Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator: Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods
Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods
Dates: September 7, 2007
Bulk Dates: 2007
Physical Description: 6 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:51:00).
Abstract: Civil rights activist and pastor Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods (1933 - ) Civil rights activist and pastor Calvin Wallace Woods (1933-) co-founded the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and participated in the Freedom Rides of 1961 and other events of the Civil Rights Movement. He is the leader of Shiloh Baptist Church, President of the Birmingham SCLC and the New Era Baptist State Convention. Woods was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 7, 2007, in Birmingham, Alabama. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification: A2007_248
Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civil rights activist and pastor Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr. was born on September 13, 1933, in Birmingham, Alabama to Maggie Rosa Lee Wallace Woods, a homemaker, and Abraham Lincoln Woods, Sr., a plant worker and Baptist minister. Woods entered Parker High School at age twelve, where he discovered and developed a skill for shoe repair, tailoring and a gift for public speaking. He graduated in 1950, with a partial scholarship to Miles College.

Throughout the years, Woods would attend the Universal Baptist Institute, the Universal Baptist Seminary and Birmingham-Easonian Baptist Bible College. He holds a B.S. degree in social science, B.D., B.R.E., M.B.S. and D.D. degrees. Woods, his brother, Rev. Abraham L. Woods, Jr. and Rev. Fred L. Shuttleswoth co-founded the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) in 1956. The Woods brothers were introduced to Reverends Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy in 1962, when they began working closely with the ACMHR.

In 1960, at the age of twenty-seven, Woods served as pastor for East End Baptist Church. He was arrested and convicted for advocating boycotts of Birmingham’s segregated city bus system. He was sentenced to prison for six months and fined, becoming the first member of the Woods family to be arrested for their participation in the Civil Rights Movement. Woods continued fighting segregation and was heavily involved in the Civil Rights Movement, and in 1963, Woods was arrested and beaten by the police for his participation in public protests. The same year, Woods joined the March on Washington. In 1965, Woods protested Birmingham’s voter registration procedures under the leadership of Reverend Edward Gardner, and one year later Woods worked as the strategy...
chairman for the protest of the shootings of five black protesters at a Birmingham supermarket.

In 2006, at the age of seventy-two, Woods succeeded his brother Abraham as President of the Birmingham SCLC, and became president of the New Era Baptist State Convention a year later. Woods is currently the leader of Shiloh Baptist Church and leads a group called the Prayer Intercessors.

Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods Sr. was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 7, 2007

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods was conducted by Denise Gines on September 7, 2007, in Birmingham, Alabama, and was recorded on 6 Betacam SP videocassettes. Civil rights activist and pastor Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods (1933 - ) Civil rights activist and pastor Calvin Wallace Woods (1933-) co-founded the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and participated in the Freedom Rides of 1961 and other events of the Civil Rights Movement. He is the leader of Shiloh Baptist Church, President of the Birmingham SCLC and the New Era Baptist State Convention.

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:

Woods, Rev. Calvin Wallace

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)
Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods--Interviews
Civil rights Activists--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)
The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers
ReligionMakers

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


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/10/2011 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
Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., discusses his family background. He talks about his mother Maggie Rosalee Woods' childhood in Birmingham, Alabama. Woods also reminisces about his maternal grandfather, who he describes as a studious man who taught his grandchildren to be fearless and assertive. Woods did not know as much about his father, Abraham Lincoln Woods', family except that his grandfather was white and his grandmother was a prophetess.

**African American families--Alabama.**
**African American mothers.**
**Miscegenation.**

Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., discusses growing up in the South during the Great Depression. He remembers standing in food lines and collecting discarded coal from the train tracks with his friends. He notes that they would take the coal home to heat their houses. Woods, Sr., also recalls his experiences in elementary school and how supportive two of his teachers, Mrs. Lila E. Geiss and Ms. Betty Gordon, were. Woods also talks about being called to preach in seventh grade.

**Depressions--1929--United States.**
**African Americans--Economic conditions--1918-1945.**
**African American students--Education (elementary).**
**African Americans--Childhood--Southern States.**
**African Americans--Religious life.**

Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., remembers his high school experiences and the devotion and innovation of his teachers. Woods also discusses his first experience with racism and the level of police brutality in the South during the 1950s and 1960s. He notes that the media outlets of the day tended to side with the police and report the brutality as acts of self defense. Woods discusses the changes he saw in race relations as he grew up. He also reminisces about graduating from college twenty six years after he first enrolled, and the day he met his wife.

**African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Alabama--Birmingham.**
**African Americans--Crimes against.**
**Race relations--Southern States--United States.**
**Racism--Southern States.**
**African Americans--Education (Higher).**

Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., talks about his involvement in the ministry and the civil rights movement. He remembers being arrested for preaching non-violent resistance to his African American congregation, but the sentence was overturned due to the unlawful nature of the arrest. Woods remembers the violent actions of the Ku Klux Klan used during the civil rights movement.
Woods also discusses the foundation of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and his personal relationship with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Woods states that the purpose of Southern Christian Leadership Conference was to better the lives of all oppressed people, regardless of their color.

Civil rights organizations--Alabama.
Southern Christian Leadership Conference.
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.
Ku Klux Klan (1915-).
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Political and social views.


Rev. Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., discusses the children who were a part of the Civil Rights Movement, and how they were treated for participating. He recalls a court injunction that allowed the children to return to school if they were expelled for protesting. Woods also talks about the political strategy in bringing Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. to Montgomery, Alabama, and the resistance they received from the city government when they requested equal employment and housing practices. Woods recounts Ku Klux Klan confrontations in Decatur, Georgia, and the role the Klu Klux Klan played as antagonists during peaceful demonstrations in the South. Woods also reminisces about Reverend King's non-violent nature.

Klu Klux Klan (1915).
Civil rights demonstrations--Alabama.
African American children--Political activity--Alabama.
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Political and social views.


Rev. Clarence Wallace Woods Sr. discusses his philosophical stances and expresses the importance of bridging the gap between former civil rights activists and the youth today. He feels that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference is vital to achieving that goal, and wants to see the youth brought more into the fold and remember the struggles endured to ensure their freedoms. Woods also talks about the importance of prayer and spirituality within the black community.

African American youth.
African Americans--Religion.
Spirituality--United States.