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Guide to the James Edward Bowman Papers 1955-2010



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.BOWMANJ
Title	Bowman, James Edward. Papers
Date	1955-2010
Size	2.5 linear feet (5 boxes)
Repository	Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract A medical geneticist and bioethicist, James Edward Bowman (1923-2011) was a professor of medicine and pathology at the University of Chicago. He gained national recognition as a leader in raising awareness about the ethical and social consequences of large-scale genetic testing programs. He was equally concerned by the ways in which public health policy and the organization of medical care disadvantaged poor and minority communities. The Bowman Papers cover the years 1955-2010 (bulk 1992-2001) and include typescripts of lectures, reprints of most of his research articles, planning for various research projects, and multiple drafts of an unpublished book project.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Bowman, James Edward. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Hanna Holborn Gray Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Biographical Note

Dr. James E. Bowman (1923-2011) was a specialist in blood disorders and their population genetics, and became a leader in calling attention to the ethical and social implications of genetic testing in public health. A long-time faculty member at the University of Chicago, he held appointments in the Departments of Medicine and Pathology (1962-1993), the Committee on Genetics (1963-1993), the College (1982-1993), the Committee on African and African American Studies (1986-1993), and the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics (from 1993, as a Senior Scholar). In 1967, he became the first Black professor to earn tenure in the Biological Sciences Division.

A native of Washington, D.C., Bowman earned his bachelor's (1943) and medical degree (1946) from Howard University. Upon graduation, he completed an internship at Freedman's Hospital in Washington, D.C. before accepting, in 1947, a three-year pathology residency at St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago. He was the first Black resident at St. Luke's, and when he arrived, he insisted on entering through the front door and not the rear door reserved for "colored" employees.

In 1949, while Bowman was a resident, American researchers made two important breakthroughs in describing the genetic and molecular bases of sickle cell anemia. These discoveries were also pivotal in establishing the field of medical genetics. Although diagnostic criteria for sickle cell anemia had existed since the 1910s, doctors were unable to explain how the disease could appear "latent" in some people but "patent" in others. The prevailing opinion became that there was a heritable "sickling constitution" that was primarily limited to the Black community, where the disease occurred with greater frequency. That opinion was overturned in 1949 when James Neel showed "a clear hematological distinction" between sickle cell trait in parents and sickle cell anemia in their children. Neel found that affected children had about twice the number of sickling red blood cells as their parents, who had some sickling cells but not enough to result in disease. The latent and patent forms of sickle cell anemia were now understood to result from a genetic difference. Neel's conclusion gained further support later in 1949 when Linus Pauling showed that electrophoresis could be used to separate normal hemoglobin from sickling hemoglobin. Pauling also found that affected children had only sickling hemoglobin in their blood while their parents had mixture of normal and abnormal hemoglobin--again about half as much sickling protein as their children.

After completing his residency at St. Luke's Hospital 1950, Bowman became chair of pathology at Provident Hospital on Chicago's South Side, the oldest independent Black hospital in the nation. He was drafted in 1953 and moved to Denver to serve as chief of pathology in the Medical Nutrition Laboratory at Fitzsimons Army Hospital. Recognizing that there could be greater opportunities for Black professionals in foreign countries, Bowman inquired and was invited in 1955 to head the pathology department at the new Nemazee Hospital in Shiraz, Iran. It was in Iran that he was able to perform important population studies of the genetics of two related blood disorders: favism and glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency.

During his residency in Chicago, Bowman met Barbara Taylor and the couple were married in 1950, shortly after her graduation from Sarah Lawrence College. She would later earn an advanced degree from the School of Education at the University of Chicago. The couple's daughter, Valerie Bowman Jarrett, was born in Iran in 1956.

After completing a one-year genetics fellowship in the Galton Laboratory at University College London, Bowman returned to the U.S. in 1962 to join the faculty at the University of Chicago, becoming Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine and Director of the Blood

Bank. With his promotion to Associate Professor in 1967, he gained a second appointment in Pathology. Although he was no longer in Iran, Bowman continued his population studies, investigating G6PD in groups in Mexico and Turkey.

By the early 1970s, Bowman had obtained significant results in his research of blood disorders, but so, too, had the field of medical genetics. Over the previous two decades, genetic tests had been introduced to identify phenylketonuria (PKU) in newborns and adult carriers of Tay-Sachs disease. The new tests did not probe the genetic material itself but instead looked for the presence of some molecular marker in a blood sample. When a chemical test for the amino acid valine in sickling hemoglobin was announced in 1968, the successes of mass screening for PKU and Tay-Sachs quickly led to calls for developing a similar program for sickle cell anemia. Advocates of mass screening for sickle cell also saw an opportunity to address the economic and healthcare inequalities in Black communities after the civil rights victories of the mid-1960s.

When, in 1971-1972, community organizations and state and federal authorities began implementing mass screening and genetic counseling programs for sickle cell disease--all in the period before standards of informed consent--Bowman emerged as one of the early critics of those programs, on both ethical and medical grounds. From an ethical perspective, Bowman argued that mass screening became discriminatory when, to economize resources, Blacks were tested first since they were a community that had a higher frequency of disease. With insurance companies indicating that they would charge higher premiums for adult carriers, Bowman also feared that sickle cell screening could lead to a return of eugenics and other forms of discrimination based on race. From a medical perspective, preventative identification of carriers had little justification since carriers, or individuals having sickle cell trait, did not develop some mild form of disease. At the time, a common misunderstanding was to place sickle cell trait on a continuum with sickle cell anemia--an indication of how older notions of latent-versus-patent disease still lingered. Another source of misunderstanding was the chemical test for valine, since it could not distinguish the amount of sickling hemoglobin in affected persons versus carriers, only that a person had abnormal hemoglobin.

From 1974 to 1984, Bowman directed the Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center at the University of Chicago, one of ten such centers funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Bowman had also been on the advisory council that had urged the Nixon administration to implement such comprehensive care programs across the nation. In 1975, and again in collaboration with the NIH, he helped to organize a sickle cell exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry and a corresponding educational booklet called "Sickle Cell Fundamentals," which he co-authored with Eugene Goldwasser, PhD, in the Department of Biochemistry.

By 1980, nearly all of the laws requiring mass screening for sickle cell had been repealed and many of the federally-funded comprehensive care centers closed. Even though the attempt at mass screening for sickle cell was widely seen as a failure, the ethical issues raised by genetic testing in general not only persisted but grew with advances in molecular biology and, ultimately,

completion of the Human Genome Project. After his participation in the sickle cell debate of the early-to-mid 1970s, Bowman began to devote a greater share of his academic work to the ethical and social implications of genetic technologies, gradually moving away from research articles on blood disorders. He was increasingly invited to serve on advisory councils to public agencies and give lectures at medical ethics conferences. In 1996, he gave testimony as an expert witness in the federal court case that abolished the sickle cell screening that had been required of employees at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory since the late 1970s.

After retiring from full-time teaching and research in 1993, Bowman was able to give more attention to the book project that he had recently begun but that would, more than a decade later, remain unpublished. Entitled *Eugenics Never Died*, the book project developed his assessment of the American healthcare system. As he saw it, the U.S. healthcare system could be considered a form of “passive eugenics” since it operated with large gaps in its delivery of care, consistently neglecting poor communities where mortality rates from preventable diseases remained high. Even though “passive eugenics” was distinct from the more familiar forms of “active eugenics” of the early 20th century, Bowman suggested that the legacies of eugenic thinking in Western societies continued to have ripple effects in the value placed on the needs of poor people well after the end of legalized sterilization programs. The different book draft variants represent the largest share of the materials in the collection.

Scope Note

The James Edward Bowman Papers are arranged into five series that span 1955 to 2010, with the bulk of the material ranging from 1992 to 2001:

Series I: Personal, includes a variety of materials about Bowman. Copies of his biographical profiles and curriculum vitae will be found here, along with a transcript of an oral history interview, a magazine article about his career and a commemorative booklet from an exhibit on which he collaborated. Materials in this series are arranged by type.

Series II: Correspondence, gathers together several pieces of Bowman’s correspondence that reflect preparations for a field work trip, requests to consult from policy-makers, and invitations to boards or events. Materials in this series are arranged chronologically.

Series III: Teaching and Research, contains items that pertain to Bowman’s preparation for teaching, including a course packet, but the majority of items concern the materials for different research projects that he planned and developed, one of which was a study of African Americans at the University of Chicago. Materials in this series are arranged by type.

Series IV: Writings, is organized into three subseries, all of which are arranged chronologically.

Subseries 1: Lectures, gathers together typescripts of lectures that Bowman gave at academic and professional conferences from the 1970s to the 1990s. The topics range from abnormal hemoglobin to the issues involved in genetic testing.

Subseries 2: Articles and Essays, contains photocopies and reprints of Bowman's academic publications from 1955 to 2000, along with several unpublished writings on genetic diagnosis and newborn screening. Up to roughly 1980, Bowman's published articles are largely based on his work as a researcher of blood disorders and their genetics. After about 1980, Bowman's articles reflect a greater interest in the ethical and social implications of new techniques in medical genetics.

Subseries 3: Books, represents the largest group of materials in the collection, containing multiple variants of an unpublished book project entitled *Eugenics Never Died*. The different book drafts are arranged according to when they were composed or revised. After Draft 3, what had been Chapters 1 and 2 were merged into a revised Chapter 1. The additional designations A, B and C are used for Draft 4 to indicate that the variants have slight differences relative to each other but, as a group, they may be distinguished from earlier or later drafts. In some cases, versions of chapters are conserved with the materials that Bowman read while preparing or revising them.

Series V: Photographs, contains negatives and photographs of Bowman in the 1970s. The shots of Bowman reviewing a life-sized hemoglobin model relate to the sickle cell commemorative booklet in the Personal series. The model was being constructed for that exhibit. Materials in this series are arranged by type.

Related Resources

Davis, Allison. Papers

Elshtain, Jean Bethke. Papers

Herrick, James Brian. Papers

Lewis, Eva Overton and Julian Herman Lewis, MD, PhD Collection

University of Chicago. MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics. Records

Subject Headings

- Bowman, James E.
- African American history
- Bioethics--United States
- Eugenics--United States--History
- Genetic disorders--Diagnosis

- Genetic screening--Moral and ethical aspects
- Human Genome Project
- Medical genetics
- Sickle cell anemia

INVENTORY

Series I: Personal

Box 1

Folder 1

Copies of biographical profiles and curriculum vitae, circa 2000

Box 1

Folder 2

Printouts of web content about Bowman, circa 2010

Box 1

Folder 3

Transcript of oral history interview by Andrea Maestrejuan, circa 2000

Box 1

Folder 4

Article about Bowman in Iran in Medicine on the Midway magazine, 1993

Box 1

Folder 5

Booklet from sickle cell exhibit at Museum of Science and Industry, 1975

Series II: Correspondence

Box 1

Folder 6

Letters in preparation for field work in Ethiopia, 1969-1970

Box 1

Folder 7

Letters received, 1973-2000

Box 1

Folder 8

Invitations to events and boards, 1997-2010

Series III: Teaching and Research

Box 1

Folder 9

Handwritten notes and outlines, undated

Box 1

Folder 10

Academic and popular press articles collected by Bowman, 1982-1998

Box 1

Folder 11

Academic and popular press articles collected by Bowman, 2000-2001

Box 1

Folder 12

Academic and popular press articles collected by Bowman, 2001-2002

Box 1

Folder 13

Course packet for "Evolution and Human Diversity," 1995

Box 1

Folder 14

Proposal and planning for a study of African Americans at the University of Chicago, circa 1995

Box 1

Folder 15

Interviews with community leaders conducted for study of African Americans at the University of Chicago, circa 1995

Series IV: Writings

Subseries 1: Lectures

Box 2

Folder 1

Conference lectures - Typescripts, 1975-1989

Box 2

Folder 2

Lectures on Cultural and Ethnic Differences in Genetic Testing and Primary Care - Typescripts, 1995-1997

Box 2

Folder 3

Conference lectures - Typescripts, circa 1990s

Box 2

Folder 4

Anthropology: From Bones to Human Genome - Typescript of lecture given at the Annenberg Center, University of Pennsylvania, 1999

Subseries 2: Articles and Essays

Box 2

Folder 5

Published articles - Photocopies and reprints, 1955-1964

Box 2

Folder 6

Supplement to American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, 1964

Box 2

Folder 7

Published articles - Photocopies and reprints, 1965-1969

Box 2

Folder 8

Published articles - Photocopies and reprints, 1970-1974

Box 2

Folder 9

Published articles - Photocopies and reprints, 1975-1980

Box 2

Folder 10

Published articles - Photocopies and reprints, 1991-2000

Box 2

Folder 11

Unpublished letter to the editor of the New York Times - Typescript, 1985

Box 2

Folder 12

Unpublished writings on the New Eugenics, genetic diagnosis, and policy dilemmas -
Photocopies and typescripts, 1986

Box 2

Folder 13

Unpublished writings on genetics legislation, in vitro fertilization and marriage -
Typescripts, 1986

Box 2

Folder 14

Unpublished writings on the New Eugenics and issues in newborn screening - Typescripts,
circa 1990

Subseries 3: Books

Box 3

Folder 1

Genetic Variation and Disorders - Letter and enclosures from production editor
concerning line art, 1990

Box 3

Folder 2

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 1 - Correspondence with editor, reviewer comments, book
proposal, typescript of Introduction, 1992-1993

Box 3

Folder 3

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 1 - Typescript of Introduction with editor's markings,
conserved with later typescripts of a lecture and expert witness testimony in a court case,
circa 1996

Box 3

Folder 4

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 2 - Correspondence with editor and returned typescripts of
Introduction and Chapter 1, 1993-1994

Box 3

Folder 5

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 2 - Correspondence with editor and returned typescripts of
Introduction and Chapter 1-3, 1993-1994

Box 3

Folder 6

Eugenics Never Died - Correspondence with editor and Bowman's reply to a reviewer, 2000

Box 3

Folder 7

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 3 - Typescripts of Table of Contents and Introduction, conserved with article and lecture, circa 2000

Box 3

Folder 8

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 3 - Typescripts of Chapters 1-2, circa 2000

Box 3

Folder 9

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 3 - Typescripts of Chapters 3-4, circa 2000

Box 3

Folder 10

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 3 - Typescripts of Chapters 5-7, circa 2000

Box 3

Folder 11

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4A - Typescripts of Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1, circa 2000s

Box 3

Folder 12

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4A - Typescripts of Chapters 2-3, circa 2000s

Box 3

Folder 13

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4A - Typescripts of Chapters 4-5, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 1

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4A - Typescripts of Chapters 6-7, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 2

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4B - Typescripts of Chapters 1-2, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 3

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4B - Typescript of Chapter 3 and articles consulted while revising, 2002

Box 4

Folder 4

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4B - Typescripts of Chapters 4-5, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 5

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4B - Typescripts of Chapters 6-7, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 6

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4B - Survey data and tables, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 7

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4C - Typescripts of Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1 and floppy disks, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 8

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4C - Typescripts of Chapters 2 and 7, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 9

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4C - Typescripts of Chapters 3-4, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 10

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 4C - Typescripts of Chapters 5-6, circa 2000s

Box 4

Folder 11

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 5 - Typescripts of Table of Contents, Introduction and Chapter 3, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 1

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 5 - Typescripts of Chapters 2 and 4, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 2

Eugenics Never Died - Draft 6 - Typescript of Chapter 5, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 3

Eugenics Never Died - Unknown book on biological race that Bowman read or reviewed while revising? - Excerpt 1, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 4

Eugenics Never Died - Unknown book on biological race that Bowman read or reviewed while revising? - Excerpt 2, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 5

Eugenics Never Died - Unknown book on biological race that Bowman read or reviewed while revising? - Excerpt 3, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 6

Eugenics Never Died - Unknown book on biological race that Bowman read or reviewed while revising? - Excerpt 4, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 7

Eugenics Never Died - Unknown book on biological race that Bowman read or reviewed while revising? - Excerpt 5, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 8

Eugenics Never Died - Unknown book on biological race that Bowman read or reviewed while revising? - Excerpt 6, circa 2000s

Box 5

Folder 9

Eugenics Never Died - Various files on human rights, genetics in the workplace and a typescript of Chapter 3 (Draft 3 stage), circa 1997

Box 5

Folder 10

Eugenics Never Died - Various files on human genetics, self-publishing and typescripts of Introduction and Chapter 5 (Draft 3 stage), circa 2001

Series V: Photographs

Box 5

Folder 11

Photo negatives of Bowman making a presentation, circa 1970s

Box 5

Folder 12

Photographs and negatives of Bowman reviewing design and construction of a hemoglobin model [1/4], 1975

Box 5

Folder 13

Photographs and negatives of Bowman reviewing design and construction of a hemoglobin model [2/4], 1975

Box 5

Folder 14

Photographs and negatives of Bowman reviewing design and construction of a hemoglobin model [3/4], 1975

Box 5

Folder 15

Photographs and negatives of Bowman reviewing design and construction of a hemoglobin model [4/4], 1975