

NORTHERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL HISTORY CENTER

HISTORY 497 PROJECT: FARMING AND FARM FAMILIES IN DEKALB COUNTY

Oral History Interview
with

LUKE BRIDGER

October 22, 1986

N. State Road
Genoa, Illinois

By Terrence Zeller

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL HISTORY CENTER

FARMING AND FARM FAMILIES IN DEKALB COUNTY

General topic of interview: Large scale diversified farming in the DeKalb area from the nineteen forties through the seventies, with observations on both the commercial and social aspects of farming.

NARRATOR: LUKE BRIDGER
DATE: October 23, 1986

INTERVIEWER: TERRENCE ZELLER
PLACE: N. State Street
Genoa, Illinois

PERSONAL DATA

Born in South Grove, Illinois in 1910 Luke Bridger has lived in the DeKalb area all his life. He began farming in 1931, moved to his present location in 1943; and retired from farming twelve years ago. Starting with a farm of less than 160 acres, he eventually farmed over 1000 acres with livestock forming the basis of his marketing operations. He is married and has four children.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Bridger has a very well developed sense of history. He has a basement full of mementos and antique farm implements. One room is adorned by photographs of the family going back five generations. In our meeting he exhibited intelligence, humor and insight. The view of farming offered here is that of a successful farmer and community leader.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

HISTORY 497 ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: FARMING AND FARM FAMILIES IN DEKALB COUNTY

NARRATOR: LUKE BRIDGER
DATE: October 22, 1986
LENGTH OF TAPE: 50 minutes
TAPE COUNTER NUMBER

INTERVIEWER: Terrence Zeller
PLACE: N. State Road, Genoa, Il.

SUBJECTS COVERED

Side A

000-100 Early life, beginning in farming, farming operations in the 1930's, first new tractor, kinds of work done, role of horses, 1945-1960: size of the farm, farm operations

100-200 Farm help, the price of land-- then and now, government policy-- then and now, new machinery, fertilizing technique, pesticides

200-300 Planting techniques, schooling of children, church attended, 4H, work role of wife, work roles of children, hired help

300-400 Draft status, effect of World War II on operations, first television, vacations, social life, marketing strategies

400-500 Cars, appliances, 1960-1975: changing nature of farming

Side B

000-100 Changing farm equipment, how new farm equipment changed farming, change in farm size 1960-1975, effect of government policy on farming, social life, vacations

100-200 Provisions for retirement, price of land, farming techniques, farming and schooling, 1975-1985: changes in social organization

200-300 Cause of current farm isolation, role of government in agriculture, loss of farmland

300-360 Views on farming