

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Nelvin Sloman

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Agriculture in Illinois Oral History project

Interview # AI-A-L-2019-018

Nelvin Sloman, a life-long farmer with memories that date back to the late 1930s, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Agriculture in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 2, 2019 Location: Sloman residence in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Craig Moots, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Indexed by: Craig Moots, ALPL volunteer

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 3:08 / 3.13 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 21, 2019.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Nelvin Sloman, *Agriculture in Illinois*, AI-A-L-2019- 018

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Nelvin Sloman was born on October 8, 1930 in Fayette County, Illinois. After several moves and a divorce, Nelvin's mother married William (Bill) Sloman in 1934. Bill had moved from England to Illinois to farm, and the new family lived in southwest Christian County in King Township. Nelvin describes life on the farm in rural Illinois in a time before electricity and when draft animals were used for tillage, planting, cultivating and harvest. Nelvin recalls helping Bill farm at age eleven by harrowing with a team of horses and plowing the garden with a one bottom plow pulled by a white horse. Crops grown on their farm at that time included corn, wheat, oats and clover. Soybean was a relatively new crop in the 1930's; it was being promoted to farmers by the Staley company. The life that Nelvin recalls in the 1930's and 40's is a time when rural families were much more intertwined socially and economically than in later years. Farms were smaller and neighbors closer than today, and families relied on each other during the depression years. He shares memories of how landlord/tenant relations were based on trust and relationships rather than purely economic factors.

Nelvin met his future wife Ida on the first day of High School in Morrisonville and recalled that Bud and Freda's restaurant was the local hangout for teenagers in Morrisonville. Nelvin and Ida were married, had three sons and had a successful farming operation and seed business before retiring and transitioning the farm to one of their sons. Nelvin has possibly seen the greatest change in farming operations in any eighty plus year span of time, from a horse drawn harrow to GPS guided tractor. Nelvin passed away on December 12, 2020.

Subject Headings/Key Words: farm life in the 1930s and 1940s; claim shack; rural electrification; Delco power; homestead; early mechanical thresher; tenant farming; Morrisonville, Illinois

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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