

On August 28, 1963, more than 250,000 people joined the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The crowd stretched from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial. Among the participants was Jackie Robinson, who had become the first African American player in Major League Baseball in 1947. Robinson gave this interview at the base of the Washington Monument during the march.

PRIMARY SOURCE AUDIO

Jackie Robinson Interview, Educational Radio Network, 1963



Baseball player Jackie Robinson walks with his wife and son at the March on Washington. A legend on and off the field, Robinson joined the fight for civil rights in the 1960s.

Jackie Robinson Interview

Interviewer: This is David Edwards on the stage. Jackie Robinson is standing here shaking hands with various of his well-wishers at the moment. We will be with him in a moment. Here he is. Mr. Robinson.

Jackie Robinson: Yes.

Interviewer: You broke the {color line} in baseball what seems like a long time ago, but there are a good many color lines remaining. What do you see as the next steps to be taken?

Jackie Robinson: Well, I sincerely believe that the steps today that the Negro is taking is an indication that in all fields that the barriers have to come down. We're not going to be satisfied with {tokenism} at all. And I know very well that all of us are going to continue our pressures and we are sure that things are going to come about very soon.

Interviewer: What ways do you think that action can most effectively be pursued now?

Jackie Robinson: Well, I'm sure that a demonstration such as this will let the Senators and Congressmen know about the quiet determination that the Negro is having here. So I think this is obvious what we're going to do.

Interviewer: How about more direct action projects, freedom rides, sit-ins, and other boycotts, other such programs?

Jackie Robinson: Well, I think the boycott is going to come into being more and more because the Negro is recognizing their tremendous economic strength. We represent income, more money than the whole of Canada. I think white businessmen are beginning to recognize it. The Negro now is beginning to recognize this tremendous strength and we're going to use this strength to our best advantage. Businesses and industry that will work with us will get our cooperation. Those who will not then we're going to just go someplace else. It's going to be as simple as that as far as I'm concerned.

Interviewer: Are you going to be marching this afternoon?

Jackie Robinson: Oh, most definitely. So I'm in charge of, I'm the head of the Connecticut Delegation. If I can find them among these thousands of people I'll be lucky, but we are looking forward to it and we're quite thrilled. I've never been so honored and thrilled in all of our life.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Mr. Robinson.