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7. Family Challenges

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Family Challenges

WE EXIST

EVIDENCE OF MAINE'S BLACK FAMILIES from 1800 to the 20th Century



Ms. Beverly Bowens



"I think just living was a challenge. My parents both were children of the Depression, so there was that challenge right there. I think being Black was a challenge, although not as much in my mind as a child. It was when I grew up that it was a challenge. Just getting through, getting through college was a challenge. Every day is a challenge."

Ms. Beverly Bowens (born in Maine; age 67; left at 21 years old for about 35 to 40 years and then returned to Maine)

Keywords: family challenges, Black Families, Maine

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: Bowens, Beverly](#)

Mr. James Mathews



"...I guess, you know, life is a challenge. Coming up as a child, you know, we had a problem with a lack of finance. My uncle acted as my father. He was held back financially because he had the skills of an electrician, but he wasn't able to use them. And so I believe that that would be a challenge; you know. We were held back from being financially able to fund our needs on his standpoint."

Mr. James Mathews (age 59; born 1941 in Portland Maine; married with five children; lived in Maine all his life – lived in South Portland for over 26 years)

Keywords: family challenges, Black Families, Maine

Full Length Interview: [Home is Where I Make It: Mathews, James](#)

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Dr. Lance Gibbs is the curator of this exhibit and served as the research lead for the project, providing historical background from news and scholarly references, and authoring the short contextual catalogue essay entries which complement the photos, written, and audio galleries. Dr. Gibbs is a lecturer in Race and Ethnic Studies and is currently the director of the Race and Ethnic Studies program at the University of Southern Maine. Dr. Gibbs is also the Talbot Fellow for the Gerald E. Talbot and African American Collections. Dr. Gibbs' research interests focus broadly on the family, in particular in father involvement/fathering/fatherhood, among immigrant fathers from the African Diaspora. For more information, contact Lance Gibbs, at lance.gibbs@maine.edu



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