

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Kay Smith

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
IHPA Legacy Oral History project

Interview # HP-A-L-2010-014

Kay Smith, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Coordinator, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *IHPA Legacy* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 23, 2010

Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Newlyn Hosea, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: Susan Burke, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Betty Workman & Rozanne Flatt, ALPL volunteers

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

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Abstract

Kay Smith, *IHPA Legacy*, HP-A-L-2010-014

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Kay Thread was born on September 8th, 1950 in Robinson, Illinois and grew up in Springfield, Illinois. Following high school graduation, she attended college for several years, then married Jerry Smith in 1972. The couple moved away from Springfield the following year. Kay served as a chief assistant in a major law firm for many years. In 2006 the Smiths returned to Springfield, where Kay volunteered at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. She soon applied for and received a contract to serve as the Lincoln Bicentennial Coordinator for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's (IHPA). In that capacity Smith coordinated all of the events related to the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth on February 12th, 2009.

This interview covered Kay's two year tenure as the Lincoln Bicentennial Coordinator, coordinating closely with the Illinois Bicentennial Commission. She details the awarding, in two phases, of one and a half million dollars of grant monies that went to various communities and organizations throughout Illinois. She addressed how these grants were decided on, implemented and monitored, including the appointment of a special committee to review grant applications. Kay discussed her extensive coordination with various federal, state, and local authorities in planning a multitude of bicentennial activities. Special mention is made of President Barack Obama's participation in the final celebration. She specifically covers her day to day workings with IHPA personnel including the director, state historian, and other members of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum staff.

Topics Covered: Illinois Bicentennial celebration; Illinois Bicentennial Commission; Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; President Barack Obama's involvement with the Lincoln Bicentennial; budgeting for the Lincoln Bicentennial; State Historian Tom Schwartz; Senator Richard Durbin; using museum volunteers to staff events; communication with media; and Lincoln-Douglas debate communities

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