

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Mark K. Johnson

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Illinois State Museum's *Agriculture in Illinois* Oral History project

Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-101

Michael Johnson, a photographer, tree farmer and sawmill operator, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Oral History of Illinois Agriculture project of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and the Illinois State Museum.

Interview dates & location:

Date: October 8, 2008 Location: Carroll County, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Michael Maniscalco, Illinois State Museum

Technical Support: Robert Warren, recording engineer

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Abstract

Mark Johnson, *Agriculture in Illinois*, Oral History project

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Mark Johnson was born on October 19, 1965 in Columbus, Ohio. He completed a B.S. degree in Animal Science at Oklahoma State University in 1989. He currently judges sheep shows nationwide, and also raises Southdown sheep on a small farm in La Salle County, Illinois. Mark works as an Agricultural Specialist for Kline Creek Farm, an 1890s era living-history farm in DuPage County, Illinois. In this interview, Mark describes the process of planting, harvesting, and threshing oats on “Country Fair” day at Kline Creek Farm. Oats are a cool-season grass that are planted in March or early April at Kline Creek using an Appleton grain drill pulled by Percheron draft horses. They are harvested in July using an International grain binder, which cuts off the stalks and ties them into bundles. Field workers then stand up the bundles in shocks to dry. Then the bundles are placed on a hayrack wagon and fed into a McCormick-Deering thresher that separates the seed from the chaff. The thresher at Kline Creek Farm is powered by a 1922 Minneapolis steam tractor. Oat seeds are fed to cattle, horses, and sheep on the farm, and any surplus seeds are sold for farm income. Oat chaff, or straw, is baled and stored in the barn to be used as animal bedding in the winter.

Subject Headings/Keywords: Kline Creek Farm; Country Fair; oats; cool-season grass; spring planting; Appleton grain drill; Percheron draft horses; oat growth (best <80°F); oat harvest; International grain binder; oat bundle; oat shock; hayrack wagon; oat threshing; McCormick-Deering thresher; straw walkers; oat seed; box wagon; livestock feed (cattle, horses, sheep); human food (oatmeal, Cheerios, oatmeal cookies); oat straw (chaff); hay vs. straw; stationary baler; grain bin; surplus; cash crop; Minneapolis steam tractor; steam power; coal fuel; wood fuel.

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