



James McBride Dabbs was born on May 8, 1896 in Mayesville, SC. Between the years 1917 to 1919, Dabbs served in the U.S. Army and worked with field artillery. From 1921 to 1924, he was an instructor of English at the University of South Carolina, Columbia. In 1925, he left Columbia and went to Coker College where he served as the English Department Head until 1937. He left Coker College in 1942. Afterward, he made his living primarily by farming. During this time, Dabbs began to write.

Throughout his lifetime, Dabbs was a firm advocate of racial equality and integration. He used his writing as the medium by which he voiced his opinions.

In 1958, *The Southern Heritage*, Dabbs' first book, was published. The book earned him the Brotherhood Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. It speaks directly of race relations in the South from a period just before the Civil War to the 1950s. The book received very favorable reviews. *Who Speaks for the South?*, Dabbs' third book, was published in 1964. It discusses where the South stands in our nation's history. In 1972, *Haunted by God* was published posthumously. Dabbs' last book questions the connection between Southern culture and religion.

While Dabbs used his writing as his primary mode for promoting racial equality, he was also a man of action when it came to integration. From 1957 to 1963, he served as a member on the board of directors for the South Carolina Council on Human Relations. From 1964 to 1970, he worked on the board of trustees for Penn Community Services, Inc. in Beaufort, SC. In Dr. Martin Luther King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail," Dabbs is mentioned personally as one of the few white men who "have written about our [the African-American] struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms." Later in his life, Dabbs became a ruling elder of the U.S. Presbyterian Church and a dedicated supporter of desegregation within the church community. James McBride Dabbs died on May 30, 1970.

- Blake Bolen

1990 Inductee to the South Carolina Academy of Authors



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