

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Yvette Ackerman

Part of the Illinois State Museum's and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Oral History of Agriculture in Illinois*
Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-096

Yvette Ackerman, a farmer and farm products entrepreneur, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Illinois State Museum's *Agriculture in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: January 19, 2007 Location: Morton, Tazewell County, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Robert Warren, Illinois State Museum

Recording engineer: Doug Carr, Illinois State Museum

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Michael Maniscalco and Tony Colantino, Illinois State Museum

Video Indexed by: James Oliver, Illinois State Museum

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Abstract

Yvette M. Ackerman, *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture*,
AIS-V-L-2008-096

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Yvette Boone was born on May 30, 1962 in Birmingham, Alabama. Her father's computer career forced the family to move several times, first to Texas, then to Illinois, and finally to Georgia. She worked in catering and restaurant management in Atlanta for a number of years, then returned to Illinois in 1994 and married John Ackerman, her high-school sweetheart. Yvette, John, and their four children live at Ackerman Farms near Morton. The farm, when they began managing it, was a small corn, soybean, and beef-cattle operation. Faced with the prospect of losing the farm because it was too small to be profitable in the growth economy of the 1990s, they diversified and sought niches that would allow them to keep farming. Today they raise canning pumpkins, ornamental pumpkins and gourds, chrysanthemums and apples, in addition to corn and soybeans. Yvette manages two gift shops. One is in a refurbished hog building at the farm. It is open seasonally and offers specialty foods and artwork produced in Illinois and elsewhere in the Midwest. The second shop, located in downtown Morton, is open year-round. It offers antique furniture, jewelry, artwork, decorative items, a baby boutique, and some of the same specialty foods that are available seasonally at the farm shop. Yvette and John hope that diversification will allow them to keep their small family farm operating for many years to come.

Subject Headings/Keywords: Ackerman farms; family farm; Alabama, Texas, Georgia, Chicago IL, Morton IL; restaurant management; pregnancy; pumpkins, gourds, chrysanthemums, apples; gift shop; cash flow; clientele; trade shows; auctions; estate sales; furniture, baby boutique, jewelry; wholesale; consignment; employees; gender roles; diversification; buy fresh, buy local; community responsibility; family traditions; Web site (www.ackermanfarms.com).

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