

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jennie Battles

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

Interview # HP-A-L-2014-043

Jennie Battles, who worked at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency from 1986 to 2014, 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: Nov 13, 2014      Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Date: Dec 2, 2014      Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript  
being processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_      Total Time: 2:49 + 2:54 / 2.82 + 2.9 = 5.72 hrs

Session 1: Early life, teaching career and her early years with IHPA

Session 2: Years at IHPA, Living History at Old State Capitol and Vachel Lindsay

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 26, 2015.

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

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# Abstract

## Jennie Battles, *IHPA Legacy*, HP-A-L-2014-043

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Jennie Boston was born in March, 1939 in her grandparents' house in Sumner, Illinois, where she also grew up in a loving extended family. She graduated from Salem Community High School in 1956, and attended William Woods College before transferring to the University of Illinois, majoring in English. Jennie taught high school English for many years at Dixon High School while her husband, Dick Battles, worked at the Dixon State School for the Mentally Retarded. When the state closed that facility in 1977, the family moved to Petersburg, Illinois.

Jennie worked for many years at Famous Barr in Springfield doing personnel training, then in 1986 she began working at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency as an interpreter at the Old State Capitol. She talked extensively about the Portrait of a Prairie Capitol, a theatrical production, held at the Old State Capitol in her early years at the agency, as well as the Living History program at the Old State Capitol under the guidance of the IHPA director, Michael Devine. Over the years she advanced to the job as volunteer coordinator, then to assistant site manager, helping to oversee not just the Old State Capitol, but also the Lincoln Law Office, and in 1990, the Vachel Lindsay home as well, (all located in Springfield). In 2001, Jennie became the site manager for the Vachel Lindsay Home after its extensive renovation, an ideal position for her due to her English teacher background and enthusiasm for Lindsay, renowned as one of Illinois's Prairie Poet. Due to very tight budgets over her tenure at the home, Jennie had to find creative ways to market the home and host events, many of them focused on Lindsay's reputation. She retired from the job in 2014.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Vachel Lindsay home; Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; Old State Capitol, Springfield, IL; Robert Coomer; Carol Ann Andrews; Vachel Lindsay; Dick Taylor; Justin Blandford; Michael Devine; Lincoln Legal Office; Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site; tomb; Elizabeth Graham;

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