venerable became interested in science at a young age, and his interest increased in high school and college. He describes his scientific curiosity and his experiments in school and college. In this section of the interview, Venerable also discusses his first exposure to issues of race and racial violence when Emmett Till was murdered in 1955.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Grant Venerable, Section A2013_100_001_005, TRT: 5:28:51 ?

In 1961, Grant Venerable graduated from Manuel Arts High School, and then enrolled in the University of California, Los Angeles [UCLA], where he majored in chemistry. Venerable was mentored and influenced by several notable chemists at UCLA, including Professors Mostafa El-Sayed, Kenneth Trueblood, Nobel Laureate Willard Frank Libby, and the head of the kinesiology department, Donald Handy. While there, he was also inspired to blend his interest in art and science, and began creating oil paintings of chemical structures and molecules. Venerable talks about his rich cultural experience at UCLA, where he attended lectures by prominent cultural and political figures, and meet historian, John Hope Franklin. He also reflects upon the Civil Rights Movement and the socio-political climate in the United States in the 1960s.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Grant Venerable, Section A2013_100_001_006, TRT: 6:28:25 ?

In 1965, Grant Venerable graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), with a B.S. degree in chemistry. He then went on to attend the

University of Chicago, which was well known for producing African American scientists, including chemist and professor, Henry McBay, and HistoryMakers Billy Joe Evans, Reatha Clark King and Gloria Anderson. Venerable describes his experience as a physical chemist at the University of Chicago, and explains the disciplines of organic, inorganic and physical chemistry. In 1967, he received his M.S. degree in chemistry under the tutelage of Mark Inghram. Venerable then went on to pursue his Ph.D. degree at Argonne National Laboratory, where he worked with Professor Jack Halpern and studied cobalt cyanide complexes.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Grant Venerable, Section A2013_100_001_007, TRT: 7:28:32 ?

In 1967, Grant Venerable began his Ph.D. degree at Argonne National Laboratory and the University of Chicago, where he worked on his dissertation, entitled ‘The Pulse Radiolysis of Transition Metal Cyanide Complexes in Aqueous Solution.’ Venerable describes his research, and its implications for experimental chemistry. He also discusses the history of the Manhattan Project team in returned to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he worked on gamma radiolysis of biochemical compounds. In this section of the interview, Venerable describes his experience in searching for a faculty position at a university, his teaching assignment at San Francisco State University, his experience teaching at Duarte High School, and his recruitment to California Polytechnic State University. He also talks about his involvement in the Black Students Alliance at the University of Chicago in the 1960s.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.