

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Mark Flotow

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Historians Speak - Illinois* Oral History project

Interview # HSC-V-L-2020-063

Mark A. Flotow, author of the book *In Their Letters, In Their Words: Illinois Civil War Soldiers Write Home*, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Historians Speak – Civil War* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Nov 12, 2020 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Multi-Purpose Room, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital Video

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Technical Support (Videographers, etc.): Kurt Williams & Garrett West, ALPL Theater Dept. staff

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:01 / 1.02 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on June 8, 2021.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Transcript being  
processed

# Abstract

## Mark Flotow, Historians Speak, HSC-V-L-2020-063

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Mark A. Flotow was born in May 1955 in Melrose Park, Illinois. He worked for many years as a demographer and statistician, retiring in 2012 as a Division chief at the Illinois Center for Health Statistics, Illinois Dept. of Public Health.

In 2019 Mark published a book entitled *In Their Letters, In Their Words: Illinois Civil War Soldiers Write Home*, the product of years of diligent work combing the vast collection of Civil War soldier letters archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's manuscript department. He compiled and edited hundreds of excerpts from Civil War letters and provided a detailed narrative which provided context for the quotes he selected. Mark organized the book around several themes he encountered while combing through thousands of letters, and eventually selected excerpts from 165 correspondents. The book was published in 2019 by the Southern Illinois University Press. In November 2020 Dr. Mark DePue interviewed Flotow about the process of writing the book during one of the Presidential Museum's series of Facebook Live presentations. The two were introduced by the Museum's programing director, Joe Crain.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Illinois Civil War soldiers; letter writing during the Civil War; literacy of Civil War soldiers; Abraham Lincoln; Missionary Ridge; Southern Illinois University Press; camp life of Civil War soldiers; Union soldiers' opinion of slavery

**Notes 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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