

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Harold John Kraut

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Agriculture in Illinois Oral History project

Interview # AI-A-L-2015-036

Harold J. Kraut, a Calhoun County farmer, WW II Navy veteran and Soil Conservation Service employee during his 100+ years, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Agriculture in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Aug 27, 2015 Location: R.R. 1, Box 157, Batchtown, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Pete Harbison, ALPLM History Fair Coordinator

Transcription by: Carolyn Berning, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Pam Long; Janice Culp, ALPL volunteer

Total Pages: 28 pgs Total Time: 1:42 / 1.7 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 27, 2015.

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

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Abstract

Harold John Kraut, *Agriculture in Illinois*, AI-A-L-2015-036

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Harold John Kraut was born on May 24, 1913 in Gilead, Illinois and has lived in Calhoun County for his entire life. He started life on the farm and has worked many different jobs associated with agriculture and conservation over his lifetime. He served in the United States Navy during WW II, on the USS *Invade*, a mine sweeper/sub chaser on the East Coast of the United States. The interview covers his early years in Calhoun County, life in the U.S. Navy, and his work for the Soil Conservation Service.

Early in his life Kraut worked at an ice storage facility. He also worked shocking wheat, pruning apple trees, hauling apples to landings on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers for shipment to St. Louis, breaking ground with a team of horses, working in a rock quarry, owning a gas station in East St. Louis, and driving trucks. He was present at the opening of the Joe Page Bridge into Hardin, Illinois in 1931. All of this was a part of his life while going to school and before leaving Calhoun County to serve in the Navy from 1943 to 1945.

After returning to Calhoun County following the war, he purchased a house that he still lives in, along with approximately ninety acres of farmland. He farmed his land and also worked for the Soil Conservation Service, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture. Mr. Kraut constructed farm ponds, advised farmers on soil conservation and watershed management issues and also helped to reintroduce wild turkeys into Calhoun County.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Calhoun County, Illinois; farming in Illinois in the 1930s-1960s; opening of Joe Page Bridge in 1931; USS *Invade* (AM-254); U.S. Soil Conservation Service; reintroduction of wild turkeys into Calhoun County

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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