Interview with Michael Scully

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: This is Mark DePue. I'm the Director of Oral History at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today is May 7, 2008 and I'm about to start an interview with Michael Scully for our History of Illinois Agriculture Series that we are partnering with the Illinois State Museum. We're very much looking forward to hearing your stories today, Michael, so thank you for being here with us.

Scully: It's good to be here,

DePue: Why don't we start with our standard background questions. Tell me a little bit about your parents if you will. Well, let's start with when and where you were born.

Scully: I was born in London, England during the general strike of 1926, May 24th to be exact. Those days of London, we had an apartment on Charles Street. And incidentally, many years later when I started a farm near, adjacent to Buffalo, Illinois, the entrance to the farm, by coincidence, went into Buffalo on another Charles Street: curious coincidence. In London—we went to school there for a while—and it was during the days of the great fogs they had in London. Those fogs—and we used to watch them from our apartment—were so dense you didn't dare go out in the street. And, although this is history –it happened a long time ago –one of the great ecological triumphs was, for London, and for perhaps many other cities now, including what China's going through, is that these fogs, thanks to various laws, disappeared. Coal fires was the main problem. And now London is a clean town.

DePue: I know—one of the reasons that we need to be interviewing you, and that this is going to be such an interesting interview for me, is because of, not just your father, but your grandfather. So let's pick up your story with William Scully's story. What can you tell us about his early life? His beginnings?

Scully: William Scully was ninth in a large family. And never received a great income. He looked in the papers, after managing a few farms that were left to him, and in 1950 read about these rich lands in the Midwest.

DePue: You mean 1850.

Scully: 1850. Right.

DePue: Now, he was born and raised in Ireland?

Scully: He was, right.

DePue: And his father was a fairly large landowner in Ireland himself?

Scully: They had land. I'd have to go into the history of who exactly had what. He had a brother who was a bachelor, who was fairly wealthy. Never married. And when he came back from America in 1850 he asked his brother whether he'd come in and help him buy some of this land. His brother said, why do I want, what do I want to do, having to fight all those Indians out there? But he lent him $10,000 pounds. His brother later— his brother died eventually and so the loan was paid off, or forgiven. And with that money and with money of his own, he came to Logan County in 1850 and bought approximately thirty thousand acres up in Logan County.

DePue: Why did he choose Logan County?

Scully: Well, Logan County was probably the last land that was left untouched. Most of the good land, the high land, was already farmed or occupied. But Logan County was probably half under water. In fact, rumor had it that he practically lost his life riding through Logan County and getting in problems with the water.

DePue: One of the things that struck me about William's story is that –you can correct me if I'm wrong here –but he had the foresight to realize, okay, Logan County, cheap land 'cause it's underwater, but also it's right smack dab between St. Louis and Chicago and you've got to anticipate there's going to be a rail line there as well. Was that part of it?

Scully: Yeah, he anticipated this. Yeah, he was a careful thinker and this was definitely one of his concerns. And of course, right now –and we were not pleased with it at all – in the seventies they put a four lane [high]way [then Route 66] right through the middle of our land, ensuring, you know, that a lot of traffic went by. Now we're used to it, but at the moment, we didn't like having our piece of pie divided in two.

DePue: By Interstate 55.

Scully: Yeah, that's right.

DePue: But also reinforcing the logic for being there in the first place and the availability of markets.

Scully: Exactly. Right.

DePue: What can you tell me about the personality of William Scully, because he figures large into your family story.

Scully: Well, he had plenty of will, and he was audacious; he had a whole bunch of principles which are enumerated, and we still have his lists. Whether he observed them all is a good question. But anyway, he took a great chance and I think the value of this whole enterprise is the fact that here we are almost a hundred and sixty years later, we're still in one piece. The tenants, who are many generations old, still are on the land. And the land is farmed carefully and the people involved are satisfied –especially now with these rising prices –and it's lasted a long time.

DePue: Now it was not only in Logan County that he purchased land. Where else did he purchase?

Scully: Well, later on he purchased approximately ten thousand acres in Grundy County, Grundy Livingston County. Then of course, went west and purchased...in Nebraska he purchased about, over forty thousand acres. And Kansas, maybe thirty, thirty-five. And then later his uncle purchased about twenty five thousand acres. His brother, rather, purchased twenty five thousand acres in Louisiana. And all that land is still in the family. Most of it is in trust. And the enterprises on that land are modestly successful.

DePue: From what I have read—again, correct me if I'm wrong here—but by the time he was done purchasing, he had close to a quarter of a million acres of land?

Scully: By the end of his life he had that exactly.

DePue: And anybody who's that successful doesn't manage to get through life without a little bit of controversy. Can you talk a little bit about some of the difficulties that he had?

Scully: Well he wasn't an American citizen. This was a major concern. So he finally became an American citizen. I might add, he also purchased about forty five, forty, forty five thousand acres in Missouri, which was later sold by my father. He also had two families and another child who became a manager of the Logan County lands and was left three thousand acres, I understand, in Kansas. Later on they discovered oil on that land and his descendants became wealthy families in Peoria, Illinois, with a great house on Grandview Drive. We used to spend Christmases with them. And I remember my brother and I used to get about thirteen presents from Auntie Florence, who was our rich American aunt. But in Europe, over about three or four presents was not allowed. And so most of these presents our parents took away from us, just leaving us with our favorite four. That was considered enough.

DePue: I wonder if we can get a picture of Michael's parents and also of William Scully himself. We can get that up and take a look at that. Michael, what I would like to ask you also about William's life is the nature of his relationship with his tenants and how that was different, if you will, from how other tenant relationships were at the time?

Scully: We're doing a retrospect up at Lincoln and we have a favorite picture, which I believe is going to display of the Cross family, all of them in one picture. Most of the tenants have stayed on from generation to generation. And they must be satisfied, because [they] sell their leases at the end of their tenure at considerable price to oncoming people. So from that standpoint of view, they're satisfied. And it gave them an opportunity to farm without an enormous injection of capital to buy land. A lot of them preferred to stay as tenants rather than buy their own land. The lease is a one-year lease and could be terminated at the end of the year. But we don't refuse the same tenants unless they go bankrupt or something. They stay on and on and on.

DePue: So it passes even from one generation to the next.

Scully: That's right.

DePue: Now one of the things that struck me was that the term "sharecropper" is certainly one of tradition in the United States, but these were not sharecroppers by the strict definition. They were paying a cash rent each year?

Scully: Yes. It was cash rent, which was not popular in this country. It is a European and Irish instrument. I think it was because landed gentry wanted a steady income and cash rent suited them best. They knew exactly what the income was. Early on, even when I became involved in the business, cash rent was considered more speculative than share rent, when you share the crop. But now I think the majority of farms are cash rent. It's a simpler operation and from a landowner's point of view, you don't have to pay the repair of buildings and things like that, which are a more personal nature.

DePue: Well, I noticed that one of the most troubling periods that the family had with the American operation and their tenants was during the 1930s, obviously those dust-bowl years when production plummeted.

Scully: Yeah. Yeah, we have had troubles. We haven't had trouble for many years, but I think that was due to my father living abroad, perhaps. And I think during the dust-bowl years the rents were somewhat high. What the troubles were, were resolved. And there's not permanent damage to the actual business.

DePue: I think it's important to mention here: most of the articles and reports I've seen were that the family's rents were actually lower than other places.

Scully: Well, our rents, until recently, were maybe twenty percent below market. But now, of course, since cash rent is very common, we can find out what the average rent is

that people pay and our recent policy is to have an average rent. We're not looking for enormous rents, we're not looking for top rents. But we are looking for average rents.

DePue: Another aspect of William's policies, and I guess your father's as well, as far as their tenants were concerned that struck me was this notion that the Scully family owned the ground and everything down and that the tenants were responsible for everything above ground.

Scully: That's right.

DePue: So that if they built barns or houses or anything like that, that was their expense, but that was also—

Scully: That's their responsibility, right.

DePue: But also their property to sell.

Scully: It's their property. And they can sell, when they sell our leases, they sell our leases for a considerable amount of money.

DePue: Was that also something unique back in the late nineteenth century, when William started this?

Scully: I really couldn't tell. I, you know, I just don't know what the history of things were back then.

DePue: What's your attitude about the effectiveness of that policy?

Scully: Well, we don't get into that. And, that's between one tenant and another. And actually the lease doesn't give them any right to the land or the value of the land. And so far we're not in the selling land. So as that is concerned, we're not, we're not involved.

DePue: So it's been the family long-standing tradition to retain the lands, not to parcel them out.

Scully: Yes, it has.

DePue: And the logic of that? The rationale for that?

Scully: Well, we think land is—we're not clever enough to make fortunes or good money in other businesses, so we might as well stay in land (laughter). We have tried a few ventures. I think my cousin has done fairly well with oil and the Peoria part of our family did well. However, in our land we haven't found any oil wells. The only problem I have with oil is you get used to a tremendous income and after about thirty years your oil gets depleted and unless you're clever or adventurous and successful, that's the end of the game. But land goes on—if looked after properly—

goes on and on and on. And of course from a larger standpoint of view, the prairie is a natural resource. Whether it's treated as a natural resource is to be debated. But I found when I wanted to farm, the depth of black soil was twenty one inches. And after that there's yellow clay. And if we go through those twenty one inches through neglect or misuse, then the whole middle west will revert to something not very valuable.

DePue: Well, we've left out another very important chapter for this story, for William and your father as well, I believe. And you alluded to it. Logan County was half underwater.

Scully: Yeah. Well, I say half underwater. It's in general terms. It's sort of interesting. Recently I took the Empire Builder train out west and in the Dakotas they have the same type of flat land we have in Logan County, but they have these sinks. In these sinks are great pools of water which have never been drained. I think that was about the same in Logan County, but our land is more valuable so we have drainage all over the place. But up there in the Dakotas, they produce wheat and the seasons are much shorter, so they've never drained these sinks. But it was interesting to go through that land and look out of the window and see how this slightly rolling land indeed contained a lot of small lakes and various water-filled holes.

DePue: How did William conquer that problem then?

Scully: Well, he started a giant drainage system and he trained a person called Simms. He had crew of lusty men go out –we have some pictures of the crew and there they all are, with their beards and everything else –and it was they who dug this system. And over a forty year period the thirty thousand acres were drained.

DePue: So was it primarily drainage ditches, or also extensive tile systems?

Scully: There was drainage ditches and then there were eighteen inch tiles hooked into the drainage ditches and then gradually the tiles got smaller and smaller, as it went upland.

DePue: Well, that sounds like an incredible expense the Scully family had to put into the land to get it productive.

Scully: Well, it made the whole business successful and it took a concentrated effort over at least forty years.

DePue: Forty years of hard labor.

Scully: Well, of course, everyone got a rest in the winter, basically (laughter). They didn't work in the winter. William Scully didn't do that; he had a crew of other people doing most of that.

DePue: But at the end of that, I would guess what you have is some of the most productive, some of the richest land in the entire world.

Scully: Well, I think we figured ninety two percent of our land in Logan and Sangamon County is "A" class land.

DePue: I wonder if you could talk a little bit about when the generations changed hands. I believe William died approximately 1906 or somewhere around there?

Scully: 1906, yeah, ’06 or ’07.

DePue: And as we've discussed, he had it in his mind that he wanted to keep this land together, to keep it under the tenant relationship.

Scully: He gave all his land— there was a great disappointment among the two brothers— that's my father—

DePue: That's Thomas?

Scully: —and Uncle Fred. Thomas and Uncle Fred. He gave all his land to his wife. His second wife, who lived in England.

DePue: What was her name?

Scully: Gosh.

DePue: We can get to that later.

Scully: Yeah, you'll have to get that, yeah. She lived at Cowley, and you have a picture of Cowley with my mother and father in front of this. She leased a great big property in Gloucestershire, and I remember visiting her in the thirties. She happened to be in bed, probably not very well. But anyway, the two boys got a good allowance, but they didn't get any of that land because she was obviously afraid that they'd go sell it. But finally a few years before her death in ’32, she transferred that land out and there was a big law case in the early thirties about death taxes, which the two sons won. So the land was passed on and was never sold. And then, with the Logan County lands, my father put everything in trust during his later years to my brother and myself. And right now these trusts go on to a coming generation. Out west – I’m not quite familiar with what has happened –but the land still, belongs to my two cousins. Interesting enough, Uncle Fred died, and his wife Betty died in 1941, within a month of one another. And my two cousins, Bill and Robin, came to live with us in the big house we built at Lincoln. My father was a stern disciplinarian, and the rule was, or rather the rule of unpaid family labor, came into effect because he always kept us to work. And we cleared forty acres of woodland near the house and burned it as fuel in the furnace. One of us had to get up at six o'clock in the morning to shove a few logs in the furnace. Breakfast was at 7:30, and my father liked to take a hot shower. But there was occasional time when we didn't wake up and the water was cold. And so was his attitude when we came down to breakfast.

DePue: That probably was in the later thirties, then?

Scully: That was in the forties.

DePue: In the forties.

Scully: We lived in Europe until...thirty-nine.

DePue: Let's go back and talk about those years a little bit. You were born in London.

Scully: Yeah.

DePue: Where did you grow up then?

Scully: Well, we had this flat on 12 Charles Street in London. And then my father built a small lodge, as he called it. It happened to be a pleasure dome in the south of France. We lived there and went to school there for several years.

DePue: What was your father doing during those years?

Scully: Well, he used to live in the south of France six months a year, then go up to Scotland and shoot grouse in the summer, and then come over to the States in the fall and look at the land. And he also took an opportunity to shoot some ducks, too. So that was the sort of life that I remember between 1930 and 1939.

DePue: So life changed a bit by the time you got to the United States.

Scully: It was, yes it did. Well, one of the lawyers, at my father's death, from Chicago said, you know, Hitler is your best friend. And my mother put up her nose at that because her brother, being killed during the First World War by the Germans, obviously. And so she had no great love for Germany. But the lawyer said, Well, if you hadn't come over here, you might have lost your lands, too. And she realized that was probably the truth.

DePue: You are a product of the public schools in England?

Scully: Well, I went to a private school called Hawtreys. And you have a picture of, and...

DePue: Well, one is a picture—

Scully: One of the—

DePue: —of a bunch of students at Hawtreys.

Scully: Yeah, and it is a typical attitude. You went there—I was delayed because of an accident. I was delayed one year so I arrived at Hawtreys at the age of nine. And, you know the Potter movies? The famous Potter...

DePue: Harry Potter.

Scully: Harry Potter, right. Well, he leaves on this train for the mystery school? And that's exactly what happened to us. We were put into long pants in London and Eaton, collar shirts; then we were taken to Victoria Station just like the cattle, the calves being weaned from cows, which we used to do at Buffalo every year. There was a great wailing and screaming as young children were separated from their mothers. We were put on this train, and the doors slammed shut, and most of us were looking out the window with tears in our eyes, leaving our mothers and going to some strange (laughter) boarding school. And that was standard procedure for a certain class of Englishman.

DePue: How old would you have been when you first started at Hawtreys?

Scully: Well, I got there about nine.

DePue: Nine years—

Scully: It was 1935.

DePue: What specifically caused the family to move to the United States in thirty-nine.

Scully: Well, I think the summer of 1939 they realized that trouble was brewing, because we usually went to Scotland. And I had my trunk packed for Harrow with a top hat and everything like that. I'd been to Harrow to see what the, it was like. My father went there. In fact, my father was there with Winston Churchill. But instead of that, we went down to Portsmouth and took one of the big transatlantic liners to the States and then a train to Illinois: the Twentieth Century Limited. Then we came south and when they opened the doors at Lincoln, Illinois to get off. It was hot and damp, and we'd never, we were not used to this climate. I said nothing, but I think my brother grimaced a little at the thought of this strange land that he was now entering (laughter), wondering what success he'd have in it.

DePue: This was your younger brother?

Scully: Yeah, this was my younger brother.

DePue: And his name?

Scully: Peter.

DePue: This was your father's second marriage, was it not?

Scully: Yes.

DePue: Did he have some children from the first marriage?

Scully: He did. They received compensation in an English court, but his first wife never wanted to come to the states, and so the divorce was in England and the children received a certain amount of money, you know, in the separation. But we were told

never to, never to contact this family. And frankly, every—well, they're all dead, now. But I became friendly with one of the grandsons of the next generation who's a historian. We buried the hatchet because both of us were interested in history. And he has a good job with an insurance company and accepts his position and we've had a good relationship.

DePue: Would it be fair to say that your father, inheriting, I believe most of the land in Illinois that his father, William, had built up over time, that the essence of his estate, his money, was the land in Illinois? Or were there properties in England and Ireland as well?

Scully: There were properties in England and Ireland, but there was a revolution: The Time of the Troubles. All the landlords got kicked out, including my father. And we were left with some Irish bonds, which my father sold—most of them.

DePue: And all that—

Scully: As the eldest son, I received a couple of plots of land, and I used to get about three or four hundred dollars for the rent. I went over to Lincoln to see the rentals, and they saw I had pink cheeks—I was pretty healthy –and from then on, I never received any rent from any of them (laughter).

DePue: Of course, all of that happened, the Irish revolt happened long before you were even born.

Scully: Yeah, that happened from twenty-two to...yeah, in the early twenties. That was before I was born.

DePue: Did you also attend a private school in the United States?

Scully: Yeah. We knew people in the east and we were sent to St. Mark's School at Southborough, Massachusetts, which was a boarding school. We came into St. Mark's on a refugee quota. I don't know how true this is, but anyway, there were several other boys from Europe. Half French, Ori Emmett, and David Rouen, and Jeffrey Orr, and several other boys who were accepted. So I spent five years there, and they prepared one for either Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. And we never, we did not know any other colleges aside these three. So everyone got into the college of their choice. We were prepared in such a way that there was no competition getting into colleges. We had heard of MIT, [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] but you had to be bright and good at math and it sounded a very boring place (laughter). I think only one of our class of forty-four went to MIT.

DePue: Are you suggesting that it wasn't quite as difficult academically to get into Harvard, Yale, or Princeton at the time?

Scully: Everyone got into these colleges. I remember taking the college boards. They were true and answer periods. There was no stress, there was no studying, and we all got into the college of our choice. It was a very different situation.

DePue: You graduated from St. Mark's in what year?

Scully: Forty four.

DePue: 1944.

Scully: And the summer, the early summer I went to Harvard, but I'd already applied for the Field Service, because in those days, everyone wanted to get in the war some way or the other.

DePue: This is the American Field Service?

Scully: Yeah, I'd applied for the American Field Service. I could apply because of the accident I'd had in France as very young child, about four, when I was run over by a car. One of my eyes was not very good. So I was limited service, and so would only get a desk job in the United States Army. And they gave you the opportunity to join either the Merchant Marines or the American Field Service. There might have been a couple of other outfits one could have joined but I decided that I wanted to see some action and, so I joined the Field Service.

DePue: Well, tell us a little bit about the American Field Service, because I don't think most people are familiar with it.

Scully: Well, they were started by a bunch of ex-patriots in the First World War, when America was not in the war. And there were about, probably twenty-five hundred, mostly people living in France, and some in England, who didn't join the French Army because you could not join a foreign army, but worked with—unless you wanted to lose your citizenship—but worked with the French army. Of course, after the war, they were a very small outfit and gave out a few scholarships. But under Steven Galatti, resurrected during the Second World War and again we were about two thousand people serving with the British and French in various theaters of war, mostly driving ambulances, but also doing some stretcher-bearing work and so forth.

DePue: So what were your personal experiences with the American Field Service?

Scully: Well, they gave us about two or three weeks training, and then we were sent—or rather, no training in the States, but we got our training...personally I got my training in Naples. They told us how to drive. How to double clutch and how to change a tire. And also when we park the car, we were specifically told to take the rotor out of the carburetor. The rotor is that thing that makes electrical connection with the spark plugs. Otherwise the Italians would go steal the car while you were in a bar having a drink or something. So that was de rigeur.[prescribed by custom] I mean, you might have your keys but forget about that. After a couple of weeks, or maybe three weeks training, we were sent out and we served with the Eighth Army. The Eight Army consists of half the nations of the British Empire. And we served with the Scots, and of course the English. We served with the Indians, the Gurkhas, and there was an Italian division, and New Zealanders, and we met Australians. We

also served with the Poles. It was an international army. Of course the Eighth Army had fought in the desert and probably the most well-known of the Allied armies. Anyway, my own service was in Italy, and then later we went up to Germany for a short while. Then V-E Day [Victory in Europe Day] came about and after a furlough in England, they sent us to India, where we stayed there for about five or six months. Of course, the atomic bomb went off and eventually we came home.

DePue: So they kept you busy for the entire war.

Scully: Well, I think you can say, as most people say, in war it's eighty percent you're bored to death and the other twenty percent you're frightened to death (laughter). You can take your pick.

DePue: And you were an ambulance driver, shuttling wounded from the front lines to the hospitals?

Scully: Right. Yeah. And we had four–wheel-drive vehicles, which enabled us to get within a couple hundred yards of the front. Obviously a great advantage. People didn't have to be carried very far. And then we'd drive back—mostly at night because everything was under fire –and you'd have someone walking in front of you with a lit cigarette cupped behind his back. And you'd drive at about two or three miles an hour over these rough, ready-made brick roads with groaning people in the back and...

DePue: Do you have any particular stories or memories that you'd like to share with us about that experience?

Scully: Well, I suppose the worst experience was...we ended up in Germany, and after V-E day we were shipped down to Celle, which was a hundred miles south of Germany and within a stone's throw of Belsen, one of the last concentration camps which was liberated by the Allies.

DePue: I believe that was the one where Ann Frank died.

Scully: Right. Obviously we didn't meet her. Whether she was dead—she probably had died before we arrived. But obviously we'd never seen anything like what had transpired in Belsen. And obviously were...almost shocked, you might say, at the human damage which was done and the, the amount of depravity which human beings could put on one another. I made a speech once concerning this, recently, for the American Field Service, previously to the Iraq war, which describes my...thoughts on the subject.

DePue: Well, having served in Italy with the Eighth Army—

Scully: Yeah.

DePue: —even as an ambulance driver, this was some of the most brutal combat in World War II.

Scully: Well, it was (laughter); it was one of Winston Churchill's brilliant ideas which didn't exactly work out. 'Course from our point of view, we never heard about that, you know. In fact, when you're at the front with your outfit, you hear very little outside news. And for me it was an exciting time. We endured what we had to endure and in those days...we were enthusiastic about what we're doing. Of course, let's face it, the war was fought by eighteen and nineteen year olds. You know, they're young boys. On both sides. And as young people, we were enthusiastic but probably not very wise as far as the bigger questions of life were concerned. We just did what we had to do, went through the day. It was a simple life. You just thought of two things: life and death. Getting three squares. Having a night's sleep.

DePue: That would probably _____(??)

Scully: Not getting cold, you know. Just very simple. It's a very simple life. There were no big nervous problems about how much money you had in the bank and that sort of stuff. The Field Service paid us twenty dollars. Well, we're at the front. There was nothing to spend money on anyway.

DePue: So , it strikes me that you start off living this, what I would certainly consider a fairly privileged life, in France and in England. You come to the United States and your father works you hard but you still are going to a private school. And now you're in the American Field Service and you've seen what you've seen there, and living a very different kind of experience, as all soldiers do.

Scully: It was a big, big change. But remember, we were with a group, and group solidarity helps you a great deal. We had a common cause, and I think the people we were with...well, they're all types of people. There were adventurers, there were artists. There were people trying to get away from their wives. There were conscientious objectors. But on the whole, I think the tone of the Field Service and the people that entered, although diverse, was...was a higher tone than say, an ordinary infantry outfit. They were there because they were volunteers.[Many soldiers were drafted into service in WWII.] They're there because they wanted to be there. And for me, it was a great experience.

DePue: How would you say the experience changed you?

Scully: Well, one obviously matured a good deal faster. And I was reading something in one of the farm magazines about how people should be brought up. The person writing the article said, After high school, instead of going directly into college, it'd probably did more good if they went out in the world for a couple of years and experienced some sort of adventure, some sort of growing up...living conditions, where they could get a solid footing about what the world was about. And that's what I got with the Field Service.

DePue: Were you doing the same kind of duties—ambulance driving—when you ended up in India at the end of the war?

Scully: In India...well, no, we...really we did nothing in India. We were waiting to go into Sumatra, and we were all going to be given Bren gun carriers, which amused us and excited us. And the wounded were going to somehow be put on top of these Bren gun carriers, which you know, had tack-like treads. And we were going to learn how to drive these things, and this is all sort of exciting. But actually of course, in the middle of this, the atomic bomb went off and then everything came to a standstill. Everyone wanted to go home, but of course...you know there were just so many ships and planes that'd take you home, and so everyone had to wait. So we stayed in India for five months after V-E Day. I got a chance to see the last of the British Raj in India: the officer's quarters in the camps, and the last of those—you might say a certain section of the British Empire. Which, again, was instructive.

DePue: At that time did you understand that the days of the British Empire and days of England in India were closing?

Scully: That didn't enter into our experience at all. We were young. I know we came into Bombay and we went to camp called Kalyan, which was thirty miles outside of Bombay We used to take the train into the big city. Now it's called Mumbai, you know. And for the first time we saw all these beggars dragging themselves along the train, people without legs and stuff. And my particular observation was, they lived the same sort of life that we saw in the concentration camps in Europe. And of course, they only paid us twenty dollars a month, so we couldn't exactly give them very many large tips. Besides, we wanted to save a certain amount of money because in Bombay we went to the Taj, which is the big hotel, and had a couple of drinks. That sort of stuff.

DePue: Do you remember your reaction when you heard about the atomic bomb?

Scully: Yeah. I don't think, frankly...we were looking forward to another campaign. And many of us really did not want to go back home. But anyway, the bomb went off and obviously, we didn't know much about it. The bomb and just gone off. I mean, the horror of the hundred thousand people dying in Hiroshima didn't weigh very deeply on us. It was just another fact. Well, of course, when you've come out of Belsen, it wasn't any worse than that. We'd seen all that stuff. So...we knew our adventure had come to a close. And we were willing to just go with the flow and come home. I think the biggest disappointment was to Galatti, because he had to reform the whole Field Service on another basis, which took some years. But...we came home ...we came home on, I think the Queen Mary, with fifteen thousand Canadian troops and landed in Halifax. We were greeted by the Canadian Red Cross and given baskets of food and candy and stuff, and put on a train for Montreal. Then we changed trains and came down New York. My parents were there to visit their dear son coming back from the war (laughter), and there I was, back in bourgeois society. I remember later on going on a holiday. We went to England in forty-eight, our first trip back to Europe. And we arrived at South Hampton and my brother and I had to carry my father's baggage. Here I was, having come back from the war, and I was now a porter for the parents (laughter). So I felt disappointment.

DePue: Well, I was going to, I was—

Scully: It was sort of a slavery I didn't care for (laughter).

DePue: But I would suspect your parents were very proud of your service.

Scully: Well, they were. They were proud, but of course it was back to another regime with certain other rules.

DePue: But wouldn't that regime be Harvard? And college?

Scully: Well, I was given the choice of staying at home and going into business or going to Harvard. Well, of course, obviously I chose going to Harvard. And the old man gave me a pretty good allowance. But I knew I could be kicked out like they kicked another family out. So when I got to Harvard I saved half my allowance. He gave me two thousand dollars. Which actually, today, would be probably...ten times as much. And I saved half of it, so when I got out of Harvard, I had thirty-five hundred dollars in my bank account.

DePue: Now, when you say you were afraid that you could get kicked out, you're not even talking about getting kicked out of Harvard, but—

Scully: No, kicked out of the family.

DePue: Well, I want to back up just a little bit, and we certainly want to come back to this point. But, when you're going to Harvard, what is it in your mind that you want to do with your life?

Scully: I just wanted to go to Harvard. I had no idea—it was better than staying at home. And the question was, what to do at Harvard. It was in the spring, and I used to go down to the athletic building, which was across the Charles[River]. I was walking down this building in the afternoon and it was crowded. There were a lot of people walking down and also cars crossing the bridge. I heard this, "click-click, click-click" as I was in the middle, passing over the bridge. I went to the edge of the bridge and looked over the side, and there below me came the first and second Harvard crews. And they were going to the Weeks Bridge, which is a beautiful bridge about half a mile down the Charles River. I looked at these crews, and I looked at their rhythm, and I said, That is a beautiful sight and I want to be a part of it. And I went down to the boathouse and started rowing. I'd never rowed before. I loved to play sports. In England I played soccer and cricket, and rugger [rugby] and I was fairly good at sports. I'd never rowed before, but I thought I'd start this. It was really the result of this one picture. Mind you, rowing was hard work. But Harvard had a good tradition of rowing; they had strong crews. For the next four years I rowed. Harvard, I might say, was an urban experience. Harvard Square is sort of a rough center. There were battles between the townies and the people at Harvard. I was part of those, one or two of those scuffles. I'm not saying we were right and they were—I'm not saying who was right –but anyway, we did get into scuffles. But anyway, crew gave me the discipline. I was on that crew for four years: gave

me the discipline of rhythm, and hard work, and patience, and working under a certain amount of pain. And that was what I got out of Harvard. Later, when I went down to Buffalo to start my own farm—organic farming –obviously there was very little money in organic farming. The main thing was to get through the day, make your compost heaps and try to keep up with the economies which had to be made, or the expenses you were spending. And that gave me the discipline, I think, for going into the sphere of organic farming, which everyone thought was backward: was unimportant was a lazy approach, a traditional approach. But now, of course, it's become quite popular.

DePue: Well, let's go into that relationship with your father. Because you get to Harvard and are wondering, I wonder if I'll be kicked out. What was going on there?

Scully: What, at Harvard?

DePue: No, between yourself and your father.

Scully: Well, nothing. The four years I'd had at Harvard, nothing bad went on. You know we actually spent some of the summers down at the south of France. I worked the other part of the summers hauling rocks around the estate and also cutting trees. Unpaid family labor with my brother and most of my cousins when they were there. Of course, after the war, they'd left. But it was only after I left Harvard and came back and worked in the business for about three or four months, and at that point...I think the relationship with my mother was very close. And I think my father might have become a little jealous.

Also at that time, I started the American Field Service experience. After graduating from Harvard, I went down to New York and entered into the Art Student League. I took drawing lessons and stuff. They told me at the Art Student League that there were ninety thousand artists in New York, and one would become famous, and four would make a living, and the rest of us would starve (laughter). Well it was obvious, after trying art, that I was going to be one of the starving ones. But the main experience was that [Steven] Galatti –who was in a dilemma about the Field Service –Galatti came from an old family and was a Harvard man, and I think was captain of the football team at Harvard. He was a well-known do-er and shaker, as they say. He wanted to resurrect the Field Service, and there was an idea that they should try and raise money from the high schools and try and get the high schools to raise six hundred dollars, which today would be six thousand dollars – and get a foreign student over and live in that particular community. I came to that particular important meeting. Mind you, it was in the basement of this old brownstone house which was the Field Service headquarters, and it was not particularly well kept up, and all the relics of the war were there and sort of not very well kept and so forth. We met in the basement and...yeah. Steve's secretary was there. She was a Japanese girl. And also, someone who did society dances and stuff. And it was this particular person, I can't remember her name, said, Why don't you send someone out west into the hinterlands to collect six hundred dollars and maybe start something? I said, “Oh, I'm going back to Lincoln.”

So I came back to Lincoln and I went to the local high school and told them about this particular program. And we had a couple of money raisers. My mother gave a hundred dollars. And I gave fifty. And we got up to four hundred dollars, and we couldn't raise a cent more. But Handlin, the principal of the school, liked the idea. He just purloined two hundred dollars from some student funds, and we were over the top. We were the first people to be able to raise the six hundred dollars. About a month or so later, Indiana had raised some money. And that first year, maybe three or four students came from Europe. A German student came to Lincoln and stayed with a family. And did very well and won a state public speaking contest the next spring.

But I think my father might have got jealous that I was doing extracurricular activities and making myself known in the town. It was out of all this that resulted in me being expelled from my home. When he said you had to leave, you just had to leave. And so I left. But fortunately, I had thirty-five hundred dollars in my pocket.

I think you have one of the papers which I gave in a speech, of my particular training which I gave myself in agriculture. I was a hired man for a while. On this particular trip, I left for the east and I stopped at Louis Bromfield's farm.[in Ohio] He was one of the great gurus.[of organic gardening] I remember stopping at Louis's. I It was a beautiful day; about three or four hundred people were there. And there was Louis in a jeep with two bulldogs and a loudspeaker hooked up to the machine. He said, "Let's all go to the top of this hill and I'll explain the workings of our farm." So he took us up this winding path to the top of this grassy hill, and there he showed us his farm. It was sort of like a Sermon on the Mount speech he gave (laughter). He showed us how the rich trees sank their roots into the valuable ground and absorbed all the nutrients they needed to grow. And they were a darker green than most other trees, et cetera, et cetera. Anyway, he gave his speech.

Well, I left for the east and then stayed with friends for two or three weeks at Mount Kisco. They knew of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer. I got introduced to one of his seminars he gave at Spring Valley and I asked him for a job. He said, Let me think about it. Then I went up to Massachusetts to stay with a friend. And frankly, I said to myself, what have you got to learn? What are the first things you've got to learn in farming? Well, milking a cow was, I thought, an important objective. I didn't know how to milk a cow. So I stayed with this friend in New Bedford and I went around the countryside asking for work. This one man was looking for labor and they were paying five dollars a day, and the Massachusetts rule was you could only work ten hours a day. Well of course, milking cows, if you want to get the maximum milk, you should milk them twelve hours apart. So after I got the job, we had two hours in the afternoon which didn't count, you see, but we could do anything (laughter). So we usually just sat under a tree and either read a book or just went to sleep. Anyway that was the rule.

So this one farmer looked at me and he said, Can you milk? And I said, of course I can. It was the perfect lie, and he knew it was a lie, too. But I was in good shape and he needed cheap labor. And I was part of that...you know, I represented cheap labor. He said, Come along to the barn at 4:30 in the morning. It was a Sunday morning and I came to the barn. And he opened these two doors and there were two other people with me. One of them was an experienced neighbor of the farm. He said, You handle the milk machines. They were De Laval milkers. And the other two, You strip the cows. He pointed to me and another gentleman, another boy. As I said, he opened the doors and inside that barn there were a hundred and twenty eight cows. I took one line of cows, sixty four cows. I obviously didn't know how to milk. I didn't know how to milk. But anyway, I went through the motions. And by the end of day, I had five blisters on one hand and four on the other. The cows were fed a high protein diet, so they really all had diarrhea; their tails spent half the day flipping back and forth, hitting you on the side of the cheek. So I came back home to where I was staying, and I smelled so badly, they said, You're going to have to wash yourself off in the garden with the garden hose. And this I did, but they were glad to keep me. I worked at this farm for a couple of months, and at the end of three or four weeks I got to milk cows pretty well.

I think the most boring job I ever had anywhere, they had seventeen acres full of stones. And a crew of us picked up little stones and big stones and threw them into a back of a truck. This went on and on and on. And I think it was the most boring job I've ever had. Day after day. We just went behind this truck, picking up these stones and throwing them in back of this truck.

One of the other jobs, too: a lot of the fields were irrigated, and they had these heavy iron pipes which you had to carry around and connect one pipe to another. And of course, the alfalfa was two and a half feet, two feet high and wet as anything. So of course, you were wet up to your waist, carrying these pipes around and mess around. But that's what we did. Then my boss was the boss's son. He was fourteen years old and he used to boss me around. And the foreman just couldn't understand why a Harvard graduate would take a job like this (laughter). He thought this was insane.

Well, eventually, I got a letter from Dr. Pfeiffer. He said he'd take me on as a student. So I left this position in Massachusetts and worked at the Pfeiffer farm, which was at Chester, New York, near Newburg. They were Germans and they spoke nothing but German. Of course, I didn't speak any German. I slept on the landing. They had cows –about thirty of them, typical string of cows –you know, typical New York dairy situation. I worked with them for...I must have been there five or six months. No, four and half to five months. We used to get up at...I could hear the alarm clock go off at 5:15. And instead of washing my face and shaving, I quickly used to get dressed and run out to the barn and start giving silage or hay to the cows. Of course I knew how to milk, which they were surprised. And then later I'd come in we'd have breakfast. I'd shave later on. Then we worked through the day. And then we'd have tea, German style. And Mrs. Pfeiffer would help with milking and also do the cooking. Dr. Pfeiffer only appeared at the farm once a

week. He lived in Spring Valley, forty miles away. He was really a scientist. He used to come up and give orders and so forth. We used to have meetings and conferences, this sort of stuff. And...

DePue: I think, Michael, we need to take a step back here. Because Dr. Pfeiffer is an important person in his own right and a disciple of Rudolph Steiner, I believe.

Scully: Yes. Well that's what I discovered later on. I didn't know a thing about Steiner. In the evenings there wasn't anything to do, and they had a library next door, right, the next room. So I looked at the library and started reading some of these books. I said, Oh this is where he got his ideas from. You know, it wasn't all, it wasn't all Pfeiffer's ideas. He got them from somebody else. I started reading Steiner and I was enthusiastic about what I read, and that's how I got interested in Steiner. And—

DePue: I think we need to take a little time talking about Steiner's philosophy and then what Dr. Pfeiffer did with that as well, his own views. Because I think they play prominent roles for the rest of your life after that.

Scully: Well they certainly did because I have a library at home with probably up to five or six hundred books of Steiner's—he was a prodigious lecturer. He had a cosmology—

DePue: Steiner is—

Scully: He also had a history of the world. And he was a clairvoyant and spoke with these unborn gods, so to speak. He was a scientist. That is, Steiner.

DePue: Where was he from?

Scully: He was from Germany. But he left Germany and had his headquarters at Switzerland. He died in 1925? He was born, I think, in sixty-one. Died in about twenty-five. They built a temple called the Goetheanum; it was made of wood. And he had enemies, powerful enemies, and evidently someone set fire to the old Goetheanum about two years before he died. But in spite of the setback, they started building a new Goetheanum made out of cement, which was eventually built after many years, and still exists. It's a fairly small philosophical group. There are about fifty thousand members today. I think about eighty percent of them live in Germany.

DePue: What is the group called?

Scully: Pardon?

DePue: What is the group called?

Scully: The Anthroposophic Society. I'll let you spell it out. You probably (laughter) have to get it correct. Anthro—

DePue: Well, I've seen this—

Scully: Anthro is Greek for man, and sophir is wisdom. So wisdom of man would be the idea. I said, he had a complete philosophy, which I found pretty interesting, I followed. But of course, I was in the farming section of it. When you get into practical affairs, you know, you get down to bedrock and you find it's a lot of physical labor. And you're limited and have to work with other people and other economic factors. For instance, you have to buy your tractors, you know, which are made by other people. So you're subject to the rules and regulations of the world. Also, of course, you have to find people to market your stuff to. And economics comes into play pretty closely. So one is very limited, as far as freedom if you want to try new ideas. Because they take time to develop and maybe you have rely a lot on other people and their ideas. And maybe these ideas are not being developed, so forth and so on.

DePue: I know that one of the, one of the fields that Steiner got into—I guess he basically invented this notion of biodynamic—

Scully: Biodynamic—

DePue: Biodynamic agriculture.

Scully: Right. Yeah.

DePue: Can you explain what that—

Scully: Well, biodynamic meant that agriculture relies on biology and there are certain dynamics in biology. For instance, Pfeiffer points out in one of his books that the soil needs nutrients. And you may find a certain part of land lacks certain nutrients such as copper, or selenium, or something like that. But interestingly enough, these nutrients occur, these nutrients occur in certain plants, and so balance out the soils. Where do these nutrients come from? They come from invisible aspects, you might say, part of the cosmos, which are not evident. This is certain dynamics of the soil and of life, which are not explained by just physical means, but they are observed. And he made certain preparation to enliven the compost pile.

DePue: This is Pfeiffer now?

Scully: Well, Steiner made the actual formulas. Pfeiffer carried them out in certain ways. Anyway, this is what biodynamics is all about, which produced a more wholesome food than you could get through ordinary agricultural means. So the question is, when I got home, and as a result of my experience...when I say, "I got home" from the Pfeiffer farm, I was drafted into the Korean War, and so I spent two years in the army. But before I went into the army, I returned home and this particular controversy I had with my father sort of disappeared. My father lived in the big house. He would always come in the back door and things were sort of forgotten and forgiven.

A couple of interesting things at the Pfeiffer farm was: Mrs. Pfeiffer used to bake a pie once or twice week –probably once a week. We'd put all our dishes in the sink, and Mrs. Pfeiffer said, Whoa, you should have kept your dishes because I have a pie ready for you. Well, I said, We don't know whose dish belongs to who, and Willy, the daughter, piped up and said, "Oh Michael, we all know your dish!" Well, you see, I clean my dishes with a knife and fork. They had followed the German custom: wiped their dishes with a piece of bread. So from then on I wiped my dish with a piece of bread, did what everybody else did. And I think this custom happened from the thirty years war or something in Germany, where no one had any food and...it just kept on, you know, this habit.

There was another amusing...time. My mother obviously was not pleased, you know, that I'd been kicked out of the family. So she came to New York and came up to the Pfeiffer farm to visit, and we all sat down to tea. She was well-dressed, her New York clothes. Of course the rest of us were in farm—we'd just come in form working an afternoon on the farm. She bought a big box of chocolates –a sort of Whitman's sampler –and she put it in the middle of the table and took the lid off. And we all looked at these chocolates 'cause really we were starved for sweet things. No one dared take a chocolate, though. So the lid was replaced and my mother left for New York again, and we went out to milk the cows. Of course, all of us, or myself, were thinking of these chocolates. I came back in the kitchen after milking the cows and there wasn't a soul in the house. So I crept over this box which was in the middle of the dining room table and lifted off the cover and all the chocolates had disappeared. So I replaced the cover and later we came in for dinner, and not a word was mentioned about the chocolates. And nothing was ever said about this incident again. It was one of the curious things which happened.

DePue: You tell the story about the chocolates, which is to suggest that Dr. Pfeiffer thought that the chocolates were not healthy? They were not part of what biodynamics was about?

Scully: No, I don't think, I don't think there's anything to do with it. I don't even...no this is...well of course, he came up from...he came up once or twice a week from his laboratory in Spring Valley. And really, they tried to keep him... Pfeiffer was one of these geniuses, but he always would get into mechanical trouble—when he handled mechanical things he'd get into trouble, such as rolling up a window, you know. He'd get his fingers caught in the glass going up. Stuff like that. But still he was revered and he did excellent work in his field.

DePue: How did he pass on his information, his thoughts about how agriculture should work to—

Scully: Well, of course—

DePue: —you and others.

Scully: It's mostly conservative rotations and then you added these compounds to a compost heap. And then, a lot of his science was regularly known stuff, you know? If, for instance, if you want to get certain yields in your cornfield, you have to have so much nitrogen, and he'd take these from regular manuals 'cause he relied on other research on the basic way a farm worked. So in other words, you were supposed to put ten tons of manure on your corn crop in order to get the required nitrogen to get an adequate yield.

DePue: Ten tons per acre?

Scully: Ten tons per acre, right. And of course, when I went into farming we used his knowledge, and we used to take soil samples to see if we had all of the elements, you know: we had enough calcium and lime, calcium, phosphorus and so forth. A lot of stuff he did, which was part of regular agriculture.

DePue: Can you describe conservative rotation?

Scully: Well, on my farm I had three rotations. I think I had one set of rotations with one year or corn, one with two years of corn, and one with three years of corn. Oats and clover. I wanted to test what this compost would do and as I said, we came into certain practical problems with putting on the compost. Of course, we had a certain amount of weed seeds going in, which affected the yields of the corn. And of course, what we wanted to do is keep the yields up with everyone else. We had difficulty doing that 'cause people were putting on more and more artificial nitrogen, and we were limited, the amount of compost we could make. And also there were inherent disadvantages of using compost, such as weed seeds and so forth, and cultivation.

But the other problem with the crops where it was known under chemical...modern agriculture, that the viability of the seeds were decreasing, and also the nutrient value of the actual crops in the last forty or fifty years have decreased from twenty to forty percent. In other words, we're growing crops which are worth less and less. They have less nutrient value in them. This is due to the fact we're breeding for volume. Everything is priced on volume, and we're producing stuff which actually has less nutrient value. This is now well known. And the real question is, what does this have on the health of individuals?

One interesting thing is—and I'm not an expert in this but—my wife died about a year ago from cancer. Of course, I didn't know anything about cancer. I started studying about it. But I found quite a few references to the fact that cancer was not a great problem at the turn of the twentieth century. Maybe one to three percent of people got cancer. It was not a great problem. Now up to forty percent of people are liable to get—women—liable to get breast cancer. You know, it's become a big problem.

One other problem is, the medical community is pretty well divorced from the land and their education, as far as growing crops and nutritive value of foods, is

fairly limited. So this is not taken into account. As far as cancer's concerned, what nutrient value which is missing in the crops gives you a susceptibility for cancer disease? There are several people who are now concerned about the fact that our foods—not only due to the breeding of the food –but the various machinations go on between the farmers: when the farmer sells his food, to the product of various food stuffs we buy from the supermarket. Every time it goes along this commercial line, something is added, something is subtracted. And then with all the hype that goes in and where it's placed in these supermarkets gives rise to, Hey, what do you, for the money you're spending on food, what value you're actually getting.

And from my experience with animals, as far as reproduction, you know, the birth of animals, the reproductive system is very fragile. We found with our animals, especially with our pigs, that our reproductive capacity –in other words, where sows would get impregnated with boars –was a good deal higher than...our sows would reproduce about ninety-five percent of the time, compared to about seventy percent of the time with modern, you know, this modern giant pig projects and so forth.

DePue: Let's go back to the time period you were on Dr. Pfeiffer's farm. Apparently that was just a few months.

Scully: Yeah, it's about four and half months.

DePue: And then you were drafted into the United States Army.

Scully: Yeah.

DePue: So what happened to that medical condition that you had before, back in the Second World War era?

Scully: Oh, you mean my blind eye?

DePue: Yeah.

Scully: You know, it's really curious that you ask. I went up to Binghamton to get my physical. And actually, Mrs. Pfeiffer said, You know, we've enjoyed having you on the farm, but why don't you go back to the bank during the winter or something. Because she didn't want to have an extra man around the house until next spring because there wasn't that much to do. I don't think I was worried about this dilemma, but it was something which had to be tackled 'cause they didn't want me there. And I could see her point of view because she,—actually, at the Pfeiffer farm, we only got one day off every three weeks. One of the other rules was if you broke any tools you paid for it yourself, and I had the great propensity of putting the tractor in reverse and running over a pitchfork or something like that. But anyway I went to Binghamton for this physical interview and they put me through this or that, and finally the doctor came up to me and put his hand over my left eye, like this. And he said, "Read." Well, that was my good eye, so I ended up with twenty-twenty. Then the telephone rang and he went back to answer the phone and

then he came back after five minutes and put his hand over the same eye and said, "Read." Well, of course, I got twenty-twenty. So I went in the army with twenty-twenty eyes. I said, Hey listen, you read the, that was my other eye. You should have... But he said, Oh come on, get going. You know. So I shrugged my shoulders, said, What the hell. So I ended up in the army with twenty-twenty. Well. With my—interesting enough, too. I ended up with my brother. We both went in together. We went down to Fort Leonard Wood. Went through basic. And everyone was being sent to Korea.

DePue: This was what year, now?

Scully: We entered in fifty-one, January of fifty-one. Every—I mean, Pusan perimeter was getting smaller and smaller. In fact, in fourteen weeks we were given three weeks of field training and the rest was sitting at a desk, you know, watching movies of what you should do and learning how to parade around the army compound. Of course, we should have been out. If that was the case, we should have spent three weeks learning how to parade around and the rest of the fourteen weeks out in field training. But anyway, that was the way things went.

DePue: You didn't end up in Korea, did you?

Scully: Pardon?

DePue: You did not end up in Korea, though.

Scully: No, we didn't. Because my brother started to have beer with some sergeant who was in charge of records. And all our records were kept in sort of shoe boxes. A little card like that where you had your MOS...I've forgotten even what that stands for.

DePue: Military Occupational Specialty.

Scully: Yeah. You know, and your I.Q. and the whole darn bit. And somehow he said, oh, yeah, we have some openings to go into intelligence. I said to my brother, Why don't we volunteer for Korea anyway. My brother was not going to do that. So these openings appeared and my brother suggested we apply for intelligence. So I said, Oh fine. And we applied and lo and behold, we ended up in Camp Holabird for four months. They have an intelligence center there.

DePue: Is that in Maryland?

Scully: Holabird, that's in Baltimore, Maryland. Holabird. The one rule at Holabird were—of course then, you could only get into intelligence if you had twenty-twenty eyesight. So I now had to, I had to fake it so I could, you know. 'Cause you've got to have a driver's license in the Army. You had to have twenty-twenty. So I had to fake this darn thing. No one discovered that I didn't have bad eyes. So anyway, we stuck together in Holabird and went through four months of training there during a rather hot summer. They had one stiff rule at Holabird: if you fell asleep in class,

you got canned from the Camp and you got reassigned to an infantry regiment in Korea. It was sort of tough. And damned if about five people didn't fall asleep. And they were just thrown out, you know.

DePue: Because certainly, once they got to Korea they would never fall asleep.

Scully: They just disappeared. They just disappeared. So anyway. After Holabird, we were assigned to Europe. But going back a step, before we left for our basic training I said to my brother, Let's give the old man a goodbye present. He liked to drink Bass's Ale so I said, Let's get him a case of Bass's Ale. Of course now you can get thirty different types of beer in Springfield, but not then. We phoned to Chicago and I said over the phone, Do you have any Bass's Ale? No, we don't have any. Well, what foreign beer do you have? Well, we have some Wurzburg beer. Never heard of Wurzburg. Well, send us down a case. They sent us down a case of Wurzburg beer, and damned if a year later, we were assigned to Wurzburg in Germany and spent a year there. Again, one of these curious circumstances.

DePue: Well, was the Wurzburg beer good?

Scully: It was. I love it. I've got some at home. It's a first-class beer.

DePue: So that was your short military career, then.

Scully: Well, we were in there for two years.

DePue: So that would be about 1954 when you got released?

Scully: Yeah, fifty-three. We got out in fifty-three. And then we stayed in Europe,

and frankly I thought of re-enlisting. Frankly, we were corporals and we wore civilian clothes in Germany. We had a car and ran around doing various intelligence. In fact, we did quite a bit of work vetting scientists and also, German girls who want to get out of the country and marry American boys. We didn't speak any German at all. So what we did was to learn thirty sentences in German. "I'm from the American Army and I'd like to have a few questions I can ask you." "Ich bin von die amerikanischer armee und Ich möchter gern haben ein par fragen mit Ihnen." We learned thirty of these expressions: How are, Do you know Fraulein so and so,. Is she an upright citizen and so forth and so on. And then we'd go back and write top-secret reports in five copies without any mistakes in decent English, you see. So that's our experience . Of course, we used to flog the coffee. You could buy coffee in the PX for a buck and we could flog it for eight dollars.

DePue: Flog it.

Scully: Well that was the—

DePue: The Black Market?

Scully: Black Market, right, which of course, we were not supposed to do. And then we hired a professor for one dollar an hour to teach us some German. After an hour and a half his wife would come in and it was time for Kaffee, Kuchen, und Unterhaltung: coffee, cake, and conversation. And so we'd have an hour conversation with his wife and so forth. By the time the year ended we were starting to go to German plays and you know, we were just getting good at German. But that was the end of our stay in Germany.

DePue: What happened after your stay in Germany? Release from the military?

Scully: Well, I thought of re-enlisting in the army because it was cushy over there. We had a corporal's—they would have made us sergeants. I had a girlfriend over there and...pleasant living in Europe in civilian clothes. We were getting about a hundred and fifteen dollars, a hundred and twenty five dollars a month as corporals. As sergeants we probably got a hundred and fifty. As corporals we were living as well as an assistant professor in Germany. And of course, all our food was supplied for nothing, you know. Clothing and board were—it was a good life over there. And then my father sent us a telegram. "Come home or else." (laughter). Jesus Christ.

DePue: He needed some help on the—

Scully: So then we're back—well, you know, it's hard to say no to the family. Well, he had this great big estate; he had to do something with it. So we came back to this country. My mother sent me up to Chicago and I worked in the bank at the Trust Department for a while.I got to know Jean, who came from a farm family. She was at the Art Institute. She was sort of an artist.

DePue: What was her last name?

Scully: Jean Carol Scheckler. Jean Carol Scheckler. S-c-h-e-c-k-l-e-r. We were married the following year, fifty-four or fifty-five. I sort of forget the years. And then my father had set up these trusts and I immediately went down to Buffalo and started us organic farming and of course my father was in charge. And you know, the business was run through the office. Until his death it was run that way and I used to go up to the office once a week or something like that.

DePue: Now we've only got a few minutes left today, and we're going to have to pick up talking in detail about your experiences on that farm in Buffalo. But I did want to kind of establish some of the groundwork here if we could. When you say your father's estate, now he had forty thousand acres with—

Scully: Yeah, about forty-, forty-four thousand.

DePue: Is that what you mean by the estate?

Scully: Yes.

DePue: Or did he actually work part of that land himself?

Scully: My farm was about four hundred acres so it was a very small—it was one lease. The whole estate was cash rent to various. The person on my particular lease in Buffalo was in debt, was getting drunk, and I, you know, we did not renew his lease and so he left. And actually I paid eighteen thousand bucks to get on the lease, you know, buy the lease. And—

DePue: You bought the lease from the person who was there before.

Scully: Yeah. Actually he became a mechanic down in...I think Arizona or somewhere. I talked to one of his relatives and the relative said, That's just what he needed: a steady job with a boss. And of course with the eighteen thousand he paid off whatever debts he had, and he became a good mechanic and lived a practical, useful life.

DePue: Now, just saying that you had to pay eighteen thousand dollars to gain the lease I think kind of illustrates quite a bit about the nature of the tenant relationships that your grandfather and then your father were running..

Scully: Yeah, this was the average price for leases in those days.

DePue: What was it, actually, that you were purchasing with that lease, then?

Scully: What?

DePue: What was it, actually, that you were purchasing? Was it the buildings and the structures on the property?

Scully: Yeah, there was a house down there. We moved into a little house which had been built onto. Oh, there was a couple of barns and actually, what I did was paint up the house. We re-did it as best we could. We used to sleep in the living room. And then later we moved upstairs in the attic. The original house had an upstairs. The door to get upstairs was outside the house. The original houses were built that way; the door was on the outside because a lot of times foreigners came and they didn't want to have contact with these people because they didn't know anything about their character. But they wanted to—you know, not foreigners, but strangers. But I think a lot of farmers liked housing people traveling through the country. See, because that's, you know, sort of social. You know, helped them. They could get information from other parts of the country. But they didn't know much about these people, so there was a separate outside entrance and you just climbed up to the attic.

DePue: Did you purchase some equipment with this money as well? Did it come with equipment?

Scully: No, no. I didn't purchase any equipment at all. And we finally built up the farm and finally Cockleburr was built about several hundred yards away from the old farmhouse.

DePue: Okay. Cockleburr, then, was the name of the new farm?

Scully: Yeah, I named it Cockleburr because it's full of cockleburr weeds. But cockleburr weeds grow on ground which is very fertile.

DePue: Well, this might be a fairly decent place to stop because I don't want to disrupt the story once we get into the type of agriculture that you were in. I certainly want to be able to talk in a great amount of detail on that, because you are going to pick up with what Dr. Pfeiffer and Dr. Steiner had done and apply some of these techniques, as I understand it, to organic farming of your own.

Scully: Right. Well, you have the two or three articles we did on the farm.

DePue: Let's just finish with this. Your father wasn't a total stranger to some of these concepts himself, was he?

Scully: No, he wasn't. Of course, he went to the Royal Agricultural College in England, which is a two or—I think it was a two-year course. And he had Albert Howard's book, who was the, you might say the grandfather of organic farming. Albert Howard, who'd been in India, did most of his work in India.

DePue: So he was already a proponent himself. You were following in your father's footsteps.

Scully: Well he was. He was in a way. Although, well, in Ireland, he sort of ran his own show. Over here, when his father died they built a big office in Lincoln and they ran the whole business through that office. That was the main office for Nebraska and everything out west. Also in Missouri.

DePue: Well this is probably as good a place as any to stop and we'll start and we'll talk a lot more about the four hundred acre farm that you had in Buffalo, and Cockleburr and the rest of your life.

Scully: Okay, well, thank you so much.

DePue: Thank you.

(End of interview)