

An Interview with
Frankie Washington
March 30, 1980

Interviewed by
Kona White

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
Post Office Box 571
Jackson., Mississippi 39205

AU 530
OH 1979.08.31
MHSOHP 1-38

Interviewee: Washington, Frankie
Interviewer: White, Kona

Title: An interview with Frankie Washington, March 30, 1980 /
interviewed by Kona White

Collection Title: Murrah High School Advanced History Class Oral History
Project, Easter Flood of 1979

Scope Note: Murrah High School students, with assistance from the
Mississippi Department of Archives and History, conducted oral
history interviews with local citizens about the Easter Flood of
1979. The interviews were conducted during the 1979-1980
school year.

AU 530

- WHITE: My name is Kona White and I am interviewing one of the Easter flood victims. What is your name?
- WASHINGTON: Frankie Washington
- WHITE: When you heard the news that the water was first rising, how did you feel about it? Did you believe that maybe they were putting you on and that maybe it wouldn't rise as high as they had expected it to?
- WASHINGTON: Well, I thought that they would find a way to get the water out without having to break my (inaudible/receiver?)
- WHITE: When it was declared that the water would be released and that it would flood the downtown area, how did you feel then?
- WASHINGTON: Well, I (inaudible) that they would have to prevent it. I couldn't imagine them letting so much water back up. After I made myself face reality, I started packing a few items in case I had to move out.
- WHITE: While you watched the water rise up more and more, did you get more frightened?
- WASHINGTON: Yes, I became frightened, scared that I might have to return to a home in raid, that it might be robbed, because you know, whenever there's a flood, or something like this, and they close off this area, and ask you to move out, you have people that come in and just take everything of yours.
- WHITE: Did the police check your neighborhood for robbers very carefully?
- WASHINGTON: Well, I would say yes. Well, they had so much; they had a lot of area to cover. You know, it was all the way down in south Jackson, all up by the reservoir, they had a lot of work to try to do. Plus, some of them were working and everything so, I can say this, they did try to help out in that area. They did come through that area as much as they possibly could.
- WHITE: Were there any break-ins in your neighborhood?
- WASHINGTON: Yes, there were some, not too many, but there were some, because some people did leave their homes. I tried to stay as long as I could. The water got up to my step and I just tried to stay and I just prayed to the Lord that I would make it.
- WHITE: Did the city offer you services and help?

WASHINGTON: Yes, all agencies, people from everywhere tried to be as nice as they could. It seemed like it was a little slow coming to me, but it finally got it there.

WHITE: If you were to sum this all up about your feelings about the whole situation, what would you say?

WASHINGTON: I'd say, just probably, I've never seen so much water all the days in my life, and when I went downtown, seeing water on Capitol Streets down there, and when I went out by the college, (inaudible) all around water up to that window, to those windows, oh my goodness, I just couldn't believe my eyes. That pretty building down there, just covered with water almost, just water all the way up to the top. But this could happen again, but you know, in the beginning, I just didn't want to believe this. I thought (inaudible) and everything about the reservoir. I really don't know if they telling the truth about that gate or if it was cracked or just what it was, but the man promised us that he was going to solve this problem and I believe we going to have to build those banks, what you call them, them levee things. They going to have to build them up, and get ready, because this could happen again.

WHITE: Thank you, Ms. Washington, for letting me interview you. This is Kona White signing off.

END OF RECORDING