

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Dr. Matthew Holden

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember Oral History project

Interview # VRC-A-L-2012-017

Dr. Matthew Holden, son of a Mississippi tenant farmer and Army soldier who served on occupation duty in South Korea after the Korean War, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 14, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Date: Aug 27, 2012 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:28 + 2:15 / 2.47 + 2.25 = 4.72 hrs

Session 1: Growing up in rural Mississippi and in Chicago, Illinois

Session 2: Holden's years in the Army working on personnel issues in Korea

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 23, 2012.

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

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Abstract

Matthew Holden, *Veterans Remember*, VRC-A-L-2012-017

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Matthew Holden was born on September 12th, 1931 in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, and spent his first thirteen years there with his parents. His father was an African-American and a cash-rent tenant farmer, growing cotton for a cash crop while also running a molasses rendering business. In 1944, following a devastating drought in Mississippi, the family moved to Chicago where Matthew's father found work. Holden did very well in school, and began college at the University of Chicago before he even completed high school. In 1950, he transferred to Roosevelt College in Chicago, where he majored in Political Science. He then started graduate school at Northwestern University, but was drafted into the U.S. Army on November 14th, 1955. He attended Basic Training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, and took his advanced training in the Field Artillery at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas.

Holden was shipped to South Korea in April, 1956, less than three years after the end of the Korean War. He was assigned to Headquarters Battery, 49th Field Artillery, part of the 7th Infantry Division, and was station near Munsan, south of the Imjin River, near the border of North Korea. Although he was trained to work in the unit's fire direction center, Holden ended up working in the battalion personnel section, processing officer records, courts-martial documents and other personnel tasks. He reflects on that experience in depth, the conditions in South Korea at the time, and what it was like as a black serving in a newly integrated army. Following his short military experience, Holden resumed his education at Northwestern University, which led to a distinguished career as a scholar.

Subject Headings/Key Words: life of a tenant-farmer during depression in Mississippi; occupation duty in South Korea in late 1950s; Munsan, South Korea; cash renting; University of Chicago; Roosevelt College, Chicago, Illinois; Northwestern University; service in South Korea during early Cold War; Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri; racial relations in U.S. Army in late 1950s; 49th Field Artillery, 7th Infantry Division

Note 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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