

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with LuAnn Johnson

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Family Memories Oral History project

Interview # FM-V-L-2008-069

LuAnn Johnson, Executive Director of Oak Ridge Cemetery, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Family Memories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: September 25, 2008 Location: Oak Ridge Cemetery Office in Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Video Tape

Interviewer: Newlyn Hosea, ALPL Volunteer

Technical Support: Mark Suszko, IL Information Service (Videographer)

Transcription by: Kay Smith, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Marianne Lawrence and Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteers

Total Pages: 35 pgs Total Time: 0:59 + 1:02 = 2:01 / 2.01 hrs

Session 1: Sit Down

Session 2: Walk and Talk of Oak Ridge Cemetery

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 12/19/2008.

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

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Abstract

LuAnn Johnson, *Family Memories*, FM-V-L-2008-069

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: LuAnn Johnson was born and raised in Springfield Illinois. After growing up in Springfield she headed several local small businesses. Over 20 years ago LuAnn became the Executive Director of Oak Ridge Cemetery, the municipal cemetery of Springfield Illinois. Although the interviewee was LuAnn Johnson, the interview centered on Oak Ridge Cemetery - its history, current status, and future plans. Intimately connected to the story of Oak Ridge Cemetery is the story of its service as the final resting place of Abraham Lincoln, his family, and many of their contemporaries. Oak Ridge Cemetery, a three hundred acre cemetery on the north side of Springfield, was begun in 1855 and dedicated on May 24, 1860. Dedicated on May 24, 1860 it became the burial site of assassinated President Abraham Lincoln in 1865. Oak Ridge includes a number of sites (Lincoln tomb and various war memorials) deeded to and administered by the State of Illinois.

This interview reviewed the history of this cemetery as well as the daily operation of the second most visited cemetery in the United States. In her office LuAnn discussed the establishment and growth of Oak Ridge, the political and financial structure which supports it, and its relationship with the state historical sites included within its borders. The interview also includes visits to a number of important sites within the cemetery with accompanying explanation by LuAnn.

Topics Covered: Design and construction of Oak Ridge Cemetery; growth of cemetery; relationship with Lincoln family; burial of Abraham Lincoln; relationship of Oak Ridge Cemetery with the city of Springfield; State Department of Historic Sites; dedication of Oak Ridge; 19th century Springfield society; construction and interior of modern chapel and mausoleum; headstones and memorials designs; Cowgill Mausoleum in Oakridge Cemetery; Children from the Home for the Friendless at Oakridge Cemetery; Mattie Rayburn; Lincoln contemporaries; Governor John Tanner; accordion player; Lore of the cemetery

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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