

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Paul Shuman

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

Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-067

Paul Shuman, a life-long farmer and former Board of Director member of the Illinois Farm Bureau and son of former American Farm Bureau president Charles Shuman, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and IL State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: September 22, 2008 Location: Paul Shuman residence, rural Sullivan, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL:

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Tony Bateman and Greg Lipe, IL Information Service

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 32 Total Time: 59 min + 54 min = 1 hr 53 min / 1.9 hrs

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

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Abstract

Paul Shuman, *Oral History of IL Agriculture*, AIS-V-L-2008-067

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Paul Shuman was born on December 10th, 1937 in Decatur, Illinois and grew up on the Charles Shuman family farm in rural Sullivan, Illinois, which he described at some length. His father was Charles Shuman who served first as President of the Illinois Farm Bureau before becoming President of the American Farm Bureau from 1954 through 1971, where he served as a powerful and articulate advocate for the free market system in agriculture. Charles consistently advocated that the federal government dramatically reduce its involvement in the agricultural economy. In 1963, Charles successfully led farmers in defeating the Wheat Referendum, a government measure that sought to establish a two-price plan including acreage allotments and land retirements for individual farmers.

Paul followed in his father's footsteps both as a farmer and as a member of the Illinois Farm Bureau, where he served on the Board of Directors for many years. He discussed the many changes he observed in farming during his lifetime, including increased mechanization, the importance of genetics in both livestock and plants, the shift from natural fertilizers to chemicals, and the importance of management skills and marketing expertise for today's farmers. Paul also discussed the ongoing debate about Country of Origin labeling (tracking livestock through their lives), Counter-Cyclical Payments, Variable-Rate Technology; the Conservation Reserve Program and federal crop insurance. [Also see the Janet Roney interview, Paul's sister.]

Subject Headings/Key Words: Charles Shuman, President, American Farm Bureau, 1954-1971; Illinois Farm Bureau; American Farm Bureau; National Farmers' Union; Wheat Referendum of 1963; Rural Electrification Association; Ida Shuman; Mabel Shuman; importance of education in farming; Methodist Church; Conservation Reserve Program; Country of Origin labeling; Counter-Cyclical Payments; Variable-Rate Technology; federal crop insurance

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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