

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Stephen Black

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

Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-083

Stephen Black was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Illinois State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: 11/24/2008

Location: Black Family Homestead, Carrolton, IL

Interview Format: Digital Video

Interviewer: Michael Maniscalco

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Robert Warren, Illinois State Museum

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, The Skill Bureau, Boston, Massachusetts

Edited by: Michael Maniscalco, Illinois State Museum

Indexed by: James Oliver, Illinois State Museum

Total Pages: 28 Total Time: 1:24 + 0:47 / 1.4 + 0.78 = 2.18 hrs

Session 1: Discussion of the family farm through the generations.

Session 2: Walking tour of the family house and barns.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 11/20/2009.

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

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Abstract

Stephen Black, *Agriculture in Illinois*, AIS-V-L-2008-083

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Stephen Black was born on November 5, 1945 in Carrolton, Illinois. Mr. Black's father and paternal grandfather were farmers, and his maternal grandfather was a doctor. Stephen attended the University of Illinois in Champaign with the intention of becoming a doctor, but changed his major to Agriculture. During the Vietnam War, Stephen joined the Army, and was sent to Korea, where he witnessed farming on a primitive level, with no mechanization. Rice paddies were planted by hand, and tilled using buffalo.

For more than 30 years Mr. Black was employed by the US Department of Agriculture. Upon his retirement, Stephen felt drawn to the family farm because of the history of five generations working the land. Stephen lives near St. Louis to be close to his wife's job, but drives to Carrolton to operate the family farm which was purchased by his great-great-grandmother and her three brothers more than 180 years ago. Originally, 2,000 acres of prairieland and timber were purchased, and of that original acreage, 143 acres are still owned and maintained by the family. The farmhouse was built in 1923 in the Federal Style of Architecture, and additions were made in the 1950's in the Greek Revival Style. Today, both the house and the property are recognized by the National Register as a National Historic Site.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Carrolton, IL; Farmers; Doctor; University of Illinois; Agriculture; Vietnam War; Army; Korea; Infantry Unit; Primitive Farming; Hand Planting; Tilling; Buffalo; USDA; United States Department of Agriculture; Family Farm; Prairieland; Timber; Farmhouse; Federal Style; Greek Revival Style; National Register; National Historic Site

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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