

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Bob Rogers

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
IHPA Legacy Oral History project

Interview # HP-V-L-2015-015

Bob Rogers, founder and chairman of BRC Imagination Arts, the company that designed the exhibits at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *IHPA Legacy* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Apr 1, 2015 Location: IL Information Service Studio, CMS, Springfield, IL

Date: Apr 2, 2014 Location: IL Information Service Studio, CMS, Springfield, IL

Date: Apr 2, 2015 Location: A. Lincoln Presidential Museum's Union Theater

Interview Format: Digital video, HD-Wide Screen, + Red Dragon camera

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc.): Mark Suszko, Tony Bateman, Gregg Lipe, IL Information Service, & Tim Lynn, private contractor & Red Dragon camera operator

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:52 + 1:58 + 1:16 + 1:32 (Union Theater) / 1.86 + 1.96 + 1.27 + 1.53 (Union Theater) = 6.62 hrs.

Session 1: Early career, launching BRC & obtaining ALPLM exhibit design contract

Session 2: Discussion of exhibits built for the Lincoln Presidential Museum

Session 3: Continued discussion on Museum exhibits, and launch of the Museum

Session 4: Bob Rogers' presentation in the Union Theater and Q & A session

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 19, 2015.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Abstract

Bob Rogers, *IHPA Legacy*, HP-V-L-2015-015

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Bob Rogers was born in February, 1950 in Los Angeles, California, and grew up there, dreaming of a future in the movie industry. Following graduation from high school in 1968 he attended college while also finding work in Disneyland's Main Street magic shop. In that job, he began to learn all of the behind-the-scenes aspects of the entertainment business. In 1981 he founded his own business, BRC Imagination Arts, an exhibit design firm that has developed the reputation for its immersive and imaginative products, handcrafting experiences that engage an audience and bring a museum's subject to life.

In 1998 Rogers' firm competed with several others for the opportunity to develop the exhibits for a new library and museum for the Illinois State Historical Library's collection of Lincoln artifacts, what eventually became the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. The firm was selected by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) Board of Trustees, then chaired by Julie Cellini. Susan Mogerman served as the director of IHPA at that time. For the next several years, BRC, in conjunction with Julie, Susan, Tom Schwartz (the state historian) and several others, collaborated on the design of what eventually became a revolutionary type of presidential museum. Their mission was to create a museum that would inspire visitors "with a greater attraction to and fascination with the life and times of Abraham Lincoln." Most of the interview involves Rogers' detailed discussion of the creative process for the museum's many exhibits, the challenges they encountered due to limited space and especially financial constraints, and the public's reaction to the museum's exhibits. He discussed the crucial role that Julie, Susan, Tom, Bob Coomer and others played throughout the process. He also discussed the museum's many life figures created by Life Formations, and the musical score created by David Kneupper, a renowned composer. This interview includes Bob's presentation and a Q & A session to an audience in Union Theater. A large number of museum volunteers were in attendance.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum; Bob Rogers; BRC Imagination Arts; Julie Cellini; Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA); Julie Cellini; Susan Mogerman; Robert (Bob) Coomer; Dr. Tom Schwartz; Life Formations; David Kneupper; Illinois's Central Management Services; working at Disneyland's Main Street;

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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