

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jennifer Burdette

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key – Civics Education Oral History project

Interview # ECE-A-L-2020-033

Jennifer Burdette, civics teacher and civics teaching mentor at a rural school, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Civics Education* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Jul 13, 2020

Location: Telephonic interview during the COVID-19 pandemic

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:17 / 1.28 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 5, 2020.

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

© 2020 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Transcript being
processed

Abstract

Jennifer Burdette, *Education is Key – Civics*, ECE-A-L-2020-033

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Jennifer Burdette was born in Peoria, Illinois in July 1986. She grew up in DeKalb until the second grade when her family moved to Hampshire, Illinois where she graduated from high school in 2004. Jennifer then attended Monmouth College, majoring in history and teacher education. While at Monmouth, Jennifer formed the History Club, graduating in 2008. Following college, she became a teacher's aide in Hampshire, and later was hired at Avon High School. Burdette then moved to Spoon River Valley High School circa 2011 where she was teaching social studies at the time of this interview. Jennifer served as a civics teaching mentor through the McCormick Foundation, working with teachers in Schuyler, Fulton, McDonough, and Hancock Counties (2016-2019). She taught middle school civics and is the prom sponsor and the girls track coach. She was a member of a Rural Professional History Grant for three years. The grant allowed teachers from western Illinois to visit historic sites in the Great Plains, the southeast, and the Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and District of Columbia region.

Burdette discussed the role of civics education at a small rural school district found in western Illinois whose boundaries lie between Canton, Galesburg, and Peoria. Spoon River Valley is made up of the towns of Ellisville, London Mills, Fairview, Maquon and Rapatee. The high school has around 130 students. High school civics is taught in Grades 11-12. Jennifer talked about the civics topics being covered, the types of controversial subjects, including gun control, advertising, global warming, service learning projects, including voter registration, and media literacy/current event activities. She looks at how teachers adjusted to remote learning, which began in March 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the plans for fall schooling due to COVID-19. She addressed remote learning challenges due to internet access and internet speeds. Jennifer also discussed the new civics mandate for middle schools. Finally, she talked about how important her grant sponsored field trips were, including to civil rights historic sites, presidential libraries, civil war battlefields, civil war prisons, and early settlements. Finally, she reviewed teacher mentoring through the McCormick Foundation, the Regional Office of Education, and institutes run through Western Illinois University.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Spoon River Valley High School; Civics Education in Grades 11-12; teaching controversial subjects; service learning; media literacy; remote learning (internet access) during COVID-19 pandemic; Civics Education Mentor through the McCormick Foundation; Rural Professional History Grant field trips; foreign exchange students;

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.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955