

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Katie Brethorst

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Tumultuous 2020 Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2021-070

Katie Brethorst, Research Intern at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and graduate student at University of Illinois—Springfield, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: December 16, 2021 Location: Brethorst Apartment, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggerbach, *Tumultuous 2020* project manager ALPLM

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:58 / 2.97 hrs.

Transcript being
processed.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 6, 2022.

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

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Abstract

Katie Brethorst, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2021-070

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Katie Brethorst was born in Breese, Illinois, in 1998. Brethorst spent her childhood between Springfield and Carlyle, Illinois. She attended Carlyle High School and graduated in 2016. She attended University of Illinois—Springfield and graduated in May of 2020 with a bachelor’s degree in history and minors in English and women and gender studies. She began her master’s program in public history in the autumn of 2020. Over the course of the interview, Brethorst describes her undergraduate experience and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on her senior year, as well as the impact on her graduate studies. When the pandemic began in March of 2020, Brethorst was in her final semester. She had just finished building an exhibit, was preparing for her role in *Twelfth Night*, and was able to add two minors to her degree. In the middle of spring break, when the shut-down went into effect, Brethorst had been looking for an apartment for her and her fiancé, Bob Stockwell, to move into post-graduation. When UIS gave students thirty-six hours to move out of school housing, Brethorst was able to move in early.

In the course of a day, Brethorst’s play, graduation, and other senior year experiences were gone. Brethorst describes the initial shock and later depression that she experienced from this loss. Brethorst details the rest of the semester and the different ways professors responded. She also describes the summer months and the mix of positive and negative experiences she had. At the end of the summer, Brethorst began her graduate public service internship with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum as a research intern. A week later she began her graduate studies at UIS. Brethorst outlines her autumn semester, in which her classes were fully online. The spring semester of 2021 was also online. She describes the way she and her cohort built relationships and encouraged each other. It was over the summer of 2021 that she became engaged to Bob Stockwell. At the time of the interview, Brethorst had just completed her autumn semester of classes, of which two were in-person. Overall, Brethorst outlines the way the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted her life from March 2020 to the time of the interview.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum; ALPLM; University of Illinois—Springfield; UIS; COVID-19 pandemic; Springfield, Illinois; COVID-19 university response; remote learning; virtual learning; cancelled 2020 graduation;

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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