

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Neil Steinberg

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key – Civics Education Oral History project

Interview # ECE-A-L-2021-004

Neil Steinberg, a columnist for the Chicago *Sun-Times*, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Civics Education* Oral History project.

Interview Date & Location:

Date: Feb 22, 2021 Location: Telephonic interview

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:34 / 1.57 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on June 9, 2021.

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

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Abstract

Neil Steinberg, *Education is Key – Civics*, ECE-A-L-2021-004

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Neil Steinberg was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1960. He grew up in Berea, a suburb of Cleveland, graduating from high school in 1978. Neil then attended Northwestern University, majoring in journalism, with an interest in Cold War history as well. Upon graduating from Northwestern in 1982, Neil worked for local papers in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Barrington, Illinois and Wheaton, Illinois. He also did work in California before joining the *Chicago Sun-Times* in 1987. At the *Sun-Times*, Neil writes columns three to four times per week. In addition, he has written nine books including *The Alphabet of Modern Annoyances*, *You Were Never in Chicago*, and *Don't Give Up the Ship: Finding My Father While Lost at Sea*. Neil has also published articles in *Esquire*, *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sports Illustrated*, *National Lampoon*, *Salon*, the *Chicago Reader* and *New York Daily News*.

Steinberg looks at the role of a columnist for a daily paper. He discusses how he generates ideas for a column, picture development, selection for a title, and the location and space allotted for a column or story in the newspaper. Also discussed were challenges facing journalism today, including newspaper ownership, the rise of in social media, staff reductions, and what is considered to be facts vs opinion. Steinberg also looks at high school civics education and what a columnist guest speaker might wish to convey about journalism. Another area he covered was the current movement to stifle the debate of different ideas and speakers on university campuses. Finally, the Steinberg looks at the history of the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Subject Headings/Key Words: history of the *Chicago Sun-Times*; writing a regular column for a major newspaper; challenges in journalism and newspaper today; high school civics; impact of COVID-19 pandemic on journalism.

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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