

## **Title Page & Abstract**

An Interview with William Washington

Interview #: SAA-A-D-2004-026

Conducted by the Springfield African-American History Foundation  
For the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Born in Springfield, Illinois, William Washington graduated from Lanphier High School and Springfield Junior College. He married and worked various jobs until he started the newspaper, *Springfield's Voice*, in 1972. He talks about the old black-owned business neighborhoods that were eliminated by urban renewal. He also discusses discrimination in entertainment and recreation venues, and in the workplace.

Interview date(s):	April 4, 2004
Interview Location:	Springfield, Illinois
Interview Format:	audio cassette
Interviewer:	Willie Mitchell
Transcription by:	Susan Crapo Transcription Service
Edited by:	Cheryl Pence
Total Pages:	19
Total Time:	38 minutes, 6 seconds / 0.63 hrs

Interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential  
Library in Springfield, Illinois.

## Abstract

### William Washington Springfield African-American History Foundation Project

**Biographical Information and Synopsis:** William Washington was born in Springfield, Illinois, in 1932, one of eleven children. Mr. Washington grew up on Mason Street and attended Palmer Grade School and Lanphier High School. Mr. Washington talks about the role of religion in his upbringing. He also discusses the “unspoken laws” of segregation – restrictions on where blacks could go for entertainment and recreation.

Mr. Washington served in the U.S. Army in Korea, and married after he finished two years at Springfield Junior College. He is the editor of his own local newspaper, *Springfield's Voice*, which has been published bi-weekly since 1972. He also speaks of the destruction of the “heart of the black businesses” due to urban renewal and the building of the Horace Mann headquarters. He comments that there currently are no positive role models for children in the black community, because when a black person becomes educated they typically move to another part of town.

**Topics Covered:** Springfield, Illinois, 1930s – present; segregation in Springfield; *Springfield's Voice* (newspaper); State Journal-Register (newspaper); Badlands (neighborhood) ; urban renewal; Boys and Girls Club

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