

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Bill Lair

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft – Jim Edgar Oral History project

Interview # ISG-A-L-2009-014

Bill Lair, a friend of Jim and Brenda Edgar since the early 1970s and managing editor of the Mattoon *Journal-Gazette*, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Jim Edgar* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 6, 2009 Location: Mattoon *Journal-Gazette* office, Mattoon, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

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

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Mike Czaplicki, ALPL Assistant & Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 22 Total Time: 1 hr 11 min / 1.18 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 07/02/2009.

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

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Abstract

Bill Lair, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISG-A-L-2009-014

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Bill Lair, a long-time friend of Jim and Brenda Edgar, was born on August 14, 1948 in Peoria, Illinois, and grew up in Ottawa, Illinois. Following graduation from Eastern Illinois University, where he knew of Jim Edgar only as the President of the student body, Lair pursued journalism as a profession and eventually landed a job as a sports reporter for the Mattoon *Journal-Gazette* & Charleston *Times-Courier*. He and his wife also attended the same Methodist church that Jim and Brenda Edgar attended in Charleston, where they got to know each other. Bill's wife Marty supported Jim Edgar's failed 1974 campaign for state legislator, and from that time forward, both Lairs followed Edgar's political career closely. Edgar, for his part, made a point of keeping close connection with Charleston and Coles County.

Lair speaks about the pride that most Coles County citizens have for Edgar's career, and shared some memorable experiences he had enjoyed with Edgar over the last thirty-some years.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Jim Edgar; Fred Edgar (Jim's brother); Mattoon, Illinois; Charleston, Illinois; Eastern Illinois University; Mattoon *Journal-Gazette*; Charleston *Times-Courier*; Brenda Edgar; Edgar's 1974 legislative campaign; Edgar's 1990 gubernatorial campaign;

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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