

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bernice Albertine King

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	King, Bernice A.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bernice Albertine King,
Dates:	February 27, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:54:57).
Abstract:	Civic leader and minister Bernice Albertine King (1963 -) was the youngest daughter to the late civil rights leaders Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King. King, a co-founder of Active Ministers Engaged in Nurturing (AMEN) and the Chair of the national advisory committee on National King Week College and University Student Conference on Kingian Nonviolence. She was also the author of a book titled 'Hard Questions, Heart Answers: Sermons and Speeches'. King was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 27, 2008, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_032
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Elder Bernice Albertine King was born on March 28, 1963, in Atlanta, Georgia, the youngest daughter to the late civil rights leaders Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King. King was only five years old when her father was assassinated in Memphis in 1968. Raised in Atlanta, King graduated from Douglass High School in 1981 and went on to earn her B.A. degree in psychology from Spelman College in 1985. In 1990, King was the first official graduate of a joint degree receiving her Masters of Divinity and J.D. degrees from Emory Candler School of Theology and Emory University Law School. She has also received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity degree from Wesley College. King received her calling to the ministry at the age of seventeen. Shortly thereafter, in her mother's stead, she gave an address advocating against the South African apartheid to the United Nations General Assembly in New York. In 1985 and again in 1986, King was arrested with her siblings while protesting against apartheid outside the Southern Christian Leadership Conference offices in Atlanta, an organization that her father founded.

While in graduate school, King was a student intern who participated in project STEP in one of Atlanta's notorious housing projects, Perry Homes. The program connected the residents to employment. During that time, she also headed demonstrations at Emory University.

In 1988, King gave her trial sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church where both her father and grandfather served as pastors. In 1990, she received her degrees from Emory University in the morning, and that evening she was ordained into the ministry. This day would also mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of her father's ascension. King assisted the pulpit for a number of years before going to Greater Rising Star Baptist Church in 1992, where she developed the praise team, women's and youth ministry and the ministers-in-training program. King became

assistant pastor in 1995. It was this year that she attended the inauguration of Nelson Mandela in South Africa.

King was privileged to serve as a law clerk in the Fulton County Juvenile Court system, under Judge Glenda Hatchett, who was Georgia's first African American chief presiding justice of a state court and the department head of one of the largest juvenile court systems in the country. During her tenure, King served as a rehabilitation-outreach coordinator and counseled teens that came through the juvenile court system. She has also served as a mentor to a group of fifth grade girls at an inner-city Atlanta elementary school. King became a member of the State Bar of Georgia in 1992.

King is a minister at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Georgia, under the dynamic leadership of Bishop Eddie Long. In addition to being a speaker, orator and preacher, King has planned and organized numerous conferences, seminars and workshops for all walks of life. She has successfully coordinated women and family conferences as well as nonviolent conflict resolution conferences for college and university students. She has also conducted a class on race relations at Mississippi College in Jackson, Mississippi, and taught a year-long leadership development class.

King is a co-founder of Active Ministers Engaged in Nurturing (AMEN) and the Chair of the national advisory committee on National King Week College and University Student Conference on Kingian Nonviolence. She is also the author of a book titled *Hard Questions, Heart Answers: Sermons and Speeches*

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Bernice Albertine King was conducted by Denise Gines on February 27, 2008, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civic leader and minister Bernice Albertine King (1963 -) was the youngest daughter to the late civil rights leaders Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King. King, a co-founder of Active Ministers Engaged in Nurturing (AMEN) and the Chair of the national advisory committee on National King Week College and University Student Conference on Kingian Nonviolence. She was also the author of a book titled 'Hard Questions, Heart Answers: Sermons and Speeches'.

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:

King, Bernice A.

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

King, Bernice A.--Interviews

African American women clergy--Interviews

African American women civil rights workers--Interviews

Women anti-apartheid activists--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civic Leader

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 Bernice Albertine King, February 27, 2008. 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 Bernice Albertine King, Section A2008_032_001_001, TRT: 0:29:11 ?

Bernice Albertine King was born on March 28, 1963 in Atlanta, Georgia to Coretta Scott King and Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Her maternal family owned land from the time of the Revolutionary War. King's maternal great-grandfather, insurance salesman Jefferson Scott, was active in the Mount Tabor A.M.E. Zion Church. Her maternal grandfather, Obie Scott, worked as a barber and at a saw mill, and built his home with a small store attached. He later bought a saw mill, which was eventually burned down by jealous whites. King's mother was also industrious. As a girl, she picked cotton, and cared for the livestock on her family's farm. King's parents, who were educated only through elementary school, encouraged her to board at the Lincoln Normal School in Marion, Alabama. She then attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where she met Paul Robeson. While studying at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, she met King's father, who became an iconic civil rights leader.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.

King, Coretta Scott, 1927-2006.

Family--History.

African American families--Alabama.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernice Albertine King, Section A2008_032_001_002, TRT: 0:28:28 ?

Bernice Albertine King's paternal great-grandfather, A.D. Williams, pastored the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia for thirty-seven years. He was succeeded by King's paternal grandfather, Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., who raised her father, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, in an all-black, middle class community, and taught him to resist racial discrimination. King's father attended Morehouse College from the age of fifteen years old. He continued his studies at the Crozer Theological Seminary in Upland, Pennsylvania, and earned a Ph.D. degree from Boston University. In Boston, he

met King's mother, Coretta Scott King, who admired his eloquence and commitment to racial equality; and who carried on his legacy after King's father was assassinated in 1968. King was five years old when her father was killed; and her uncle, Alfred Daniel Williams King, drowned one year later. King struggled to cope at the time, and again when her paternal grandmother, Alberta Williams King, was killed in 1974.

Death--Psychological aspects.

King, Coretta Scott, 1927-2006.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.

Family--History.

Assassination--United States.

Segregation--Georgia--Atlanta.

Ebenezer Baptist Church (Atlanta, Ga.)

African American families--Georgia--Atlanta.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernice Albertine King, Section A2008_032_001_003, TRT: 0:28:16 ?

Bernice Albertine King's paternal grandfather, Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., was born to sharecroppers in Stockbridge, Georgia. Her paternal grandmother, Alberta Williams King, grew up in a house on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia, where King's father, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was later born. King's mother, Coretta Scott King, was involved in the Civil Rights Movement prior to meeting King's father, whom she married in 1953. King recalls her father's affection for his four children, of whom King was the youngest. In 1968, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. She was five years old at the time, and struggled to understand her father's death. Her mother continued his activism, and established The King Center in Atlanta. Both King's older brothers, Martin Luther King III and Dexter King, served as the president of the center; and King's sister, Yolanda King, hosted numerous national speaking tours in support of their family's legacy.

Death--Psychological aspects.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.

King, Coretta Scott, 1927-2006.

Family--History.

Assassination--United States.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change

King, Martin Luther, III

Death and remembrance.

African American families--Georgia--Atlanta.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernice Albertine King, Section A2008_032_001_004, TRT: 0:29:02 ?

Bernice Albertine King attended the funeral of her father, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968. She was five years old at the time, and was confused when a recording of her father played at the service. Afterwards, her mother, Coretta Scott King, traveled the country, while King and her siblings were left in the care of the members of the Ebenezer Baptist Church. In Atlanta, Georgia, King grew up in Vine City, a working class neighborhood. As a child, she often played soccer, and skated in the alley near her family's home. She attended The Galloway School, a private school with few other African American students. She befriended the children of her relatives and neighbors, including her paternal

aunt, Christine King Farris; civil rights activist Julian Bond; and Anna Harvin Grant, who taught sociology at Morehouse College. After attending private schools for years, she transferred to the public Frederick Douglass High School.

Death--Psychological aspects.

King, Coretta Scott, 1927-2006.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.

Family--History.

African American families--Georgia--Atlanta.