

The Papers of Howard Washington Thurman: Volume I: My People Need Me, June 1918–March 1936

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The Papers of Howard Washington Thurman is a four-volume, chronologically arranged documentary edition spanning the long and productive career of the Reverend Howard Thurman, one of the most significant leaders in the history of intellectual and religious life in the mid-twentieth-century United States. The first to lead a delegation of African Americans to meet personally with Mahatma Gandhi, in 1936, Thurman later became one of the principal architects of the modern, nonviolent civil rights movement and a key mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1953 Life magazine named Thurman as one of the twelve greatest preachers of the century.

Volume I (June 1918-March 1936) documents Thurman's early years in his native Daytona, Florida, his formal education and his leadership in the student movement, and his years at Howard University as a professor of philosophy and religion and dean of Rankin Chapel as well as his historic trip to India and meeting with Mahatma Gandhi in 1936. The texts, images, and editorial commentary presented here reveal the early development of the vision that drove Thurman's career as an educator, theologian, minister, and advocate for social justice and informed the twenty-three books that he began publishing in the mid-1940s. This volume provides rich insights into Thurman's thinking and spiritual growth and offers a window onto the landscape of the defining issues, events, movements, institutions, and individuals that shaped his formative years.

The texts presented here make for compelling reading, as Thurman's dialogue with the world of public theology is the story of a nation that was taking stock of its political and religious heritage. The historic publication of his collected papers will make an invaluable contribution not only to American intellectual history and to the history of religion, but to "America in Search of a Soul," as Thurman titled one of his sermons.



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