

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Anna Sielaff

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Tumultuous 2020 Oral History project

Interview T20-A-L-2021-031

Anna Sielaff, a college athlete and student during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview date & location:

Date: Sep 3, 2021 Location: University of Illinois, Champaign, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggenschach, Project Manager for *Tumultuous 2020*

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:39 / 1.65 hrs.

Transcript being
processed.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on September 22, 2021.

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

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Abstract

Anna Sielaff, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2021-031

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Anna E. Sielaff was born in Lincoln, Illinois, in August of 1998. Sielaff is an only child but grew up in the close-knit community of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS); which included her church, Faith Lutheran, and her school, Zion Lutheran School. She attended Zion Lutheran School from kindergarten to eighth grade. It was during her fourth-grade year that she was encouraged to try out for the track team. While she also played a variety of other sports, including basketball and volleyball, she found herself enamored with track and field, specifically discus and shot-put. In her fourth-grade year she became the first fourth grader in the Lutheran School Association (LSA) state competition to take home a medal for discus in her sixth-grade year.

While athletically gifted, Sielaff also performed well academically. Her father instilled in her a strong appreciation for history from an early age. Family vacations during her childhood included stops to different historic sites. Sielaff was also inspired by a high school teacher, Leslie Bischoff, who expected excellence from Sielaff. Upon graduation from Lincoln Community high school in 2017, Sielaff began attending Concordia University Chicago (CUC), majoring in history. She competed on the CUC track team while also dedicating herself to her studies. The fall semester of 2019 took her to Washington D.C. for a Lutheran college sponsored semester trip (LCWS). Upon her return to CUC in January of 2020, she found herself to be disconnected from both the track team and the campus in general. When the state went into a mandated lockdown due to the spread of COVID-19, Sielaff grappled with the cancelation of conference and national championships. A junior at the time, she describes the devastation she felt for her teammates who were seniors. She stayed home for the fall semester of 2020 but continued to train for competitions. She returned to CUC's campus for spring training in January of 2021. Anna described the multitude of emotions that followed, especially due to the impact of COVID-19 on her life. Sielaff graduated with a degree in history in May 2021 and started graduate school at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign that fall.

Subject Headings/Key Words: COVID-19 pandemic; track and field; Lutheran Church Missouri Synod; Zion Lutheran School; Lincoln, Illinois; Concordia University Chicago; cancelations due to COVID-19

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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