

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Lester & Rita Robbins

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Agriculture in Illinois Oral History project, in Conjunction
with the 'Will to Farm' project

Interview # AI-V-L-2012-015

Lester and Rita Robbins, a farm couple from Will County, Illinois, were interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Agriculture in Illinois – Will to Farm* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: April 13, 2012

Location: Home of Lester and Rita Robbins, 15710 W. Doyle Road, Manhattan, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio/Digital video

Interviewer: Sherri Kiefner, ALPL Volunteer

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Tony Bateman

Transcription by: Sherri Kiefner, ALPL Volunteer

Edited by: _____

Interview being
processed

Total Pages: 28 Total Time: 45:52 min/ 0.77 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 7, 2013.

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

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Abstract

Lester & Rita Robbins, *Agriculture in Illinois/Will to Farm*
AI-V-L-2012-004

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Lester Robbins was born on June 22, 1920 in Joliet, Illinois. Rita Robbins, Lester's wife, was born on September 23, 1920 in Manteno, Illinois. Lester and Rita, both from farm families, met at baseball games in Wilton Center and were married in 1941. A few years after getting married, they moved to the farm where Lester was raised and raised their own family on the same farm, in the same house.

The Robbins farmed with draft horses in the early years, growing corn, oats, and hay as well as keeping pigs, dairy cattle, sheep, chickens and geese. In the late 1940s they eliminated most of the livestock from the operation to expand the acreage they farmed and devote more time to the corn shelling business that Lester started in 1949. Lester also worked off the farm for two years during World War II, helping to build the nearby ammunition plant.

Lester and Rita, along with their sons, have farmed as many as 3,500 acres in the Manhattan area. Lester still enjoys helping his sons out on the farm.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Family life in the early 20th century; farming with draft horses; corn husking; horse drawn corn picker; corn shelling; hanging May baskets; milking dairy cows in the early 20th century; raising children on the farm; rationing during WWII.

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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