

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jennie Battles

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Architectural Gems Oral History project

Interview # AG-V-L-2015-001

Jennie Battles, the long-serving site manager for the Vachel Lindsay home in Springfield, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's Architectural Gems Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Jan 15, 2015 Location: Vachel Lindsay home in Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

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

Technical Support: Mark Suszko, IIS videographer

Transcription by: Carolyn Berming, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Betty Workman & Janice Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 76 Total Time: 3:19 / 3.32 hrs.

Session 1: Tour of the first floor of the Vachel Lindsay home in Springfield

Session 2: Tour of the second floor of the Vachel Lindsay home in Springfield

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on (date).

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

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Abstract

Jennie Battles, *Architectural Gems*, AG-V-L-2015-001

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Jennie (Boston) Battles was born in March 1939 in her grandparents' house in Sumner, Illinois. She began her career with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency in 1986, and in 1990 her responsibilities expanded to include some oversight for the Vachel Lindsay home as well, since it had recently been acquired by the State of Illinois. Vachel Lindsay, poet, artist and author, was a native of Springfield and perhaps the most famous American poet during the early years of the 20th Century. He was born in the home in 1879 and lived in the home for much of his life, including at the time of his death. Lindsay was one of three highly acclaimed prairie poets, the other two being Edgar Lee Masters and Carl Sandberg. The Lindsay home went through an extensive renovation during the 1990s, and Jennie became the site manager for the home in 2001.

This interview is a walking tour of the home, with Jennie serving as tour guide. Jennie develops three major themes during this extensive tour: the story of the two families who lived in the home since its construction in the 1840s; the art and architecture of the home, especially as it appeared during the height of Lindsay's career in the 1920s; and the life and times of Vachel Lindsay.

See also Jennie Battle's interview in the *IHPA Legacy* collection.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Nicholas Vachel Lindsay; Vachel Lindsay's poetry; Vachel Lindsay's artwork; Vachel Thomas and Catharine Frazee Lindsay (Vachel's parents); Clark and Ann Todd Smith (Mary Todd Lincoln's sister); Vachel Lindsay home in Springfield; Greek revival architecture; Olive Lindsay Wakefield; Springfield culture and society during 1910s and 20s; Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA); restoration of the Lindsay home in the 1990s

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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