

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Daughtry, Herbert, 1931-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry,
Dates:	November 27, 2006 and September 19, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	10 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:59:11).
Abstract:	Civil rights activist Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry (1931 -) was the founder of the African People's Christian Organization and is the National Presiding Minister of the House of the Lord Fellowship in Brooklyn, New York. A longtime political and civil rights activist, he wrote books on his involvement in the 1991 Crown Heights crisis between African American and Jewish residents, and on his relationship with Tupac Shakur. Daughtry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 27, 2006 and September 19, 2006, in Brooklyn, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_101
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civil rights activist Reverend Herbert Daughtry was born January 13, 1931, in Savannah, Georgia to Emmie Cheatham Williams and Bishop Alonzo Austin Daughtry. When he was one year old, his family moved to Augusta, Georgia. His parents separated shortly after, and his mother returned to Savannah. Daughtry moved back and forth between Savannah and Augusta as a child. His father was heavily involved in the church and Daughtry was raised in a household dominated by this religious upbringing.

When Daughtry was around eleven years old, his family moved north to Brooklyn, New York, and shortly after to Jersey City, New Jersey. Daughtry had trouble adjusting to the interracial classes in Jersey City and returned to take classes in Brooklyn. As a black child from the South, Daughtry found himself a frequent target of derision from his peers, both black and white. In response, Daughtry became regularly disruptive in school, and eventually fell into a decade-long struggle with gambling, crime and drug use. In 1950, Daughtry, hoping to get clean, joined the army, but remained strung out on heroin and was discharged after only a year.

In 1953, Daughtry was imprisoned for armed robbery and assault charges. While in prison, he experienced a religious conversion that changed his life. When he was released, Daughtry returned to the church, becoming a fourth generation minister in his family. In 1958, he became pastor of the House of the Lord Church in Brooklyn, and was named national presiding minister a year later, a post he has held ever since. In 1962, Daughtry married Karen Smith, with whom he would have four children. In the late 1960s, Reverend Daughtry became known for his activism in the struggle for school integration, and worked with organizations such as Operation Breadbasket. He became a significant figure in the Coalition of Concerned Leaders and Citizens to Save Our Jobs in 1977,

boycotting Brooklyn businesses in order to obtain jobs and services for Brooklyn African Americans.

In 1982, Daughtry founded the African People's Christian Organization, which sought to create an African Christian nation by highlighting both African origins and biblical teachings. Two years later, Daughtry became a special assistant to Reverend Jesse Jackson during his presidential campaign and accompanied him on his trip to the Vatican to advocate for a firmer stand on human rights. In 1991, Daughtry participated in Mayor David N. Dinkins' delegation to South Africa, and met with Nelson and Winnie Mandela.

Reverend Daughtry has published several books. His 1997 book, *No Monopoly on Suffering: Blacks and Jews in Crown Heights and Elsewhere* dealt with the 1991 crisis in ethnic tensions in that neighborhood. He also published *A Seed Planted in Stone - The Life and Times of Tupac Shakur*, a book that follows his relationship with the slain rapper, who joined Daughtry's congregation when he was only eleven years old. In 2003, Daughtry led a delegation of multi-faith protesters to Iraq, in a last-ditch effort to preserve peace in that nation. Daughtry lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife Karen.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry was conducted by Shawn Wilson on November 27, 2006 and September 19, 2006, in Brooklyn, New York, and was recorded on 10 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civil rights activist Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry (1931 -) was the founder of the African People's Christian Organization and is the National Presiding Minister of the House of the Lord Fellowship in Brooklyn, New York. A longtime political and civil rights activist, he wrote books on his involvement in the 1991 Crown Heights crisis between African American and Jewish residents, and on his relationship with Tupac Shakur.

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:

Daughtry, Herbert, 1931-

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Daughtry, Herbert, 1931- --Interviews

African American clergy--New York (State)--New York--Brooklyn--Interviews

African American political activists--Interviews

African American civil rights workers--New York (State)--New York--Brooklyn--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civil Rights Activist

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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. Herbert D. Daughtry, November 27, 2006 and September 19, 2006. 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 Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section
A2006_101_001_001, TRT: 0:30:18 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry was born on January 13, 1931 in Savannah, Georgia to Emmie Cheatham Williams and Alonzo Daughtry. Daughtry's paternal great-grandfather, Robert Daughtry, preached to slaves in Virginia, and migrated to Georgia after being accused of fomenting a rebellion. In Savannah, Daughtry's paternal grandfather, William Van Daughtry, became a reputed Methodist minister. Inspired by Bishop Charles Manuel "Sweet Daddy" Grace, Daughtry's father left the Methodist church to join the United House of Prayer For All People. After a conflict with Bishop Grace, he established The House of the Lord Church in Savannah, and later in Brooklyn. Daughtry's maternal grandparents, farmers Henrietta Cheatham and Clair Cheatham, owned land near Rocky Ford, Georgia, where his mother was born. She attended boarding school, and became a seamstress. His parents moved to Augusta, Georgia in 1927, and separated shortly thereafter. Daughtry also describes his five siblings and his neighborhood in Savannah.

African American clergy--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

African American political activists--Interviews.

African American civil rights workers--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section
A2006_101_001_002, TRT: 0:29:28 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry grew up in Georgia, where he lived with his father, Alonzo Daughtry, in Augusta; and his mother, Emmie Cheatham Williams, in Savannah. There, Daughtry lived with his family in a middle class African American community, and began his education at the Florance Street School. In Augusta, Daughtry attended the X. Floyd School, and worked as a grocery delivery boy, although he was fired after being caught stealing food for his poor black neighbors. Daughtry's father, the bishop of The House of the Lord Church, was a leader in Augusta's black society. He incorporated his church in 1930, after splitting from Bishop Charles Manuel "Sweet Daddy" Grace. When Daughtry was ten years old, his father moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he formed a new congregation. Daughtry recalls his early aspiration to become a doctor. He also describes segregation in Savannah during the 1930s, as well as his experiences there during Reverend Jesse L. Jackson's presidential campaigns in the 1980s.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section
A2006_101_001_003, TRT: 0:29:28 ?

Reverend Herbert Daughtry moved at ten years old to Jersey City, New Jersey, where he lived with his mother, Emmie Cheatham Williams, and enrolled at Public School 15. As a result of his experiences of racial discrimination, Daughtry developed disruptive tendencies, and was sent to live with his father, Alonzo Daughtry, in Brooklyn, New York. There, he attended P.S. 148 and P.S. 178, and excelled as an athlete, but continued to be a disruptive student. He did not graduate junior high school, and instead enrolled in a mechanic trade school. Daughtry recalls his troubled teenage years, during which he was influenced by his peers and relatively unsupervised by his parents. He began gambling; and, at fifteen years old, was imprisoned on charges of attempted burglary. Daughtry remembers the loneliness of growing up without a stable home, and his father's introverted personality. He also talks about his distaste for trends such as conked hair, and the negative portrayal of African Americans in film.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section
A2006_101_001_004, TRT: 0:29:22 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry spent his teenage years living with his father, Alonzo Daughtry, in Brooklyn, New York; and with his mother, Emmie Cheatham Williams, in Jersey City, New Jersey. Daughtry had been entrepreneurial as a young boy in Georgia, where he ran a shoe shining business; but, after moving to the North, became involved with negative influences, including gambling and drugs. At fifteen years old, he was one of the first people in his Brooklyn neighborhood to become addicted to heroin, which he obtained from an older friend who was a musician. As a result of his addiction, Daughtry turned to forgery, betting and money laundering schemes, eventually leading to his arrest on local and federal charges. In 1950, Daughtry enlisted in the U.S. Army in an effort to end his addiction. However, his master sergeant also used heroin, leading Daughtry to relapse. Disillusioned by racial discrimination in the U.S. military, he declared his addiction, and was dishonorably discharged.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section
A2006_101_001_005, TRT: 0:30:25 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry returned to a life of gambling after his discharge from the U.S. Army. He worked as a numbers runner to feed his heroin addiction, and eventually began pocketing the money that he owed to numbers bankers. To further increase his income, Daughtry joined in the armed robbery of a store, leading to his arrest. In 1953, Daughtry pled guilty to charges of armed robbery and assault, and was sentenced to seven years of imprisonment in the Trenton State Prison, followed by two years of federal incarceration for his involvement in larceny and money laundering. During the five and a half years in prison, Daughtry committed himself to God. He prepared for the ministry with help from the prison's educational resources and his fellow inmates. Upon his release on parole from the United States Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, Daughtry began his career as an Afrocentric minister. He recalls his debates with followers of the Nation of Islam, and Emmett Till's murder in 1955.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section
A2006_101_002_006, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry was called to join the ministry while in prison during his twenties, and became a prominent member of the black clergy in New York City. His Afrocentric approach to Christianity was influenced by

the Civil Rights Movement, particularly the murder of Emmett Till, which took place while he was incarcerated. As the pastor of The House of the Lord Church in Brooklyn, New York, he sometimes sacrificed his time at the pulpit in order to organize demonstrations against violence and other issues in the community. Daughtry led nonviolent demonstrations against the injustices faced by African Americans, and believed in the role of political agitation in a multipronged approach to effecting social change. When Sean Bell, Joseph Guzman and Trent Benefield were shot by police an unwarranted fifty times in New York City in November of 2006, Daughtry joined his fellow clergymen to demonstrate and meet with political heads regarding the issue of systemic police brutality.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section A2006_101_002_007, TRT: 0:29:32 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry committed himself to God during his years in prison in the 1950s. In an effort to prepare for the ministry, he sought help from well-educated inmates, and also used the prison system's educational resources. Influenced by the early Civil Rights Movement, Daughtry confronted the prison chaplain regarding discrimination against African Americans, who were excluded from consideration for better jobs. He also memorized the speeches of Frederick Douglass, and recited them to the inmates. Upon his release in 1958, Daughtry joined evangelist John Lawrence on his travels across the country. Then, Daughtry became the pastor of his late father's storefront church, The House of the Lord Church in Brooklyn, New York, where he preached to a small congregation of five adults. Daughtry also attended Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech at the Riverside Church, and joined Robert "Sonny" Carson's CORE chapter to help address the struggles of Brooklyn's black community.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section A2006_101_002_008, TRT: 0:29:25 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry participated in SCLC's Operation Breadbasket, and became acquainted with Reverend Jesse L. Jackson during the 1960s. Daughtry also pastored The House of the Lord Church in Brooklyn, New York, where he revised and published the church's constitution. Over time, his congregation grew, and he relocated the church to Brooklyn's Pacific Street. There, he became an active participant in New York City politics, in addition to his religious ministry. The location of the church near downtown Manhattan fueled Daughtry's activism, and he often led his congregation across the Brooklyn Bridge to hold demonstrations. Following his church's involvement in the protests against the police shooting of fifteen year old Randolph Evans in 1976, Daughtry led a national effort to unite local African American organizations, eventually establishing the National Black United Front. He also developed interfaith alliances with black leaders like Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section A2006_101_002_009, TRT: 0:30:34 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry was a trusted advisor of Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, whom he met in the 1960s through New York City's Operation Breadbasket. Later, Daughtry worked on Reverend Jackson's presidential campaigns during the 1980s, and accompanied him on trips to meet the pope at the Vatican, and the Archbishop of Canterbury in England. When Reverend Jackson faced accusations of anti-Semitism after using the term Hymietown, Daughtry advised him to issue an apology admitting responsibility. He also stood by Jackson during the resulting media frenzy. In 1991, Daughtry himself was accused of anti-Semitism for his role in the confrontation between the

Hasidic Jewish and African American communities in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. Six years later, he published 'No Monopoly on Suffering: Blacks and Jews in Crown Heights and Elsewhere' to explain the context of his words, and address the misrepresentation of the events in the media.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry, Section A2006_101_002_010, TRT: 0:30:39 ?

Reverend Dr. Herbert D. Daughtry authored 'No Monopoly on Suffering: Blacks and Jews in Crown Heights and Elsewhere,' in which he detailed the relationship between the black and Jewish communities in parts of New York City. He also addressed his labelling as a black anti-Semite. Daughtry cofounded the New York Ebonics Movement, and worked to achieve public recognition of the legitimacy of African American language and culture. In 1991, Daughtry was invited to lead the invocation prayer before the U.S. Congress; and, shortly after, President George H.W. Bush declared the end of the Gulf War. During the Clinton administration, Daughtry became acquainted with President William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton, and was a regular invitee to presidential breakfasts for interfaith leaders. Daughtry concludes the interview by reflecting upon his hopes for the African American community, the reparations movement and how he would like to be remembered.