

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	King, Barbara Lewis
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 21, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:24:40).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Minister Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King (1930 - 2020) is the founder and president of the Barbara King School of Ministry and also and the founder of the Hillside Chapel and Truth Center, Inc., in Atlanta, Georgia. King was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 21, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_172
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Minister and founder of the Hillside Chapel and Truth Center, Inc., in Atlanta, Georgia, the Reverend Dr. Barbara Lewis King has played an important role in the African American church and community for many years. Born in Houston, Texas, King was raised as a member of the legendary Antioch Baptist Church, where she received a very early spiritual orientation. King earned a bachelor's of arts degree in sociology from Texas Southern University. She is also a professionally trained social worker, having earned a M.S.W. degree from Atlanta University. King has also received three honorary doctorates of divinity degrees from Bethune Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida, the Christian Church of Universal Philosophy in Seattle, Washington, and the University of Metaphysics in Portland, Oregon.

Reverend King is also the founder and president of the Barbara King School of Ministry, which was opened its doors in 1971. She has also tried to extend her ministry throughout the world. She has traveled extensively in the United States, and several countries abroad including Finland, Israel, Egypt, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, the Caribbean, Brazil, Russia, England, and British Guiana. Because of this, her ministry was the first African American New Thought affiliate to establish a sister church in South Africa in 1994. Beyond her ministry, King is the author of seven books and monologues, such as *Piddlin for the Soul*, *Love Your Body Temple*, and *What is a Miracle?*

King has been recognized in numerous publications and is the recipient of many awards. Some publications include: *Newsweek*, *Essence*, *Dollars and Sense*, *Focus*, *Upscale*, and *Gospel Music Ministry Connection Magazines*. In 2003, *Savoy Magazine's* Power Issue of 100 Most Influential Blacks in America listed Reverend King as number eight among female ministers. On August 18, 2001, King received the highest honor bestowed on a woman. After many rituals, prayers, and ceremonies she became the first female enstooled as a Chief at Assin Nsuta, Ghana, West Africa. Her stool name is Nana Yaa Twunmwaa I. She is also the mother of one son, Michael.

King passed away on October 11, 2020.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King was conducted by Jodi Merriday on September 21, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Minister Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King (1930 - 2020) is the founder and president of the Barbara King School of Ministry and also and the founder of the Hillside Chapel and Truth Center, Inc., in Atlanta, Georgia.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

King, Barbara Lewis

Merriday, Jodi (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

King, Barbara Lewis--Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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### Occupations:

Minister

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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## 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 Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King, September 21, 2004. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King, Section A2004\_172\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King was born on August 26, 1930 in Houston, Texas. Her mother, Mildred Jackson Shackelford, was from Houston and attended Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, where she met King's father, Lee Lewis. After King's birth, her parents separated, and King was raised by her paternal

grandmother, Ida Lewis. Her grandmother worked for a white family, often taking home plates to feed King's father, and earned money by sewing. When King was a child, she enjoyed her grandmother's stories and homemade soda pops and fruitcakes as well as playing dominoes. She had one special birthday celebration when she turned six and received a scooter. When King was thirteen years old, she met her mother for the first time. After her mother moved to California with her mother and two sisters, King visited during the summers. However, the two remained estranged until King's adulthood. King describes her mother's funeral many years later, at which time she was barred from doing the eulogy because of her gender.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King, Section A2004\_172\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King attended Edgar M. Gregory Elementary School in Houston, Texas and was often beaten up by other children jealous of her academic success. She eventually discovered that she could buy her tormentors treats and movie tickets on credit at the theater where her father worked as a projectionist. Unfortunately, her father found out and she was punished. King was raised in the Baptist church where her grandmother was heavily involved. At fifteen years old, King preached her first sermon, an exegesis on the use of hands within the Bible. When told her gender barred her from entering the ministry in the Baptist church, she was discouraged. King saw Ray Charles perform in Houston. Her studies at Texas State University for Negroes were interrupted when she contracted tuberculosis, requiring her to spend four years in a sanitarium before she was cured. After graduating college in 1955, she studied social work at Atlanta University, then worked in the field in Chicago for thirteen years.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King, Section A2004\_172\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King was employed as a group social worker in Chicago, Illinois. She later enrolled in a Ph.D. program for adult education at the University of Chicago but did not complete it, citing a racist professor who belittled her. In 1970, King finally pursued the call to ministry she first felt in childhood after meeting HistoryMaker Reverend Dr. Johnnie Coleman. Coleman encouraged her to pursue ministry despite the Baptist church's gender restrictions. King began a study group that grew into her church, Hillside International Chapel and Truth Center, in Atlanta, Georgia. It was not well-regarded in the city at first, but it grew; at the time of the interview, King estimated that the congregation was over 10,000. King was able to use her background in social work and her own life stories in her ministry. She describes a scary situation she endured as a young woman, the importance of young people learning about their African heritage and attending Nelson Mandela's 1994 inauguration.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King, Section A2004\_172\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King went to South Africa in 1994 for Nelson Mandela's inauguration. She did not have a ticket but by carrying her Fulton County Sheriff's Office chaplain's badge, she was able to make her way into the ceremony. She found a number of people she knew, including HistoryMakers Maxine Waters and Danny Glover. King later returned to the continent for a trip to Ghana during which she was enstooled as the first woman chief in Nsuta. She believed herself to have been descended from Ghanaians. King has published two books, 'Transform Your Life' and 'What is a Miracle?',

among other writings. King reflects upon her spirituality and the New Thought philosophy that is espoused at her church, Hillside International Chapel and Truth Center in Atlanta, Georgia. King explains why her spirituality involves accepting all denominations and religions. She talks about the openness of her church and delivering the baccalaureate address at Spelman College. King also offers advice to young people.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King, Section A2004\_172\_001\_005, TRT: 0:27:30 ?

Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King embraced a variety of health practices as part of her New Thought philosophy including becoming vegetarian, walking four times a week and doing acupuncture. At the time of the interview, she hoped to learn to swim and to travel more. King talks about regretting her marriage. She describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflects upon her life, legacy and how she would like to be remembered. King concludes by narrating her photographs.