

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Shatriya Smith

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-15

Shatriya Smith, Executive Director of the Garvey-Tubman Cultural Arts and Research Center, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 25, 2022

Location: Garvey-Tubman Cultural Arts and Research Center, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggenbach, *Tumultuous 2020* project manager

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript being  
processed.

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 2:38 / 2.63 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on June 13, 2022.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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## Abstract

Shatriya Smith, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-15

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Shatriya Smith was born in Springfield, Illinois, in 1975. She was raised in Springfield and grew up on the East Side of the town, a historically African American area. She describes the strong sense of community she found there and throughout the city, citing it as the reason she has continued to reside there in her adult life. Smith is dyslexic and struggled during her school years because of the lack of support she received. It wasn't until she was in high school that she started journaling and began to build confidence in herself. This led to her writing raps and poetry, leading her to become a prominent member of Springfield's poetry community. Smith graduated from Springfield High School in 1994. She began working for District 186 as a Social Emotional Redirection Advocate Aide. On the side, she continued to work within the community on different projects. She began teaching summer classes at the Garvey-Tubman Cultural Arts and Research Center in 2017 and was offered the position of Executive Director in 2018 and again in 2019. After much deliberation, she accepted the position in November of 2019. She continued her work with the district and began training for the role of Executive Director.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of 2020, District 186 moved to remote schooling. Smith became sick with the virus early on and details her recovery, including the long-term side effects. These effects made it difficult for Smith to return to the district when school resumed in person learning. She resigned from her position and focused all of her attention on the Garvey-Tubman Cultural Arts and Research Center. Throughout the interview, Smith details the work the center completed during the pandemic, from the end of 2019 to March of 2022.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Tumultuous 2020; Tumultuous 2020 oral history; Springfield, Illinois; East Side; community; poetry; spoken word poetry; Marcus Garvey – Harriet Tubman Cultural Arts and Research Center; GTCAR; arts education; African American history;

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