

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Benjamin File

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

Interview # AI-A-L-2008-012

Benjamin (Ben) File, a life-long farmer from rural Pocahontas, Illinois, 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: March 8, 2008 Location: Ben File residence in rural Pocahontas, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: Pat Schrenk, ALPL Volunteer

Edited by: Cheryl Wycoff, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 36 Total Time: 1 hr, 32 min / 1.53 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 4/15/2008.

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

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Abstract

Benjamin File, *Agriculture in Illinois*, AI-A-L-2008-012

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Benjamin (Ben) File was born on April 29, 1923 in Pocahontas, Illinois, and was raised on the family farm in Bond County, which dates back to the Martin Van Buren administration in the late 1830s. Ben's father farmed up to 1,000 acres, primarily a hog and grain operation. His father was active in the start of rural electrification in the Pocahontas area during the 1930s. Ben started doing farm chores at an early age, and after his graduation from the University of Illinois with an agriculture degree, he returned to the family farm and stayed there the rest of his working life. Ben also served on the Bond County School Board for twelve years following a school consolidation between two rural school districts. Mr. File deposited a self-published pamphlet (Christmas 2007) of the family's history with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, entitled "Ben There-Done That."

Topics Covered: Hog and grain farming in central Illinois; farm life from 1930s through 1970s; Bond County School Board; Rural Electrification; Illinois wetlands; rural transportation; Mt Vernon & Greenville schools; Cumberland Presbyterian Church; school band; raising wild turkeys; Shoal Creek; East St. Louis Stockyards.

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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