

Student Jim Roberts

I attended Douglass Elementary from 1941 - 1950 and Douglass High from 1951 - 1956. Living in Leesburg, I normally walked approximately 1 mile to these schools. On occasion I would visit my sister who lived in Middleburg. Sometimes I'd ride the bus from Douglass south on route 15 and west on route 50 to Middleburg. Then, on school days I'd ride the bus east on route 50 and north on route 15 to Douglass in Leesburg. Douglass Elementary and High had only Black students and there were no white students on my bus. The buses were a mix of Ford, GMC and Chevy and in my school days I had both adult and student drivers. They were always Black. The adults usually had second jobs. The buses were generally in poor condition with rust and some had no heat. It was an 18 mile trip between Douglass and Middleburg, but it was all paved road. Students would be picked up at various stops along route 50 and 15. These stops weren't designated or sheltered, just where the students would walk out to the road from their homes. The bus would have 35 - 40 students and sometimes students would be standing. Fortunately, my bus never had a breakdown and since the roads were paved, it never got stuck in snow or mud. Other Black schools like Willisville, St. Louis and Aldie Mountain were accessed by dirt roads. I would also take a school bus when my high school basketball team played 'away' games¹.

¹ From July 17, 2020 interview with former LCPS Student Jim Roberts conducted by Nathan Bailey