

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jeffrey C. Miller
Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft – Jim Thompson Oral History project
Interview # IST-A-L-2015-020

Restricted Interview

Jeff Miller served in the Thompson administration as director of public aid (1978-1983), planning director (1983-1987), and chief of staff (1987-1991). He was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Jim Thompson* oral history project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: February 3, May 28, June 15, June 24, and July 7, 2015.

Location: Miller's Lill Avenue home, Chicago, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mike Czaplicki, ALPLM project historian

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Mike Czaplicki, ALPLM project historian

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:55 + 2:46 + 1:46 + 2:45 + 2:43/2.92 + 2.77 + 1.77 + 2.75 + 2.72 = 12.92 hrs.

Session 1: An unusual upbringing as the son of a diplomat.

Session 2: Miller's early career in Illinois state government.

Session 3: Running the Department of Public Aid.

Session 4: Moving from Public Aid to Governor Thompson's executive staff.

Session 5: Key policy issues during Miller's tenure as chief of staff.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 9, 2015.

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

Restricted Interview: The interview is restricted until after the transcripts have been reviewed and edited to my satisfaction as will be indicated by subsequent release, once accomplished.

Abstract

Jeffrey C. Miller, *Illinois Statecraft*, IST-A-L-2015-020

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Jeff Miller was born to Robert and Marie (McInnis) Miller in Washington, DC, on June 6, 1946. As the son of a diplomat, Miller had an unusually cosmopolitan upbringing, living in Germany, Rome, and Kabul, Afghanistan. He returned to the U.S. for college, however, graduating from Rutgers with an industrial engineering degree in 1968, then earning his masters in governmental administration from the University of Pennsylvania in 1970. Along the way he married his high school sweetheart, Linda, who he had met his sophomore year in Kabul.

Before starting his career as a public administrator, Miller served stateside for two years as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army. In February 1972 he joined the administration of Gov. Richard Ogilvie as an analyst in the Bureau of the Budget, which was still in its infancy, and reported to future Ohio governor Bob Taft. Although Miller hoped to stay at the Budget Bureau, the wheels of bureaucracy turned in 1974 and irrevocably altered his career path: reshuffling in Governor Walker's administration moved Miller to the Department of Public Aid, where he would develop the Medicaid Management Information System.

Miller spent the next decade at Public Aid, rising to Medicaid director, deputy director, and in 1978, director. He served as director until 1983, when he moved to Governor Thompson's executive staff to head the new planning office Paula Wolff had developed. After the office was absorbed back into the program staff in 1987, Governor Thompson tapped Miller to be his last chief of staff. With the end of the Thompson administration, Miller drew on his long experience with healthcare administration to serve as a dean at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine.

In this interview, Miller discusses growing up in Afghanistan, major events of the 1960s and early 1970s, his experience at Rutgers and the University of Pennsylvania, working for Governor Ogilvie's Bureau of the Budget, the Illinois Department of Public Aid, relationships among Governor Thompson's staff, Thompson's managerial style, patronage in state government, and various policy issues he worked on as planning director and chief of staff. He is especially insightful on the politics of welfare reform in the 1970s and 1980s, setting up the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), the budgetary and political challenges of health care spending, the development of HIV/AIDS policy in Illinois, and gubernatorial decision making.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Jeffrey C. Miller; Illinois Department of Public Aid; welfare reform; James R. Thompson; staff relations, Thompson administration; budgeting in Illinois; AIDS in Illinois; Medicaid in Illinois; public pensions; patronage; Superconducting Super Collider (SSC); workers' compensation.

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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