

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jean Miller & Jill Loeser

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Community Stories – Sangamon County Oral History project*

Interview # CS-A-L-2019-021

Jill Loeser and Jean Miller, who discussed the William Herndon home and farm in rural Sangamon County, Illinois, were interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Community Stories – Sangamon County Oral History project*.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 25, 2019      Location: Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Angela Weiss, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview being  
processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_      Total Time: 0:18 / 0.3 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on September 11, 2019.

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

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## Abstract

Jean Miller & Jill Loeser, *Community Stories*, CS-A-L-2019-021

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Jean Miller (Trainor) was born in January 1951 Jill Loeser (Trainor) was born in March 1959, both in Springfield, Illinois. Jean and Jill talked about Fairview, the property formerly owned by William Herndon, Abraham Lincoln's former law partner. Their Great-grandfather, Leonard Trainer, lived with the Herndons and farmed the acres. He eventually purchased the entire farm. Leonard and his wife had two sons William Leigh and Georgie. William and Georgie inherited the farm. George changed the spelling of the name from Trainer to Trainor. He also built the first addition to the Herndon home. Later, he added two rooms to the structure. George and his wife had three children; George R., Naomi, and Donald L. George's mother Mary lived in the Herndon house which by that time was deteriorating badly. Herndon's bedroom was used as a summer kitchen and in the fall, as a meat processing room. In the 1930's there was an effort to put the homestead area as a state park. There was never a definite plan presented to the legislature. A fire in 1960 destroyed most of the second floor. The rebuild changed the roofline of the 1911 addition with the Herndon house. George and Donald took care of the Herndon house. The old bedroom- study is still connected by a partially enclosed breezeway leading to the main house. Jill moved into the house at age eighteen and is still living there with her husband, Mike. Jeanne grew up on the property but moved when she married. Jill's daughter, Libby lives on the property as does Jill's cousin.

The established resource material for interview came from article by Gary Lee Erickson, *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Feb. 1974. Jean and Jill discussed how and why Leonard Trainer obtained the property belonging at one time to William Herndon, the former law partner and biographer of Abraham Lincoln. They also discussed what happened to the house the Herndons lived in through the years up to the present day, and what happened to the farm, both of which were located in rural Sangamon County, near Cantrall.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** William Herndon home in rural Sangamon County, IL; William Herndon farm in rural Sangamon County; Jean (Trainor) Miller; Jill (Trainor) Loeser;

**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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