

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Duane Northrup

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

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-37

Duane Northrup, Champaign County Coroner, 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: May 13, 2022

Location: Champaign County Coroner's Office, Urbana, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggenbach, *Tumultuous 2020* project manager

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed.

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:26 / 2.43 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 8, 2022.

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

Abstract

Duane Northrup, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-37

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Duane Northrup was born in 1970 in Augusta, Maine. His family had roots in Illinois and moved to Rantoul, Illinois, when he was four years old. He graduated from Rantoul Township High School in 1988. Following his high school graduation, Northrup began working in construction. He earned an associates in criminal justice from Parkland College in 1994. He started his own construction business before eventually leaving the private sector to become the deputy coroner in 2001. When the coroner retired in 2004, Northrup decided to run for the office. He won and, at the time of the interview, has served as the Champaign County Coroner since.

Throughout the interview, Northrup discusses his experiences as coroner and the changes that have occurred over his tenure in office. This includes solving the case of a Jane Doe from the 1990s that his predecessor inherited from his predecessor. Northrup also details the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the office of the coroner. His office began preparing for the pandemic in 2019 when early reports were coming out about the virus. Northrup had begun to reexamine the disaster plans that were created when H1N1 and swine flu were prevalent. Northrup details how the pandemic effected the office and his required duties, as well as how it affected him on a personal level. In the early days of the pandemic not much was known about virus transmission during autopsies. This paired with the constant COVID-19 exposures was a source of much uncertainty and concern. The number of cases the coroner's office saw doubled in 2020, due to both COVID-19 deaths and an increase in opioid deaths. 2020 was also an election year, which presented a new host of challenges. Northrup details these concerns as well as the way the pandemic economy effected the office. He closes by discussing his perceptions of the virus and the overall impact it had on his personal life.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Tumultuous 2020; Tumultuous 2020 oral history; Champaign County Coroner; Champaign County; COVID-19; COVID-19 pandemic; coronavirus;

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 and Museum 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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