

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Bill Waldmire

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Rochester Community Stories Oral History project

Interview # CR-A-L-2018-070

William “Bill” Waldmire, a retired photographer for the Illinois Governor’s Office, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library’s *Community Stories-Rochester* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Nov 8, 2018 Location: Cardinal Hill Road, Rochester, Illinois

Feb 13, 2019 Location: Cardinal Hill Road, Rochester, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Carole Strick. ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

**Transcript
being processed**

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:09 + 0:43 / 1.15 + 0.71 = 1.86 hrs.

Session 1: Waldmire family history in Springfield and Rochester, IL

Session 2: Bob Waldmire, a world known local artist known for Route 66 art

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on September 24, 2019.

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

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Abstract

Bill Waldmire, *Community Stories-Rochester*; CR-A-L-2018-070

Biographical Information Overview of Interview Part I: William “Bill” Waldmire was born on February 26, 1942 in Champaign, Illinois. He was the first of five sons born to Edgar and Virginia Waldmire, who were longtime Springfield residents. Edgar was attending University of Illinois at the time. Although his father had a strong interest in agricultural enterprises, his parents operated the Cozy Dog restaurant on South Sixth Street beginning in the 1940s. The restaurant got its name from the corn dog invented by his father and promoted by his mother. He had an interesting childhood because of this and other activities his father got involved in. Bill attended grade school and high school in Springfield but dropped out of school at age seventeen to marry his sweetheart, Arlene McClanahan on July 24, 1959. Arlene and Bill’s mother, Virginia, operated the Cardinal Hill Candle shop for many years. Arlene continues to do this after Virginia’s death. He recounts memories of his brother, Bob Waldmire, who was a “hippie” artist who traveled Route 66 in his VW van promoting the historic Mother Road with his art. He created many pieces of artwork of sites he saw. Bob lived a “hippy” lifestyle and often spent nights out on the prairie alone in his vehicle. He was well-known in Rochester, in the United States and in the world not only for his artwork but for all the work he did publicizing Route 66. Bob died in 2009. Bill recounted stories about his parents and brother.

Bill and Arlene are the parents of three children: Bill Junior, who died of cancer in 2010, Bonnie and Dow. Bill was a photographer for the Illinois Governor’s office for 38 years. He has an extensive collection of photographs he took during those years. He, his children and brother’s family live on acreage purchased by his grandfather. He and Arlene moved there in 1971.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Springfield, Illinois; Cozy Dog; Rochester, IL; Cardinal Hill Road; Robert “Bob” Waldmire; Route 66; Bob Waldmire’s customized VW van and school bus;

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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