

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with John Fontanetta

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key - Civics Education Oral History project

Interview # ECE-A-L-2020-039

John Fontanetta, the principal at Piper Elementary in Chicago, Illinois, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Jul 24, 2020 Location: A telephonic interview

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:04 / 1.07 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 9, 2020.

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

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Abstract

John Fontanetta, *Education is Key-Civics*, ECE-A-L-2020-039

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: John Fontanetta was born in Chicago, Illinois in February 1952. John graduated in 1970 from St. Joseph College Prep School in Edgerton, Wisconsin. John earned a BA in history with a minor in education from the University of Illinois at Chicago (Circle campus) in 1974. In 1999 John earned a MA in educational administration from Northeastern University. John's teaching and administrative career included St. Maria Goretti Elementary (1975-92), St. Priscilla Elementary (1992-1994), Irving Elementary School (1994-1999), Heritage Middle School (1999-2002), and Piper Elementary in Chicago suburb Berwyn, Illinois (2002-2013), where he was principal. At the time of the interview John worked for the Barat Education Foundation, which provides curriculum and professional training for Our American Voice, a program developed for middle schools. In addition, since 2013 John has been a professional educational trainer on the use of primary documents for the Library of Congress.

Fontanetta reviews Our American Voice, which is designed for middle schools throughout Illinois, using primary sources from the Library of Congress. He examined its four core principles (way of life, responsibility, participation, and interdependent success), and discussed the program's two phases, classroom based knowledge and a service action plan. Other discussion topics include programs available to help with the 2017 new social studies standards, including the Golden Apple Program for pre-teachers, and the website housing Our American Voice (OAV). He shared examples for each of the four core principles, and discussed the impact of remote learning after March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the impact on summer activities, and school plans being considered for the fall.

Subject Headings/Key Words: teaching civics in middle schools; Our American Voice; primary sources at Library of Congress; civics training for teachers; remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; Illinois 2017 social studies standards; race relations and Our American Voice

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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