

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr.

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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>	Woods, Calvin W. (Calvin Wallace), Sr., 1933-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 7, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:50:50).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Pastor Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr. (1933 - ) co-founded the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and participated in the Freedom Rides of 1961, other events of the Civil Rights Movement. He was also the leader of Shiloh Baptist Church, and 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.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_248
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## 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, Reverend. Abraham L. Woods, Jr. and Reverend. Fred L. Shuttlesworth 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

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## Scope and Content

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

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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:

Woods, Calvin W. (Calvin Wallace), Sr., 1933-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Woods, Calvin W. (Calvin Wallace), Sr., 1933- --Interviews

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Civil rights Activists--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:

Pastor

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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 Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., September 7, 2007. 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 Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., Section  
A2007\_248\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr. was born on September 13, 1933 in Birmingham, Alabama. His mother, Maggie Rosalee Woods (Wallace) was born in Birmingham, Alabama. Her father was Callie Denson Wallace. Calvin's father, Abraham Lincoln Woods, Sr., came from Prattville, Alabama to Birmingham, Alabama as a young boy. Woods speaks of how his mother was swept off her feet by his father and they were married when his mother was only fourteen. Maggie Rosalee Woods occasionally washed and ironed clothes while Abraham Lincoln Woods, Sr. worked as a preacher and at McWane Pipe Shop. Woods remembers going to his grandparents' for meals and enjoying bread pudding and chicken. His paternal grandmother, Rebenia Frazier, lived down the street from his childhood home. Rebenia was a religious woman known for her skills as a faith healer. Woods remembers being afraid of her when she would "speak in tongues" to predict the future.

African American families--Alabama.

African American mothers.

Miscegenation.

African American grandparents.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., Section  
A2007\_248\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr. continues his recollection of his family history. Woods describes his lack of knowledge of his biological paternal grandfather as well as how his parents lived in the East Thomas section of Birmingham, Alabama. He recalls the sights, sounds, and smells of his childhood including the dirt streets, raising chickens and hogs, and swimming in the creek as one of eleven surviving siblings. Born during the Great Depression, Woods remembers standing in line at Legion Field in order to get food handouts from the government and walking the railroad tracks in search of coal for the stove. While in the seventh grade, Woods recounts being called to preach by a vision of Jesus handing him a bible. He recalls being a mischievous, yet respectful young boy who enjoyed playing baseball and football and ran as a member of the track team. Woods was an excellent student. He attended East Thomas Elementary School, Tuggle Elementary School, and Parker High School in Birmingham, Alabama.

Depressions--1929--United States.

African Americans--Economic conditions--Southern States.

African American students--Education (Elementary).

African American children--Southern States.

African Americans--Religious life.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., Section  
A2007\_248\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Reverend Calvin Woods, Sr. describes his time at Parker High School in Birmingham, Alabama. Woods was only twelve when he started ninth grade where he was known as "Little Bit." He was involved in the choir, history club, and the debate team. He remembers two teachers who recognized his oratorical skills and helped him win the Birmingham oratorical contest, which earned him a partial college scholarship. Woods graduated from Parker High School in January of 1950. As a teenager, Woods remembers dancing the "jitterbug" and

listening to “The Lone Ranger” and the Wings Over Jordan Choir on the radio. After attending Miles College in Fairfield, Alabama for one year, Woods worked as a janitor in Birmingham. During this time, he had his first personal experience with overt racism when a police officer planted a pocket knife on him during a stop and search procedure. Woods married Lucille Grayson on December 3, 1950. He describes how he was guided into the ministry.

African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Alabama--Birmingham.

African Americans--Crimes against.

Race relations--Southern States--United States.

Racism--Southern States.

African Americans--Education (Higher).

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., Section A2007\_248\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr. continues describing the visions that led him to the ministry. In 1959, Woods was arrested for advocating a boycott of the Birmingham city buses. Woods became involved with the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights alongside his brother, Rev. Abraham Lincoln Woods, Jr. and HistoryMaker Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth. He participated in pickets, demonstrations, and assisted with voter registration. Through his work, Woods was introduced to Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He subsequently worked with Dr. King and traveled to Chicago to teach at the Urban Training Center for Christian Mission. Woods was present following the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing on September 13, 1963. He was also involved in the Birmingham riots of 1963, following the bombing of the A.G. Gaston Hotel on May 11, 1963. Woods describes the turbulent atmosphere, his efforts to calm the crowds, and the police response. Three of Woods’ thirteen children were jailed during the riots.

Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights.

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.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., Section A2007\_248\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr. remembers three of his children being arrested as part of the 1963 Birmingham riots. Following the riots, Woods and HistoryMaker Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth put pressure on Birmingham’s Mayor, Albert Burton Boutwell, to make changes in the city. Police brutality remained rampant and Woods describes numerous encounters with the Ku Klux Klan. Woods describes the events of the Liberty Supermarket picket of February 22, 1966 when five African American picketers were shot. Woods speaks of the integration efforts in Birmingham under Mayor Richard Arrington, Jr., the Birmingham Guardians Association for African American police officers, and the appointment of Johnnie Johnson, Birmingham’s first African American police chief. Woods recalls where he was when he heard that Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been killed and the challenges that the Civil Rights Movement has faced since Dr. King’s death.

Ku Klux Klan (1915-).

Civil rights demonstrations--Alabama.

African American children--Political activity--Alabama.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Political and social views.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr., Section  
A2007\_248\_001\_006, TRT: 0:25:10 ?

Reverend Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr. describes a revival of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the challenges they face today. Woods received multiple degrees including: Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Religious Education from Miles College in Fairfield, Alabama and Doctorates of Divinity from Universal Bible Institute in Birmingham, Alabama, Birmingham-Easonian Baptist Bible College in Birmingham, Alabama, and Union of Baptists Seminary. Woods briefly enrolled in graduate studies in agency counseling at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. In 1958, Woods was ordained by his father, Abraham Lincoln Woods, Sr., at Shiloh Baptist Church. His first pastoral position was at Golden Sons Lodge Hall. He then preached at East End Baptist Church for seventeen years before leaving and preaching at Roby's Chapel for a year. Woods then organized Believer's Temple Baptist Church before replacing his father as pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church. Woods wishes to be remembered as a "man of God."

African American youth.

African Americans--Religion.

Spirituality--United States.