

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Evelyn Brandt Thomas

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Family Memories* Oral History project

Interview # FM-A-L-2016-043

Evelyn Brandt, the long-time part owner and office manager for Brandt Consolidated, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Family Memories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Oct 21, 2016

Location: Office of Brandt Consolidated in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio/Digital video

Interviewer: Julie Dirksen, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript  
being processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:01 + 0:59 / 1.02 + 0.98 = 2.00 hrs.

Session 1: Evelyn's roots and early years

Session 2: Growth of the family business, Brandt Consolidated

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 22, 2017.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in  
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## Abstract

Evelyn Brandt Thomas, *Family Memories*, FM-A-L-2016-043

**Biographical Information / Overview of Interview:** Evelyn Brandt, the eldest child of Albert and Margaret Bomke, was born August 25, 1923 in Salisbury, Illinois. She had a younger brother, Glen, and younger sister Shirley. Evelyn graduated from Springfield High School in 1940, and then attended the Illinois Business College, earning an associate's degree in 1942. In 1953 she married Gordon Thomas, and was soon performing secretarial duties at the family's ag business, Brandt Consolidated. Her father Albert had started the business with the design to bring modern technology to area farmers. By the 1950s, they sold liquid fertilizer to farmers in the central Illinois area; her brother Glen was actively involved in growing the business.

For the next several decades Evelyn was a key part of the growth and success of Brandt Consolidated, with her brother Glen building his reputation as a pioneer in the liquid fertilizer business. In 1953, Glen worked with local farmer and friend, Bob Gardner, to bring liquid fertilizer (anhydrous ammonia) to central Illinois. Farmer and friend Skip Knepler helped design equipment to spread the fertilizer. The family business grew rapidly; in 1954, they sold 137 tons of liquid fertilizer; in 1960 their sales peaked 1,700 tons. In 1957 Bill Wallner joined the company, and became the company's equipment and design guru. During the 1960s new company sites were opened, including in New Berlin, Ashland and Waverly. Glen and Evelyn built their business by word of mouth, and on the principles of honesty and hard work. In 1995, Glen's son Rick was named President and CEO of Brandt Consolidated. International marketing began in 1995 and by 2014, Brandt was in forty-eight countries. Evelyn remained involved in the company as Co-owner and Executive Secretary/Treasurer. She also has become known in central Illinois for her civic leadership and philanthropic efforts.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Brandt Consolidated; anhydrous ammonia as a fertilizer; Glen Brandt; Rick Brandt; building an agribusiness; Albert Brandt; Bill Wallner; Skip Knepler; Boesdorfer Trucking;

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