

The Three Mothers

*How the Mothers of
Martin Luther King, Jr.,
Malcolm X, and James Baldwin
Shaped a Nation*

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS



FLATIRON
BOOKS
NEW YORK

By this time, Martin had found his way to world fame through his work as a civil rights activist—work that began in his home from his parents' teachings and that he developed further through his studies at Morehouse College and Crozer Theological Seminary. In 1944, Martin began his freshman year at Morehouse. There he obtained a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1948, the same year he was ordained at Ebenezer Baptist. In his studies, he encountered lessons he'd learned since he was a child but didn't yet have the language for. Stemming from his grandparents' and parents' active yet peaceful approach to challenging discrimination, he found familiarity in reading works like Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience." As he put it, "Because of the influence of my mother and father, I guess I always had a deep urge to serve humanity," and in college he was able to develop the strategies and theories dedicated to making justice a reality.

At the age of nineteen, Martin graduated from college, ready to combine his desire to end racial injustice with his calling to join his family's vocation in ministry. The same year Jimmy moved to Paris, Martin enrolled in Crozer Theological Seminary, where he would go on to receive his degree in divinity in 1951. He was on an "intellectual quest for a method to eliminate social evil." He described his approach to ministry by saying, "Any religion that professes concern for the souls of men and is not equally concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried." Martin beautifully put words to the approaches his family had been taking to ministry, education, and social justice for generations.