

The Murray Bowen Archives Project 2020-2021 Project Update



Photo Credit, Andrea Schara

2020 was a unique year for The Murray Bowen Archives Project, as it was for everyone. 2021 has brought with it additional challenges. Nonetheless, the constraints of the pandemic have not kept us from working towards our mission of ensuring that L. Murray Bowen's Archival Legacy is accessible to the world—quite the opposite. While the National Library of Medicine (NLM) has been closed since the beginning of 2020, TMBAP has continued to carry out its mission of finding the resources to ensure the work of Legacy is transferred to NLM and made accessible for research, education and for the interested public.

Connecting digitally has been a key aspect of TMBAP's work for several years. In 2019, John Engels held TMBAP's first webinar (Relationship Connection and Leadership). TMBAP held its second webinar in 2020. Presented by Kathy Wiseman, *Looking Forward by Looking Back: 40 Years of Bowen Theory Applied to Work Systems*, was an opportunity not just to showcase some of the content of Dr. Bowen's archives, but to demonstrate TMBAP's commitment to expanding research based on Dr. Bowen's thinking.

Kathy suggested that "looking back is looking forward." Listening to Murray Bowen's words after many years, Kathy heard them anew and confirmed the importance of his archives to be able to hear and read his words as his "own," which, she suggested, is important to the future of this theory. The webinar provided an opportunity for TMBAP to continue to strengthen its ties to the larger network of Bowen theory training centers across the U.S. and the world, in part through offering more than 30 student sponsorships across the network for qualified students of Bowen theory to attend this webinar free of charge.

TMBAP will host its next webinar on **January 31, 2022**, in honor and celebration of Dr. Bowen's birthday and his unique contributions to medicine. Future TMBAP webinars will continue to celebrate and draw upon Murray Bowen's archival legacy on his birthday.

The Bowen Center for the Study of the Family (BCSF or Bowen Center) houses the early institutional records that are part of Dr. Bowen's Archival Legacy. TMBAP is working with the Bowen Center in support of the Center's evaluation, duplication for continued institutional use, and donation to NLM of institutional records of the present Bowen Center up until Dr. Bowen's death in 1990. These include records from early Georgetown University medical school family programs in the early 1970s, to the move to its own space on MacArthur Blvd, still associated with Georgetown University (then the Georgetown University Family Center), and finally to its present space where it has become its own 501(c)(3) named "The Bowen Center for the Study of the Family."

As appropriate, TMBAP continues to work closely with NLM, the Bowen Heirs and the Bowen Center in Washington, DC to ensure that all of Dr. Bowen's professional and personal papers and the aforementioned Bowen Center institutional records are transferred to NLM for final processing and accessibility to the world in accordance with NLM requirements. These materials will join the rich library of audio-visual materials transferred by the Bowen Center to NLM before the pandemic.

TMBAP is also supporting the digitization and organization of metadata for Andrea Schara's Deed of Gift to NLM of her professional photographs taken 1978-1990. The metadata organization has been completed and the digitization is pending. Copies will be made for NLM, Andrea, the Bowen Center, the Bowen family, and TMBAP.

Andrea continues to lead TMBAP's Oral History Project, and TMBAP has posted eight new oral histories since the beginning of 2020. Additional oral histories are "in process" or in the planning stage for interviews, transcription, and ultimate posting on TMBAP's website.

Five videos of Dr. Bowen were also posted on TMBAP's website in 2020. One was a "classic" story about a female patient declared by several psychoanalysts at the Menninger Clinic to be "unanalyzable," repelling others like a "skunk." With Dr. Bowen's supervision, a willing clinician who had the staying power to "out-skunk" the "skunk" achieved a successful result. As Dr. Bowen explains in the video, the same can apply to one's family or spouse. This video and many more are available on TMBAP's website as a preview of the large collection of tapes housed at NLM.

TMBAP's efforts represent a complex undertaking that is not possible without the extraordinary efforts of TMBAP's volunteer board, donors, and the staffs of NLM and the Bowen Center. As we noted at the end of 2019, work to prepare papers and photographs in Williamsburg for transfer to NLM continues, and TMBAP, with the assistance of Joanne Bowen and Priscilla Friesen, facilitated the transfer of the Mary Bourne Collection to NLM. This collection includes three years of Dr. Bowen's teaching sessions in Minneapolis MN

as he integrated the theory in the last years of his life. We are grateful to Louisa Cannon, Mary Bourne's daughter, for working with TMBAP to ensure that her mother's important collection of audiocassettes, transcripts, and correspondence will reside at NLM.

TMBAP is also grateful to the Bowen Center for their cooperation and efforts to ensure that L. Murray Bowen's papers currently at the Bowen Center, are eventually transferred to NLM and for welcoming Kent Webb, TMBAP Vice President, as a member of the Bowen Network Seminar.

It is the support of TMBAP's donors that continue to make this effort possible. Without the continued commitment of so many people over many years, TMBAP would not have had the resources to do its work. Our heartfelt thanks are extended to each and every one of you.