

Biography
Of
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929. Dr. King grew up as the son of a leading minister in Atlanta, Georgia, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. His mother, Mrs. Alberta Williams King, assisted her husband in the care of his congregation. Because of their efforts and interest in behalf of the congregation and the community, his parents were known as 'Momma' and 'Daddy' King. His community, centered on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta also influenced him. By the 1930s when he was a child, it was the center of business and social life in Black Atlanta and the major center for the Black Southeast. The community was so successful that nationwide, it was known as "Sweet Auburn". The residential neighborhoods of the community, and especially the one where Dr. King was born were known for the diversity of the backgrounds of the residents. Though all Black, the neighborhoods had business people, laborers, college-educated, uneducated, rich, poor and successful all living close to each other.

As a boy, Dr. King experienced many of the same things most children do. He helped and played games with his older sister Christine and his younger brother A. D. He played baseball on vacant lots and rode his bicycle in the streets. He went to school at David T. Howard Elementary, three blocks from his home. He attended the Butler Street YMCA down Auburn Avenue. When the family moved to the house on Boulevard, he was attending Booker T. Washington High School, working a newspaper route, attending his first dances, and planning to attend college. But, Dr. King's primary memories of his childhood were of the sting of segregation.

In 1941 Daddy King moved the family to a brick home. Here King continued his development and education until he graduated from Morehouse College in 1948. Dr. King still lived in this home when he attended College here in Atlanta, starting at the age of fifteen. After graduation he left for graduate work at Crozer Theological Seminary, then in Chester, Pennsylvania (now Colgate Rochester divinity School/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary in Rochester, New York), and at Boston University. He became pastor at The Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery Alabama in 1954 and served there until 1960. From 1960 until 1968 he was co-pastor, with his father, of Ebenezer Baptist Church on Auburn Avenue, where his grandfather, Rev. A. D. Williams had also been pastor.

Starting with the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-1956, Dr. King was also the foremost leader of the Civil Rights Movement. His dedication to the tactics of non-violent resistance led to successful campaigns in Montgomery, AL, Birmingham, AL, and Selma, AL as well as encouraging African-Americans throughout the South to campaign for their own freedom. After 1965, He expanded his work to include actions in the North, opposition to the War in Vietnam, and planning for a campaign to aid poor people.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968 by James Earl Ray.