

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with J.D. Washington

Interview #: SAA-A-D-2008-109

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

J.D. Washington was born on January 12, 1929 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Washington was the first African-American principal in Springfield Public Schools as well as the first African-American recruiter for the U.S. Peace Corps. He has lived in Springfield since 1970 and talks about some of the changes he has seen since that time, especially in terms of race relations.

Interview date(s):	March 12, 2008
Interview Location:	Springfield, Illinois
Interview Format:	audio cassettes
Interviewer:	Rudy Davenport
Transcription by:	_____
Edited by:	_____
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Interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential
Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Abstract

J.D. Washington, Springfield African-American History Foundation Project

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Biographical Information and Synopsis: J.D. Washington was born in Little Rock, Arkansas on January 12, 1929 to David and Hazel Washington. He was raised in Little Rock while Jim Crow laws were in effect and attended the University of Arkansas beginning in 1949. After working several jobs throughout Arkansas, he moved to Missouri in 1954 to be a principal at a grade school. In July of 1970, he moved to Springfield, Illinois for new job as a principal in the Springfield Public Schools, where he stayed until his retirement in 1989.

In his interview, Washington discusses some of the racial issues he noticed in the Springfield school system and how these issues evolved during his time in Springfield. He also talks about some of the changes the school system has experienced, specifically changes and cuts in the arts programs. Finally, he discusses the increase in the number of African-American students in institutions of higher education.

Topics Covered: Little Rock, Arkansas; Little Rock Nine; University of Arkansas; Springfield Public Schools; racism in Springfield, 1970-1989; Black History Month

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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