

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Ruth Hambleton

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and
IL State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project
Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-027

Ruth Hambleton, a farm extension specialist, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's and Illinois State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: April 15, 2008 Location: Mt Vernon

Interview Format: Digital audio / Digital video

Interviewer: Michael Maniscalco, IL State Museum Oral Historian

Technical Support: Dr. Robert Warren, IL State Museum, camera

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Michael Maniscalco and Amy Moore, Illinois State Museum

Video indexed by: James Oliver, Illinois State Museum

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Illinois.

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Abstract

Ruth Hambleton, *Oral History of IL Agriculture*, AIS-V-L-2008-027

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Ruth (Fleck) Hambleton was born on September 17 1953 in Joliet, Illinois. She is a farm extension specialist who works with the University of Illinois Extension program. Ruth's grandparents came from Germany, eventually settling in Chicago. When the depression hit the family decided to move to a farm in order to keep food on the table. The Fleck family settled on a small farm near Joliet. The farm was a typical subsistence operation of the time, with cows, chickens, turkeys, a garden and crops to feed the livestock. The farm remained very much the same up to the time when Ruth was born in 1953. One of the largest changes on the farm at that time was the introduction of government inspectors. Ruth's parents, Frank and Annette, would often complain about the new government policies, including inspection of turkey and other produce sold from the farm. As an adult, Ruth's views toward government policies have evolved. Ruth married Kenneth Hambleton in 1978. The couple purchased a small forty acre farm approximately fifteen miles outside of Mt. Vernon. They breed calves and conduct rotational grazing. Her husband is trained in AI (artificial insemination) but decided that it was easier to purchase a bull and let nature run its course. Ruth jokingly noted that much of the equipment on the farm came from her father as part of her dowry.

In her work with the University of Illinois Extension program, Ruth started Annie's Project, which teaches women involved in agriculture subjects like farm finances, budgets, and other subjects useful in maintaining modern farms. By 2008 the project had worked with 400 women in Illinois, as well as women from twenty different Midwest states. By 2009 she intends to expand Annie's project to every state in the United States, and hopes to eventually take Annie's project world wide, especially to the Middle East.

Topics Covered: Family farm in Joliet II; Artificial Insemination (AI); Government Policies; federal farm inspections; Mt. Vernon II; University of Illinois Extension program; Annie's Project; future of Agriculture

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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