

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Gary Urwiler

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Alternative Schooling in Illinois Oral History project

Interview # EA-A-L-2017-094

Gary Urwiler, Executive Director of Mooseheart City and School in Mooseheart, IL, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Alternatives in Education* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Dec 8, 2017 Location: Mooseheart Administrative Center, Mooseheart, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:44 / 1.73 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 13, 2018.

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

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Abstract

Gary Urwiler, *Education is Key – Alternatives*, EA-A-L-2017-094

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Gary Urwiler was born in Willingbord, New Jersey in May, 1969. He came to Mooseheart (Child City and School) as a twelve-year old student, and was sponsored by Riverside New Jersey Mooseheart Lodge 279. He graduated from Mooseheart in 1987, where he was a three-sport athlete (football, basketball, and track). He then attended Eureka College in Eureka, Illinois, majoring in education, and graduated in 1992. While at Eureka, Gary quarterbacked the Red Devils football team. During his senior year, he also led the nation for NCAA Division III in passing. (In 2001 he earned a Master's Degree in school administration from Aurora University.) Gary taught at the junior high level for the West Aurora School District from 1992 to 1995, then return to Mooseheart as a Dean of Students, Athletic Director and football coach from 1995-2000. Gary then went back to West Aurora from 2000-2003 serving as a teacher, coach, and administrator. Gary served as superintendent and principal at Mooseheart from 2003-2012, and in 2013, he would become the executive director of Mooseheart Child City and School, where he currently serves. Since 2004 He served as the Mooseheart football coach since 2004, and is an active member and a leader in the local Moose Lodges-Aurora and Mooseheart. As a coach, Urwiler was named the Football Coach of the Year in 1996 by the Aurora *Beacon News* and named Chicago Bears Coach of the Week late in the 2011 season. He is also in the Eureka College Hall of Fame.

This interview reviews the history of the Mooseheart city and school beginning in 1913 as a home for children of deceased Moose Lodge members. He discusses the site selection north of Aurora, the institution's mission statement and philosophy, the evolving curriculum, the school's funding and its Naval Junior ROTC program, and extracurricular opportunities. Gary talked about a student's typical day at Mooseheart, including during school breaks and the summer. At the time of the interview Mooseheart had 211 resident children from birth to 21. Urwiler discussed the challenges of maintaining funding from local lodges, nation-wide lodge membership, infrastructure costs for the city and school, and meeting state and federal guidelines. The school has been featured in three movies, and won the state basketball championship in 2014.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Mooseheart Child City and School history, 1913-2017; city and school life for Mooseheart residents; James J. Davis; Rodney Brandon; John Jacob Henry Wilson; Mooseheart academics; Mooseheart Naval Junior ROTC program; school funding through Moose Lodges and moose charities

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