

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Darrell Duensing

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
IHPA Legacy Oral History project

Interview # HP-A-L-2016-037

Darrell Duensing, who served as site manager at the Fort de Chartres State Historic Site for forty-five years, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *IHPA Legacy* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: July 29, 2016

Location: Fort de Chartres State Historic Site, Prairie du Rocher, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Pete Harbison, Education Dept., ALP Museum

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:49 + 1:16 / 1.82 + 1.27 = 3.09 hrs.

Session 1: Duensing's early life and forty-five years as site manager

Session 2: The Great Flood of 1993

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 22, 2017.

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

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Abstract

Darrell Duensing, *IHPA Legacy*, HP-A-L-2016-037

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Darrell Duensing was born in Steeleville, Illinois in February 1949, attended public schools and graduated from Southern Illinois University with a degree in agriculture sciences in 1971. Following graduation, he applied for the position of park ranger at Fort de Chartres, and was hired in December of 1971. Darrell lived in quarters located on the site of the restored French Fort that is located in Randolph County, four miles west of Prairie du Rocher, Illinois. The fort features a powder magazine that is believed to be the oldest building in Illinois. Three different forts were constructed by the French during their years in Illinois. Fort de Chartres is located where the last fort was constructed in the 1750s. Duensing served as site manager from 1971 until his retirement in December of 2015.

The interview covers his early years in Steeleville, college at Southern Illinois University, and his forty-five years working at Fort de Chartres. He discusses what it was like living at the fort, early floods, and the early years of Fort de Chartres Rendezvous, the special event held every June. The interview covers the first fourteen years of his tenure at the fort when the historic site was administered by the Illinois Department of Conservation, and the subsequent transition from IDOC to the newly created Illinois Historic Preservation Agency in 1985. Duensing also discussed how the budget reductions have impacted the historic site and the Rendezvous, the impact of the Great Flood of 1993, and the relationship between the local citizens and the fort.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Fort de Chartres; French period of Illinois history; Fort de Chartres Rendezvous; Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; Great Flood of 1993 Illinois Department of Conservation; Prairie du Rocher, Illinois; volunteer support

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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