

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Richard (Fritz) Klein

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

Interview # HSL-V-L-2016-035

Richard (Fritz) Klein, an Abraham Lincoln presenter for several decades, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Historians Speak - Lincoln* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 29, 2016 Location: Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois

Date: March 14, 2017 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Session 1 – Digital video; Session 2 – Digital audio

Interviewer: Dr. James Cornelius, Lincoln Curator, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc.): Mark Suszko, Tony Bateman, Tom Craven and Bobby Troesch, Illinois Information Service

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

**Transcript
being processed**

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:25 + 1:21 / 1.42 + 1.35 = 2.77 hrs.

Session 1: Video interview with Fritz dressed and in character as Abraham Lincoln

Session 2: Audio interview with Fritz reflecting on experiences presenting Lincoln

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 7, 2017.

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

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Abstract

Richard (Fritz) Klein, *Historians Speak*, HSL-V-L-2016-035

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Richard (Fritz) Klein was born on August 30, 1948. Mr. Klein is widely recognized around the U.S., even the world, as a top-tier actor/ presenter of Abraham Lincoln, doing so in a career of about forty years. He began in theater and was soon drawn into this particular role, balancing marriage and children with his efforts to learn the role for various audiences and travel to make a living at it. Increasingly he is seen in documentary and dramatized films on Lincoln. He writes his scripts, cites them all from memory, and in general is a highly knowledgeable student of Lincoln, with an unusual experience in that field. He offers many stories of his travels (some years in Hawaii, California, the East, around the Midwest, occasionally the South), and the astonishing or insightful things that school groups, teachers, tourists, or foreigners ask him or tell him about Lincoln and his era. Regular appearances since 2005 at the ALPLM, whether in the Plaza chatting with Museum patrons or on-stage in formal theatrical works (2 of which he wrote or arranged), sometimes with a Mary Lincoln presenter, have made him widely recognizable. This interview includes much on his and Lincoln's faith, families, and life on the road; and the teaching of history, including during the various U.S. presidencies he has witnessed.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Lincoln, Abraham; Lincoln presenters; U.S. history; Civil War history; teaching of history; public speaking; the Bible and politics; public history; living history.

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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