

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Michael Scully
Part of the Illinois State Museum &
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's
Oral History of Illinois Agriculture project

Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-020

Michael Scully, an organic farmer and trustee of a large farming estate, 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* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 7, 2008 Location: IL Information Service Studio, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Mark DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): IIS Studio

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 28 Total Time: 1 hr, 55 min / 1.92 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 9/3/2008.

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

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Abstract

Michael Scully, *Oral History of IL Agriculture*, AIS-V-L-2008-020

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Michael Scully was born on May 24, 1926 in London, England. He spent his early years in England and France, attending Hawtrys Preparatory school, a boarding school, in England, until his father was compelled to move the family to his estates in Logan County, Illinois in 1939. Michael attended high school at St. Marks Boarding School in Massachusetts, then joined the American Field Service upon his graduation in 1944, where following training he drove an ambulance for the British 8th Army in Italy, and after victory in Europe, was posted for a short time to India. Following the war, Scully attended and graduated from Harvard University, where he participated on the varsity rowing team. He then returned to Illinois before moving east, eventually working as an unpaid farm laborer for Dr. Ehrenfried Pheiffer, a disciple of the German philosopher Rudolph Steiner. Pheiffer was employing Steiner's theories on biodynamic agriculture on his New York farm, and Scully was an eager student, absorbing many of Pheiffer's ideas on organic farming. In January, 1951 Scully was drafted, receiving training in intelligence at Fort Holabird, Maryland, and then was sent to Germany where he did background investigations of German civilians and others. Following his military service, Scully returned to the United States, and purchased a tenant farm from his father near Buffalo, Illinois, where he applied the principles of biodynamics and organic farming on his 400 acre farm.

Mr. Scully passed away suddenly on Sunday, May 25th, 2008, three days prior to his second interview session. The second interview was to cover Michael's experiences on his farm, affectionately named Cockleburr, and his involvement in preserving Union Station in Springfield, adjacent to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, which now serves as a visitor's center for Springfield attractions.

Topics Covered: William Scully; Thomas Scully; tenant farming practices in Illinois; drainage of farmlands in central Illinois; Hawtreys Preparatory School, Westgate-on-Sea, England; St. Marks boarding school, Massachusetts; American Field Service; ambulance driver for British 8th Army (Italy) during WW II; Bergen-Belsen concentration camp; Rudolph Steiner; Dr. Ehrenfried Pheiffer; biodynamic agriculture; organic farming; Camp Holibird, Maryland; army intelligence during the Korean War; Cockleburr farm in rural Buffalo, Illinois

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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