

Title Page & Abstract

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Illinois State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project
Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-107

Oba Herschberger, an Amish farmer, discussing traditional farming methods with draft horses, 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: February 5, 2008 Location: Sullivan, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Michael Maniscalco, Illinois State Museum

Technical Support: Robert Warren, recording engineer, Illinois State Museum

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Abstract

Oba Herschberger, *Oral History of IL Agriculture, AIS-V-L-2008-107*

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Mr. Oba Herschberger is a 59-year-old Amish man born September 14, 1948 in Douglas County. Oba reflects on his parents (Chris and Amelia Herschberger) and in particular about their strict following of Amish traditions. He also speaks to the health of his parents and how they lived to 91 (Father) and 89 (Mother), never seeing a doctor in their lives.

Oba found his childhood chores fun and tells stories about hand shucking corn and driving teams of horses to plow. His farm layout includes a main house where his son lives, his house, a milking barn, and two horse barns. The farm, located 3 miles east of Sullivan, IL, is comprised of 200 acres, which is divided into 12-acre plots. The 12-acre plots allow for work to be completed in a single plot in a single day. Some plots are used for grazing horses and cattle. Mr. Herschberger used to be a dairy farmer, raising Holstein cattle, but now has given that business to his son who lives next to him. Oba is intensively involved with raising and breeding draft horses and is the owner of Extremes Revenge, a nationally known stallion draft horse. Oba and his sons also farm corn, beans, alfalfa, wheat, and oats, which he feeds to his livestock. While talking about his crops, Oba noted that they did not have insect infestation problems until other farmers used insecticides, which he still refuses to use. Oba also explained how he used to be bashful when he would encounter non-Amish people, but since his son had an accident, he has lost his fear of non-Amish and now enjoys going to town (Mattoon or Sullivan). Finally, Oba finished with a bleak outlook for the Amish farmer, with more and more moving to other occupations like woodworking and factory jobs.

Subject Headings/ Keywords: Douglas County; Sullivan, IL; Mattoon, IL; Amish; Hand Shucking Corn; Draft Horses; Holstein Cattle; Cattle; Extremes Revenge; Livestock; Corn; Beans; Alfalfa; Wheat; Oats; Insects; Insect Infestation; Insecticides; Woodworking; future of Amish farms

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