

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Frances Staggs

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Project Name Oral History project

Interview # FM-A-L-2020-013

Frances (Francie) Staggs, who spent a year in Okinawa with her husband during the Vietnam War, and later spent sixteen years volunteering at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Family Memories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Feb 19, 25, Mar 5, 2020

Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential
Library, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:01 + 2:04 + 2:12 / 2.02 + 2.07 + 2.2 = 6.29 hrs

Session 1: Early life on the farm, marriage and life in Madison, Wisconsin

Session 2: Jan and Francie's experiences in Okinawa and post service years in IL

Session 3: Experiences as a volunteer at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on (2/25/2021).

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Frances Staggs, *Family Memories*, FM-A-L-2020-013

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Francis (Francie) Davidson was born on August 17, 1941 in Terre Haute, Indiana, and grew up on a small dairy farm in rural Marshall. In 1950 the family moved to a farm in rural Martinsville, Illinois. She graduated from Martinsville High School in 1959, then attended Illinois Commercial College in Champaign, graduating in 1960. While in Champaign she met Jarleth (Jan) Staggs, and they were married in October 1962. The couple spent the next few years in Madison, Wisconsin while Jan worked on a master's degree in industrial relations, earning a degree in 1964. While there, Francie worked in a bank.

In March 1966 Jan was drafted into the Army, and by the end of that year he was stationed in Okinawa, working as a clerk. Francie soon joined him, and spent an exciting year on the island, making friends with members of a local church and enjoying her time with many of the officers' wives. Her daughter Marcia Anne was born in January 1968. Upon their return to Illinois, Francie and Jan made several moves as Jan progressed in his career, settling in the Springfield area in 1973. Their daughter Sherry Lynn was born in January 1972 in Winfield. Jan worked for the state of Illinois and the family lived on a small acreage near Rochester, and after 1988 on a house south of Lake Springfield. In the late 1970s Francie began taking classes at Sangamon State University in Springfield, where she earned a BA degree in 1981. Over the next few years she worked part time, as a graduate assistant or student worker for the oral history program, founded by Dr. Cullom Davis. In 1991 she earned an MA degree, majoring in history.

From 1992 through 1998 Francie worked at the First Congregational United Church of Christ as a secretary. From 1999 to 2003 she worked as a program secretary and statistician at Catholic Charities Community Services, and also as a refugee resettlement caseworker. Starting in 2004 she volunteered for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum prior to the library being dedicated. She was one of the institution's first volunteers, and still volunteered there at the time of this interview. She described the early months of the library, the dedication ceremony for the museum, and many other memorable events held in the museum and library.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Francis (Francie) Staggs; life in Okinawa in the 1960s; Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum; Sangamon State University; Dr. Cullom Davis; growing up on an Illinois dairy farm; Martinsville, Illinois in the 1950s; Catholic Charities Community Service refugee resettlement case work; ALPLM dedication in 2005;

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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