

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Harry Tartt

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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>	Tartt, Harry, 1908-2008
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Harry Tartt,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 12, 2002
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2002
<b>Physical Description:</b>	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:18:50).
<b>Abstract:</b>	High school teacher, chaplain, and pastor Reverend Harry Tartt (1908 - 2008 ) was a high school teacher before joining that Army as a chaplain. Tartt served in Africa, Europe, and Asia. He returned to teaching in the Gulfport, Mississippi area after retiring from the military. Tartt was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 12, 2002, in Gulfport, Mississippi. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2002_200
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

A writer, actor, U. S. Army major and ordained minister, the Reverend Harry Charles Tartt was born on October 16, 1908, in Biloxi, Mississippi. The oldest of seven children, Tartt excelled in school where his classmates were Johnny Robinson, poet Margaret Walker and activist chemist Katie Booth. After graduation from Mobile County Training School in 1928, Tartt enrolled in New Orleans University (now Dillard University), graduating summa cum laude in 1933.

Tartt taught at 33rd Avenue High School in Gulfport, Mississippi, in 1934 and left Gulfport to pursue a master's degree in English literature at the University of Chicago. Instead, Tartt became a staff writer for Bronzeville's Chicago Bee newspaper. Drafted into World War II in 1942, Tartt entered the Quartermaster Corps of the U.S. Army with a commission as a second lieutenant. He served as a replacement chaplain in northern Africa and in southern France, and then was stationed in Germany and Italy after the war. During his military career, Tartt earned five battle stars and the Army Commendation Medal, the nation's highest peacetime award, attaining the rank of major.

Tartt also appeared as an actor in three German movies: The Life of Lola Montez, Alexander the Great and Maid Without Honor. His European stage credits include La Boheme, Pagliacci and Fanny. In Korea, Tartt served as editor-in-chief of seventeen different Army publications. While in the U.S. Army, Tartt attended San Jose State University and eventually earned his M.A. degree in English literature from Xavier University in New Orleans. His experience as a U.S. Army chaplain inspired Tartt to pursue the pastor's course of study at Emory University's Candler School of Theology. The United Methodist Church subsequently ordained him. Tartt's inspirational essays have appeared in many publications.

After his military service, Tartt returned to Gulfport to teach in the school system. He has received numerous

awards for service, including the Living Legacy Certificate of Recognition by the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, the Charlie Green Award, the Harriet Tubman Award, the Ageless Heroes Award and the Citizen of the Year Award. Tartt remained active in the Gulfport area until his death on May 12, 2008. He was 99 years old.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Harry Tartt was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 12, 2002, in Gulfport, Mississippi, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. High school teacher, chaplain, and pastor Reverend Harry Tartt (1908 - 2008 ) was a high school teacher before joining that Army as a chaplain. Tartt served in Africa, Europe, and Asia. He returned to teaching in the Gulfport, Mississippi area after retiring from the military.

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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:

Tartt, Harry, 1908-2008

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Tartt, Harry, 1908-2008--Interviews

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High school teachers--Mississippi--Interviews

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African American clergy--Interviews

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African American Methodists--Interviews

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Military chaplains--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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United States. Army.

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## Occupations:

Pastor

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Chaplain

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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 Harry Tartt, November 12, 2002. 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 Harry Tartt, Section A2002\_200\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Reverend Harry Tartt describes his family and childhood. Tartt's father, Seth Tartt, was born in Meridian, Mississippi and his mother, Beulah Charles Tartt, was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Tartt's maternal grandmother, Theresa Charles, moved to Chicago, Illinois in the 1930s to work in the stockyards, but he did not know any of his other relatives. Tartt was born on October 16, 1908 in Biloxi, Mississippi, but was raised in Gulfport, Mississippi where his father worked at a fertilizer plant. Tartt remembers the community as very closely knit and segregated from the white community. His parents were very religious, and his family attended St. Andrews A.M.E. Church in Gulfport. Tartt attended Gulfport School (Colored), and was the only male in his graduating class in 1924.

High school teachers--Mississippi--Interviews.

African American clergy--Interviews.

African American Methodists--Interviews.

Military chaplains--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Harry Tartt, Section A2002\_200\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Reverend Harry Tartt describes his education and his United States Army service in World War II. In Gulfport, Mississippi, Tartt was first exposed to black newspapers like the Chicago Defender and Marcus Garvey's 'Negro World.' After graduating from high school in 1924, Tartt worked at the fertilizer plant until he had raised enough money for college tuition at New Orleans University in Louisiana. Tartt earned his B.A. degree in black history in 1933 and returned to Gulfport to teach at 33rd Avenue High School. In 1937, Tartt migrated to Chicago, Illinois, where he attended the University of Chicago, drove a jitney and wrote for the Chicago Bee newspaper. In 1942, Tartt was drafted into the United States Army to fight in World War II, where he was a second lieutenant in the 28th Quartermain Regiment and served in northern Africa and Italy. Tartt became an actor in German films and plays, and remained with the Army until 1964. He served in both the Korean War and Vietnam War and achieved the rank of major.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Harry Tartt, Section A2002\_200\_001\_003, TRT: 0:19:20 ?

Reverend Harry Tartt talks about his career following his United States Army Service in World War II. Tartt married Orlean Grace Tartt on March 23, 1941 in St. Louis, Missouri. After World War II, she acted with him in three German films: 'The Life of Lola Montez,' 'Alexander the Great,' and 'Maid Without Honor' as well as in stage productions in Munich, Germany. In the Korean War,

Tartt served as editor-in-chief of seventeen different Army publications. Drawing on his experience as a chaplain in the Army, Tartt became a minister and was ordained in the United Methodist Church, the A.M.E. Church, the C.M.E. Church, and the Baptist Church. He retired from the ministry in 1978, but continued to preach as an inspirational speaker around Gulfport, Mississippi. He ends the interview by talking about his hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflecting on his legacy.