

AFRICAN CONNECTIONS

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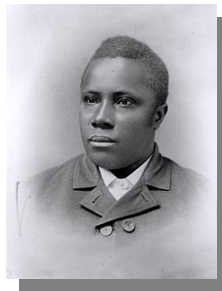
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For Immediate Release!
Saturday, January 10, 2009

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John Lewis Waller



January marks the 159th anniversary of pioneering diplomat's birth in New Madrid Co., Missouri (USA)

Documentary film in production

As the world prepares for the inauguration of President-elect [Barack Obama](#), the AFRICAN CONNECTIONS Research and Education Fund notes the January 12th birthday of African-American lawyer, politician, journalist, publisher, businessman, military leader and diplomat [John Lewis Waller](#) (1850 – 1907).

Born into slavery in [New Madrid County, Missouri](#) (USA), John Waller rose to become a prominent member of the [Kansas](#) Republican establishment. Although spurned in his attempts to seek elected office, he was the only African-American elector in the [1888 U.S. Presidential election](#). In 1891, he was appointed United States Consul to [Madagascar](#), by President [Benjamin Harrison](#).

Following his service in Africa, Waller organized a company of Black American soldiers to fight in the Spanish-American War. Under Waller's command, this unit was sent to Cuba as part of the Twenty-Third Kansas Volunteers.

The life of John Lewis Waller is to be profiled in an upcoming television documentary, “**John L. Waller: Striving For Equality**” (working title).

Produced by **David M. Talley**, a former network television executive, the program focuses upon the life and times of a remarkable American.

Talley, 56, has spent the better part of two years, researching, writing and searching photographic archives. Technical assistance for the project has been provided by documentary filmmaker [Melvin Cox](#).

A graduate of the [University of California, Berkeley](#), Mr. Talley holds advanced degrees from the [Stanford University Law School](#) and from the [Stanford University Graduate School of Business](#).

The Waller documentary includes hundreds of news clippings, illustrations and photographs drawn from a variety of sources. The production features interviews with distinguished scholars including (listed alphabetically):

- [Dr. Allison Blakely](#), Boston University
- [Dr. Liliane Koziol](#), University of California, Berkeley
- [Dr. Susan O'Donovan](#), Harvard University
- [Dr. Manisha Sinha](#), University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- [Dr. Clarence Walker](#), University of California, Davis
- [Dr. Calvin White, Jr.](#), University of Arkansas
- [Dr. Randall Woods](#), University of Arkansas

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Editors Please Note:

John L. Waller's grandson, [Andy Razaf](#) (1895 – 1973) achieved international fame as a composer, poet, and lyricist of such well-known songs as "[Ain't Misbehavin'](#)" and "[Honeysuckle Rose](#)".

Links to Public Domain Images of John L. Waller:

<http://www.africanconnections.com/Images/waller.jpg>

http://www.africanconnections.com/Images/Hon_John_L_Waller.jpg