

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Mary Lynne Cleverdon

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Family Memories Oral History project

Interview # FM-A-L-2012-041

Mary Lynne Cleverdon, who participated in the 1964 Mississippi voter registration drive, and later was involved in Democratic politics in Chicago, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Family Memories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Oct 19, 2012 Location: Cleverdon home in Springfield, Illinois

Date: Nov 15, 2012 Location: Cleverdon home in Springfield, Illinois

Date: Dec 10, 2012 Location: Cleverdon home in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue

Transcription by: Patty Maynor, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Roberta Volkmann and Jan Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 103 pgs. Total Time: 1:56 + 1:53 + 1:58 / 1.93 + 1.88 + 1.97 = 5.78 hrs

Session 1: Early life, education and marriage

Session 2: Experiences during the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer

Session 3: Teaching in Chicago, and political affiliation w/Abner Mikva & Dan Walker

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 11, 2013.

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

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Abstract

Lynne Cleverdon, *Family Memories*, FM-A-L-2012-041

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Mary Lynne (Larson) Cleverdon was born on September 13th, 1941 in Concordia, Kansas. Her father moved the family several times over the next few years, and Lynne adapted well to each new environment. She graduated from Northern Valley Regional High School in Demarest, New Jersey (the Harrington Park, New Jersey high school) in 1959, and attended the College of Wooster in Ohio, where she met her future husband, David Cleverdon, who graduated top in his class in 1963. The two were married in 1962, and following graduation in 1963 they spent the summer touring the American west on a motorcycle. They then moved to Chicago, where David attended the University of Chicago Divinity School, while Lynne found work at the university's library and eventually began teaching at the elementary level.

In 1964, Lynne and David were inspired to work on Mississippi Freedom Summer, a voter registration drive in rural parts of Mississippi that sought to register African-Americans. David went south first. Lynne joined him later in the summer, performing office tasks in North Gulfport, Mississippi. She described their experiences as civil rights workers in detail, culminating with their return to Chicago later in 1964, after David had been arrested in Mississippi due to his registration drive efforts. Upon their return to Chicago, Lynne taught school for a while. Then both David and Lynne became involved in the local, Democratic politics. Lynne did office work for a time with Abner Mikva, an independent Democrat (progressive) from the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago. David helped with Robert Kennedy's primary campaign in Indiana in early 1968, and eventually joined Dan Walker's campaign, as he sought election as Governor in 1972. It was during this time that Lynne got to know the Walkers, Victor de Grazia and his wife, Pat Quinn and many others. After Walker won the election, defeating Richard Ogilvie, Lynne and David moved to Springfield. David joined Walker's staff, helping with patronage hiring.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Mississippi Freedom Summer; voter registration in Mississippi; North Gulfport, Mississippi; Abner Mikva; Governor Dan Walker; Victor de Grazia; teaching grade school in impoverished south-side Chicago schools; Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); Pat Quinn.

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