

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Alan Lowe

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Historians Speak Oral History project

Interview # HS-V-L-2017-089

Alan Lowe, director of the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum before becoming executive director at ALPLM, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Historians Speak* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Oct 27 & 30, Nov 20 & Dec 11, 2017

Location: IL Information Service studio, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital video

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

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Mark Suszko, Tony Bateman & Tom Craven, Illinois Information Service videographers

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:32 + 1:28 + 1:33 + 1:53 / 2.53 + 1.46 + 1.55 + 1.88
= 7.42 hrs

Session 1: Background and early years with National Archives & Records Administration

Session 2: Opening the Howard Baker Center for Public Policy and selection to be
Director of George W. Bush Presidential Library & Museum

Session 3: Discussion on George W. Bush Presidential Museum exhibits

Session 4: More on museum exhibits, construction and grand opening & early events

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 23, 2018.

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

Abstract

Alan Lowe, *Historians Speak*, HS-V-L-2017-089

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Alan Conner Lowe was born on February 21, 1964 in Paris, Kentucky. His parents owned a small tobacco and cattle farm. Following graduation from Bourbon County High School in 1982, Lowe attended the University of Kentucky, starting as a pre-med major, but later switching to history. He continued on at UK to earn a master's degree in history in 1988, and married Kathy Ecton that same year. He then began a career with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), starting as an archivist at the President Ronald Reagan Presidential Library prior to its opening in Simi Valley, CA. In 1992 he took a job in Washington, D.C. with NARA. He and Kathy stayed there until 2003; he began as a management analyst, but soon became the Director of Operations, helping to oversee all Presidential Libraries throughout the country. In 2003 Alan accepted the challenge as the first director at the Howard Baker Center for Public Policy then being planned at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He found that position both challenging and rewarding.

In December of 2008 Lowe was asked to visit President George W. Bush in Washington, D.C. about the possibility of serving as the director of his Presidential Library and Museum. Alan readily accepted the offer, and he, Kathy and their young daughter Carolyn once again moved, this time to Dallas Texas, where the Library and Museum would be built on the campus of Southern Methodist University. Lowe talks extensively about the planning, fund raising, architectural and especially exhibit design of the new Library and Museum complex. He discusses the museum's exhibits in detail, highlighting the 9-11 exhibit, the Oval Office, and the Decision Points Theater. Ground breaking for the museum was held with much fanfare on November 16, 2010, and the grand opening occurred on April 25, 2013, with all five living presidents in attendance. Lowe remained at the Bush Library and Museum for the next three years, overseeing a growing number of programs and temporary exhibits, including displays of the president's paintings of foreign leaders. In May 2016 Alan accepted the position as director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, where he began serving in July of that year.

Subject Headings/Key Words: George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum; George W. Bush; National Archives and Records Administration; Senator Howard Baker; Howard Baker Center for Public Policy; Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum; role of archivist at Presidential Libraries; Southern Methodist University; growing up in north-central Kentucky in 1960s & 70s; Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

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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