

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Eric Bandy

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Tumultuous 2020 Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-41

Eric Bandy, pharmacist and owner of Bandy's Pharmacies, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: June 27, 2022

Location: Bandy's Pharmacy, Salem, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggenbach, *Tumultuous 2020* project manager

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed.

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:51 / 1.85 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 12, 2022.

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

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Abstract

Eric Bandy, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-41

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Eric Bandy was born in Centralia, Illinois, in 1975. He was raised in Salem, Illinois, by his parents who owned the original Bandy's Pharmacy. Bandy's mother served the business and bookkeeping side of the pharmacy while also running gift shops and Bandy's father ran the pharmacy. Bandy attended Salem Community High School and was actively involved with a variety of extracurriculars. He grew up contemplating whether he would become a veterinarian or pharmacist and upon graduating high school in 1993, he decided to attend St. Louis College of Pharmacy. He graduated with his RPh in 1998 and began working for his father. Bandy saw opportunities to expand the business but with his father nearing retiring age, his father was reluctant to commit. This led Bandy to purchase his first pharmacy in 2004 in Irvington, Illinois. In 2008 he bought a medical equipment store. In 2015 he bought his second pharmacy in Centralia. In 2017 he bought his father's original pharmacy. At the time of the interview, he owned pharmacies in Salem, Centralia, Irvington, and Wayne City.

Throughout the interview, Bandy describes the way the pandemic impacted both his pharmacies and his personal life. He outlines the start of the pandemic and the mitigations he put in place in the pharmacies. In April 2020, Bandy closed the pharmacies to foot traffic for a couple of months and focused on providing service through the drive through window. Despite these mitigations, the risk of exposure still weighed on Bandy and his team as they worried about bringing the virus home to their families. They also became a site for PCR tests. When the vaccine became available, Bandy immediately applied to be a distribution center. They got their first vaccines in August 2021 and began opening vaccine clinics across Southern Illinois. That autumn, in lieu of the vaccine mandate for school staff, Bandy set up testing sites at fifteen different school for those that were required to test. Bandy closes by describing the personal impacts the virus had on him and his family.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Tumultuous 2020; Tumultuous 2020 oral history; Eric Bandy; Bandy's Pharmacy; Salem, Illinois; Centralia, Illinois; Irvington, Illinois; Wayne City, Illinois; PCR tests; vaccines; COVID-19; COVID-19 pandemic; pharmacist perspective on the pandemic

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 and Museum 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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