



Oral History of Illinois Agriculture

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Abstract: Irene McGuire was born on August 18, 1932 in Cobden, Illinois. Irene's parents were fruit farmers when she was first born, but at the age of five her father lost the farm due to Depression era economics. Throughout her youth the family always talked fondly of farming. Eventually Irene married Daniel McGuire, the son of an orchard owner. Irene and her husband moved into an old home on the farm, which was founded in 1820. This house had been Daniel's Grandmother's house and needed some repairs. As Irene settled into the family she soon began to learn the family business. Fern McGuire, her mother-in-law, and Irene kept the books for the farm. Irene explained that she started with the small jobs like keeping track of the number of picked bushels. Eventually Irene and her husband found themselves taking over the entire 800-acre fruit and livestock operation. The McGuire farm was not always primarily fruit as Irene explained, but when she became a part of the family the fruit business was already in place. In the 1980's, Irene and her husband saw themselves in a difficult situation. The past seven years had yielded no peach crop and everything on the farm had been put up for collateral. In the end, the government told the McGuire family that they had to either try to sell the farm or they would be declared bankrupt. After numerous attempts at trying to sell the farm as a whole they eventually had to auction off sections. Parts of the farm are now housing development, and other parts are still orchard, run by a large fruit company.

Keywords: Cobden, IL; Great Depression; Orchard; Fruit; Livestock; Peach Crop; Failed Crop; Bankruptcy; Auction; Housing Development; Fruit Company

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Interview with Irene McGuire

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May 27, 2008

Interviewer: Mike Maniscalco

McGuire: Nobody ever gives you credit for it.

Maniscalco: (laughter)

Cameraman: Okay.

Maniscalco: I'll be just the voice.

McGuire: Okay.

Maniscalco: We could call it the voice of God or something. (laughter)

McGuire: Oh. Okay. Go from the top down.

Maniscalco: Who would try that, right?

Cameraman: Okay, we're set to go.

Maniscalco: Everything's going?

Cameraman: Yep.

Maniscalco: All right. Today is May 27, 2008. We are in Cobden, Illinois with Irene McGuire. How are you doing, Irene?

McGuire: Fine.

Maniscalco: Great. Thank you very much for letting us come down here and do this interview with you.

McGuire: You're more than welcome.

Maniscalco: It's going to be a lot of fun. Why don't we start out with your date of birth and where you were born.

McGuire: August 18, 1932 right here in Cobden.

Maniscalco: Nineteen thirty-two right here in Cobden. Now, tell me about your immediate family. Were your parents from here?

McGuire: Yes. Yes. My dad was Van Hartline. He and my mother owned a farm up here on the hill during the Depression, and like an awful lot of people, they went under.

Maniscalco: They went under during the Depression?

McGuire: They went under in thirty-eight.

Maniscalco: Thirty-eight. Okay. Now did they have any siblings that lived around them, or their aunts and uncles around?

McGuire: Yeah, but again the Depression—there weren't that many jobs. Everybody had a family. They scattered. They went where the jobs were.

Maniscalco: Now what about your grandparents? Were they around here?

Irene McGuire

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- McGuire: They lived five miles—or about four miles south of Cobden. And, again, they had a farm, but they weren't strictly apples and peaches. They had a ground farm.
- Maniscalco: Oh, okay. Now what about your parents' farm? That was an orchard, as well?
- McGuire: My dad had apples and peaches both here. Just outside of town.
- Maniscalco: So, basically, pretty much your entire family lived around this little area.
- McGuire: Yes.
- Maniscalco: Do you know how your family got here?
- McGuire: Well, it depends upon how much time you want to take. Yeah, my family came over here from Germany—the Hartline side—I think it was—it was in the 1800s, but I don't remember the year right off the bat. They were in Pennsylvania, and they worked their way down the coast. And so the stories go, everybody that came over from another country was looking for an area that was like what they came from. They went down to North Carolina, and in those areas—in the mountains in those areas because it was like Germany and Austria was when they were there. And little by little they worked their way across to Illinois, and seemed to think that this looked like home.
- Maniscalco: Very interesting. Very good. Do you know where they originally stopped? Do you have any ideas?
- McGuire: On their trip?
- Maniscalco: In Illinois?
- McGuire: Yeah. In this area, there's a Casper Church cemetery area where there are a lot of German families. In fact my Hartline grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents are all buried there.
- Maniscalco: Wow. Wow. Interesting. Well, that's a very interesting family history.
- McGuire: It is. A few years back Dan and I were on vacation and we were in North Carolina, and we knew that my fifth great-grandfather was buried there, and we found the cemetery and his headstone in native stone out there, which had a lot of iron in it, but on one side it was his family history in English, and on other side it was printed in German. It really makes you know where your roots come from.
- Maniscalco: Yeah. I bet it does. So you grew up, the early part of your life, on a farm.
- McGuire: Right.
- Maniscalco: With your parents. Can you tell us a little bit about that?
- McGuire: Well, I was only six when they lost the farm and we moved to Anna, which is five miles from here. My dad had worked part-time here in town with a shoe repairman, so he went to Anna and got in with a shoe repairman down there because he had a wife and four kids that he had to support. And he repaired shoes till the early fifties, and then he went and he got a job at the state hospital in the—what do you call it? Where they teach the inmates to make brooms and what have you. And he worked there until he died in 1955.
- Maniscalco: Oh wow. Okay. Now what about your mom?

- McGuire: Again, she was a housewife until the—I think it was 1953 when she went to work at the state hospital in the sewing room.
- Maniscalco: Very interesting. Now both your parents ended up working in the state hospital. Was that kind of a common job around here or—
- McGuire: Yes. It was at that time. Gosh, I don't know how many patients they had at the state hospital. In the interim they have—what do I want to say—a lot of nursing homes have taken the patients from the hospital that are capable of living out away. It's not the place that it was when I was a kid as far as jobs are concerned, but it still is a good place to work. It's good steady money.
- Maniscalco: Now, I guess you spent your very early, early childhood on a farm, then. Until you were six.
- McGuire: Yeah, until I was six.
- Maniscalco: Do you have any memories of that? Of those times?
- McGuire: The biggest memory I have—I have a sister two years older—and once a day, mom would make us take a bucket of water—one of us on either side—down to the orchard where they were picking so the guys could have fresh drinks. You know, when you're only six years old when you leave here, there wasn't a whole lot that you're capable of doing and doing right so...
- Maniscalco: So I guess that was kind of your chore that you had to do.
- McGuire: Yeah. And, of course, you helped with the chickens. Anything that your mother could find to keep you out of mischief.
- Maniscalco: So there were animals as well as on the farm. It wasn't just an orchard.
- McGuire: Oh, yeah. We had cows, we had chickens, and pigs. But that was the staple. As you talk to people you'll find that in the thirties when people are just starting to recover from the Depression, everybody had pigs because that was your staple meat for the winter. You would slaughter pigs, and your wife canned all of this stuff so that you had meat to get through the winter with. And you had chickens. The cows were to milk. You didn't butcher—unless you had a lot of cows, and we didn't have a lot, so...
- Maniscalco: And how about the chickens?
- McGuire: Oh, you ate chicken—you had fried chicken a lot.
- Maniscalco: A lot?
- McGuire: (laughing) And there was nobody that could cook it better than my mom.
- Maniscalco: Oh really?
- McGuire: Yeah, right.
- Maniscalco: Do you have any secret recipes you'd like to share with us?
- McGuire: Just tender love and care.
- Maniscalco: (laughter) Great. Now what about your friends around those times?
- McGuire: Well, I had just started school when we moved, and I still have a number of kids—kids!—people that were in school when I was. I have a lot of friends in Cobden from back in the late thirties, and I have a lot of friends around Anna that I went through junior high and high school with.

Maniscalco: Did you play any specific games with them at those times?

McGuire: No, you played dolls. And my oldest brother—he was nine years older than me—he would make from scraps around the farm—we had a sweet potato basket which was a long cylinder, and he took the wheels off of our baby buggy as my youngest brother got old enough not to use it anymore—and where he got that I don't know—but he had a steering wheel on it. He made a go-kart long before people called them go-karts. And then he told my sister and my younger brother and I, "Don't touch. That's mine." It was put together with spit and bailing wire, and he knew that we kids would tear it up, so...

Maniscalco: Now how many siblings do you have?

McGuire: I have a sister who's still living, and I had two brothers, both of them have passed away.

Maniscalco: Okay. And what are some of your fond memories of having siblings?

McGuire: Of living on the farm?

Maniscalco: On the farm or anytime.

McGuire: It was a simpler time. I think I missed that the most, watching my grandchildren—my kids grew up on a farm with definite rules and mean old parents who spanked, but I watched my grandchildren grow up in town. They don't get out and play in the dirt like we did. That was entertainment. You took what little cars you had and played outside. Played cowboys and Indians before it was not politically correct to do that. My sister and I played dolls. My youngest brother and I played cowboy and Indians. And we played baseball. As the seasons changed, you changed with it.

Maniscalco: Now you said your parents lost the farm during the Depression.

McGuire: Right.

Maniscalco: Do you remember them recalling that time?

McGuire: They never told us. When we moved to Anna, it was because my dad had gotten a job. I didn't know that we'd lost the farm, oh gosh, I guess until I was sixteen—fifteen, sixteen years old. And then, little by little, they told us what had happened. That they just simply couldn't make the payments anymore.

Maniscalco: Interesting.

McGuire: You keep stuff like that from your children because you don't want them running around being scared that we don't have a place to live anymore.

Maniscalco: Yeah. Do you remember your parents talking about the farm? Fondly about the farm, or...

McGuire: No. Honestly I don't remember them ever talking about the—unless one of us kids brought it up, then they did. I think the biggest thing that stands out in my mind, when we moved to town I would not drink milk. My sister would, my youngest brother wouldn't, because it didn't taste like what we'd been having. And it took a long time before we figured out we'd been used to drinking fresh milk from the cows, and store-bought milk just doesn't taste the same.

Maniscalco: Yeah. Interesting. Talking to your parents in later-life, did they talk about the farm—

McGuire: Yeah. If you had questions, they didn't have any problem answering them. They did not volunteer a lot. And as an adult when we started failing on our farm, Dan and I knew it, the

boys knew it, but we didn't talk to anybody outside the immediate family about it unless they asked. And we had seven years in a row where we didn't have a peach crop, which means you don't pay income tax, you don't pay social security, or anything, because you made no money. And we knew that we were to the point where we were going to have to sell out. We put it up for sale, ran it in all the magazines that we could find relating to farms, and we had a number of people come and look. Basically, they wanted to take it off our hands, but they didn't want to pay for it. And we felt like after as many years as we had in improving it and making it a better place to do that we deserved something for our time.

And the money was tight. This was in eighty-five when there were farm sales all over this country almost as bad as it is with home sales right now. But you accepted it. You have no choice. You either are going to sell it or they're going take it—the FHA and the banks are going to take it away from you, and they'll sell it, and they won't give you anything for it, so...

Maniscalco: That's got to be kind of a difficult spot for—

McGuire: I'll say it is.

Maniscalco: So you kind of brought us to that, and that's—the fact that you brought your children up on a farm and you married your husband who was living on a farm?

McGuire: He had just gotten out of the Navy and came home and went back to work with his dad.

Maniscalco: Interesting. Now can you tell us how you guys met?

McGuire: Yeah. My oldest brother married a girl in the neighborhood, and she was a good friend—they were good friends with Dan's parents. They all went to the same church. And Bette kept—my new sister-in-law kept telling me, "There's a bunch of good looking boys up here." And my oldest brother was a schoolteacher, and anybody that's not employed elsewhere in the summertime, you go to the local farm and get a job either picking fruit or helping to sell it. My oldest brother was working at the packing house when Dan came home, and he said, "Is there anybody still single down around Anna that I would know?" And [my brother] Speed said, "Yeah. Irene is still single." So he looked me up. Because we had known each other in high school—well, right after high school.

Maniscalco: And he looked you up and...

McGuire: And we got back together and got married—

Maniscalco: The rest is history? (laughter)

McGuire: Yeah. And an interesting point that doesn't need to be in there, but, when we decided to get married—we started going together in August. He proposed in November, and we started thinking about what we were going to do as far as a wedding and all that. And Dan said, "We either have to get married before peaches and apples bloom, or after apples are all processed," which gave us from May until the end of November. And I said, "Why?" And he said, "Because I'm going to be so busy." When the crop's coming in and you're processing fruit, you don't have time to stop long enough to get married, which was—I remember I thought it was really funny. I didn't, because like all women I wanted to be a June bride. Didn't work out that way. Got married in May.

Maniscalco: Interesting. Now can you tell me a little bit about his farming career and...

- McGuire: The McGuires had been on the same territory for over a hundred years. Dan's great-great-grandfather started the farm in the 1800s, but his grandfather and grandmother were—he never knew his grandfather. He was killed with a runaway carriage when—my father-in-law was only ten when his dad died. But his mother, then, took over the farm and was still living till right before Dan and I got married. And, of course, then his dad took it over, and we took it over in sixty-nine.
- Maniscalco: Now what was that like taking the farm over from his dad? Was it...
- McGuire: Basically there weren't a lot of changes other than it meant all the books came over to my house. I had been doing a lot of the bookwork up until then because grandma knew it was coming, and she was trying to break me in. Everything came over there. The only difference than before was that when anybody asked what to do, granddad told 'em; then when we took over, Dan told 'em. And, of course, you've got to go through a lawyer. Like anything else nowadays, you have to go through lawyers and get it all put over in your name. You get all the tax bills as well as all the bills. It was quite amicable, but it was time. Granddad was in his late sixties, early seventies, and he didn't want to retire, but he wanted to not have to be the boss any more. And I'm talking about E.D. McGuire, now.
- Maniscalco: Now, do you remember your husband talking about, here comes—grandpa's going to give me the farm, or dad's going to give me the farm?
- McGuire: You have to buy it legally. So we made a payment, and then each year, the way the lawyers set it up, we had to make a payment to his dad and mom, which was fine on the years that you make money. On the years that you lose the peach crop, they don't get paid either.
- Maniscalco: Oh, jeez. And how were they with that?
- McGuire: No. They were used to it. I suppose it doesn't make any difference what kind of farming you're in, it's always a risk. Like last year, it wasn't just the apples and the peaches that got frozen out down here. The corn didn't set, everybody lost their strawberries, their blueberries. A freeze like we had in seven [2007] just takes out everything. And it's really rough on the economy of the area that you live in, even though they don't think you spend a lot of money with them. You don't have workers for—working for you, therefore they don't have money to spend.
- Maniscalco: What other effects does it have on the economy other than just the workers?
- McGuire: Well, if they're itinerant workers, they usually go back to wherever they came from, or else—because we had a lot of people that came out of Texas and Arizona and Mexico that make a circuit. I don't remember where they start in the spring, but they work up here in July and August and September in peaches and apples. Then they go on to Michigan and pick cherries, and a lot of them, then, when the cherries are over, will go back down to Florida for the winter. And what they do down there, I'm not sure, but they have a route that they make. And then when spring starts to come—you can always use extra people in the spring. You're pruning or you're taking care of the orchards. Getting them ready to have a crop.
- Maniscalco: You're speaking of a lot of hired help. How many people did you have on the farm?
- McGuire: That were with us full, all year round, there were probably fifteen. Saturday morning was payday, and on Friday nights I'd sit up and write—hand-write—anywhere from twenty to two hundred checks depending upon what variety of peaches or apples were in to and how many people we had working that week.

Maniscalco: What's the average weekly wage for a farm worker like that?

McGuire: Back then? Honestly, I don't remember. But we paid by the bushel, and if you didn't pick enough to make the minimum wage—and I had to figure all this out every week—if their picking was not good, then I had to put them on as hourly wage. And Dan and I had always gone by the thoughts, and so did his dad, that if everybody else is paying a dollar and a quarter, then we're paying a dollar thirty-five. We tried to pay more than what the competition did because these people would go to whoever was paying the best.

Maniscalco: How did you determine who was going to pay a dollar and a quarter?

McGuire: You didn't know until your workers told you, "Well, I can go to so-and-so and get better money."

Maniscalco: So I guess you kind of had to go on the word of the people.

McGuire: Yeah. Either that or you make a wild guess, and when people apply for a job you tell them what you're paying. But we always try to keep our wages comparable to anybody else.

Maniscalco: Interesting. Now, do you know where the hired workers were coming? The (break in tape) workers?

McGuire: Not really. And again, at the time we knew they were coming out of Mexico and Arizona and in there living on the border because almost all of them had family still in Mexico. They'd come up—they knew people who were up here. Oh, gosh. I have to think backwards. Union County and Jackson County were the ones that were using the most people. They got together, and with federal help—and I'll show you when we go up to the orchard—and built a migrant camp. They're cinderblock buildings for families. As long as you're working in agriculture in this end of the state, you and your wife can stay there. And I'm sure at one point that there was a fee for doing it. I don't remember what it was. But if you got rained out for a week, they didn't ask you to leave, but if you came up and brought your family and lived there and you didn't get a job, then they would ask you to move on because they could always have somebody else that was willing to work. It wasn't just a free motel to stay in.

And, again, my husband happened to be president of the Union, Jackson Farm Labor Union [Camp]. And they did real well. They provided a whole lot nicer than what they'd been provided. When I first married into this, there were a lot of workers that came out of southeast Missouri who grew cotton all year, but there's a slack season on it when our peaches would be in, and they'd come up here and stay for a month picking peaches and then it was time to go home and pick cotton. And they pitched tents on your farm, any place that they could find it that wasn't privately owned. They just came up—it was a family vacation for them, and still making money to go home with.

Maniscalco: I'm sure you've met tons of people that, you know, came through the orchard and worked through there. Do you have any great stories from those types of people? Any good memories of specific ones?

McGuire: Well, no. Not really. The last ten years that we were in business, we had one couple who came out of Texas. He was a US citizen, she wasn't. But they came up every year and stayed and worked for us. But Dan could never talk him in—we had an extra house on the farm that we were going to let him live in, and they didn't want to. They thought it was going to be too cold up here in the wintertime. And being used to Texas and Mexico, I could understand their fear.

But I guess about the last ten years that we were in business, they did stay, and they turned into managers at the farm labor camp. They saw that the apartments were taken care of and all of this.

But they were two of the nicest people you'd ever want to know. They were at our house to eat supper, we went down and ate supper with them. They weren't just workers, they were friends as well as workers. You make good friends with them. And I think, like most people, when we first ask 'em up to eat at our house they were very prim and proper, scared to death they were going to do something wrong. And I told Maria, "If you don't feel comfortable then tell me, please, because I'm not Mrs. McGuire, I'm Irene, and you're as welcome in my—if I ask you in my house, then you're welcome here." But it took her a long time to break down that barrier and feel comfortable with me.

And then after we left the farm, every time we were back in the area, she would call and ask Dan's dad to have us come down to her house. We were friends right up until they both retired and went back to Texas.

Maniscalco: Oh, wow. That's very (inaudible speech).

McGuire: It's like anything else, if you're comfortable with the boss, if you're a good worker, you're going to get rewarded one way or the other. And they were so good to us.

Maniscalco: That's nice to hear. Now, I'm kind of gathering that most of these people are of Hispanic origin.

McGuire: Yeah. Now, out of southeast Missouri they weren't. We had a lot of workers come out of Arkansas, they weren't. The ones that came out of Texas or New Mexico were definitely Spanish.

Maniscalco: Now, they probably spoke Spanish, I mean...

McGuire: Some did, some didn't, and Dan and I (laughing) did not speak Spanish. You know, we didn't grow up with them. Now, both of our boys speak Spanish. But they always had one with them, their leader always spoke enough English that whatever we told him, he could translate for them.

Maniscalco: So I guess that's how you made it around the language barrier.

McGuire: Right. Right.

Maniscalco: Interesting. And your husband kind of used that one interpreter?

McGuire: Yes. And, again, when you have a farm, you're always going to have people having accidents, and, of course, I usually got the phone call, "Go take him down to the doctor." And on the way home one day, here's this Mexican sitting next to me, and I had [taken] him to the doctor and he got some medicine and we went home. When I got him back to the camp, he tried to thank me by nodding his head most of the time, and I didn't understand him, he didn't understand me, until I said, "Manana," and he said, "Yeah." But it was the only Spanish word I could come up with. I wanted him to know, "You're coming back to work tomorrow," because he was fine.

Maniscalco: Cool. Now, you raised your children on this farm as well. Were they involved in any agricultural organizations as children, like 4H?

McGuire: FFA. Brad was. There's fifteen years between my two children. By the time Dana was twelve was when we lost the farm, so he didn't have a lot to do with any of the field work where Brad did. Brad bossed a crew of young people as—in high school where the weeds needed to be chopped down and stuff like that, and, then, after—he put in four years in the Navy, and then came out for four years, and in that four years he was out he came back and bossed a crew for us out in the orchard. But as far as being—staying on the farm, they didn't—Dana wasn't old enough to decide what he wanted, but Brad said, "I watched Dad do it, I watched granddad do it. Ain't no way that that's going to be—take over my life like it did theirs." I mean, it is very time consuming. You got to be a special person. You got to love it more than anything else in order to stay with it. And as a wife, you learn not to be jealous of the farm because if that farm makes money, it's to your benefit too.

Maniscalco: Now how about... You're kind of in a rural area, and you're bringing up your children. How about dealing with that idea that you're farther away from town, and your kids might want to have friends over and things like that?

McGuire: Oh they did, and they went to friends' houses. When they were kids, they were allowed to be kids. They came home from school, and you put in your hour, two hours, how long—whatever dad had for you to do—and then you were a teenager again. He didn't run their lives.

Maniscalco: So their father came up for chores for them, though.

McGuire: Yeah. Well, we had dogs. We had bird-dogs, and we had beagles that had to be fed and watered every evening and taken out and let them run, and there was always something that kids could do.

While we're talking about the farm, however, this piece of furniture and this table were Dan's grandmother's. Yeah. His grandfather had these pieces made for her when they got married, and he—there's a date on the back of that one, and I think it's 1849. And it was sitting over in his grandmother's house, which was sitting empty until we got married and we painted it and moved in, just getting old. The summer that Dana was born, I spent all—you know, you've got a brand new baby, you're not going anywhere anymore. I spent the summer taking the finish off of these because they were, like any furniture—they're oak—but somebody down the road someplace had painted them black. And Dan kept telling me there was an oak table underneath all that color, so I spent the summer refinishing them, too. And then when all their cousins came around they said, "Is that grandmother's table? Doesn't look like it." And everybody was interested—everybody wanted it, and I said, "Nope." Dan and I were the last of the grandchildren to get married. They all had a chance at it. Nobody wanted it until I cleaned it up. I might let you have it, but you've got to go buy me a brand new table, and it's got to be solid oak because this one is. It's not that pretty, but with the family connection, it's mine.

Maniscalco: That family connection adds value to it, definitely. Now, what about your kids in school?

McGuire: Brad went to grade school and high school in the Carbondale area. Dana went to the same grade school that Brad did up to the seventh grade; [then on to school in Arizona.] After we lost the farm, Dan got hired in Arizona where they were trying to establish orchards, and they wanted to pick his brain for setting up—and they did a good job of having orchards, but they couldn't get it through their heads that—it was a conglomeration of lawyers and doctors out of Phoenix who had bought all this ground, and they wanted to raise apples. And somebody had told them, "It'll cost this much to do this and this much to do that," but nobody told them that

you don't just go out there and put the tree in the ground and it grows. You've got to water it, you've got to feed it, you've got to spray it, you've got to take care of it, and you're not going to get any apples off of it for four, five years. I think they were all shocked that that tree wasn't just going to grow on its own, and little by little they pulled their money out.

And when we were back here we used equipment that we were familiar with. When we got out there, nobody had a spray rig. Dan told them, "You need this kind of spray rig," and the company that we had used back here said, "If you want to sell spray rigs, we'll put you on our payroll. You sell it, you get the commission." And then after that started falling apart in Arizona, his boss out in Michigan said, "If you want to go to California, we'll move you. If you want to sell spray rigs out in California, and you get all the commissions." So we were in Arizona six years, and then we moved to California, and Dan was the area rep for AgTech Sprayers, and we were there for fifteen years.

Maniscalco: Oh wow. So you guys have seen all kinds of agriculture, really.

McGuire: We have. And where we lived in California, San Joaquin Valley, and they grew everything from peas to grapes to apples, peaches. If it can be grown, it can be grown in that area. We moved right in where they were growing everything, and he did a good business. He did a good job of selling equipment.

Maniscalco: So he sold spray rigs and what else?

McGuire: Mowers. Big batwing mowers. And I'm trying not to use any brand names. Gosh. Anything that had to do with farming. And if somebody called, if he didn't sell it, he could give them an idea of who to call and what other companies were out there.

Maniscalco: Interesting.

McGuire: It was, and we enjoyed it. I wasn't interested in living in California, but at the same time that's where the job was, you go where the money is. And I enjoyed being there, and I finally went to one of the local malls and applied at a Hickory Farms Cheese store. Went to work, and I worked there for seven years while he was—he was on the road all the time. He'd come home on Friday nights and take off on Monday mornings, and the rest of the time it was me and the dog.

Maniscalco: So when did you come back to Illinois?

McGuire: In four. Two thousand and four we moved back.

Maniscalco: How was it coming back after being gone for such a long time?

McGuire: Like being—don't film this—it was like coming home. In the meantime, my mother and dad had both passed away before we left here, but it was—your friends are still here. They just got old while you were gone. You don't think you're old until you look at your friends that you went to high school with. You think, "Boy, if they looked like that, what do I look like?" But, in many ways, it was humbling coming back, but in many ways it was like never having gone, either. Southern Illinois is still southern Illinois. A bunch of rednecks, but then I'm one of them, too, so.

Maniscalco: Very cool. Let's talk about your orchard, some. Can you tell me how big is it?

McGuire: We owned about 800 acres. We didn't have it all in fruit. I think we had about 350, 400 acres in apples and peaches. The rest of it had been and still was pasture because we had Black

Angus cattle, and we had (counting) five houses on the acreage where people that worked for us full time were welcome to live in if they wanted to. Tenant houses.

Maniscalco: There you go. Were you charging rent to people living there?

McGuire: No.

Maniscalco: No. That was just for doing work.

McGuire: We provided the house and the repairs that were needed on it. It was up to them to have their own furniture and, so, if they wanted something changed on the inside, they were welcome to do it.

Maniscalco: Now, can you tell me a little bit—I'm sure you've experienced living on a farm, and with the orchard—can you tell me kind of the process of what you go through to grow apples or to grow peaches in a season?

McGuire: Now this is where I need Dan. You're working fifty-two weeks out of the year. There's always pruning that needs to be done in order to encourage more growth on your trees. Gosh, I don't remember when we first started the first sprays, but there's bugs out there right now that you're spraying for. You are spraying various chemicals to keep the bugs out, to keep the—what's the word I'm looking for—the things that will attack the tree itself.

Maniscalco: Diseases?

McGuire: Yeah, not only diseases, but the animal—the insects. Locusts and what have you that burrow into the ground and will attack your trees later. There's always something that needs to be done. And if you're not pruning, then you're probably out there raking wood that has broken off the trees in the wintertime. You're trying to keep the ground in good shape because, again, rodents, everything else will be attracted to whatever kind of junk you've got laying under your trees. And sooner or later you're going to have to have that orchard ground in good enough condition to drive heavy tractors and spray rigs and all this in there and not mire down constantly. And, then, as the fruit starts coming on they're going to thin, unless God gives you a good freeze, and then you don't have to because he thinned you.

And we never did strip pick like a lot of people do. We picked as they got ripe. If it wasn't a certain size and a certain color, leave it alone. It will be next week. And again, Dan and the farm managers all instructed the people as to what was to be picked that day and what variety because we'd have twenty different varieties of peaches in order to not have it all come at one time. You want some to come today and some next week. Some next month. When I first married into this we didn't have but three or four different varieties of peaches. The peach season hit you in August, and you worked day and night trying to get it all done without losing your crop or having it rot off the trees for you. And, again, there on the payroll back when I first got into the family, you paid your employees so much per bushel, and they got a weekly paycheck. But if they would stay from the first day that they came until the last peach was picked, they got a nickel per bushel bonus, but if they quit two days or the day before we were through then they lost their bonus.

Maniscalco: Oh my gosh.

McGuire: Well, this whole area was peaches at that time, and you had to have some kind of incentive for them to stay with you, not to go over to somebody else's house and pick for a while.

Maniscalco: Yeah. Now you said that there's lots of different variety of peaches that you grew. Can you tell me some of the different varieties? Do you know them?

McGuire: Oh we had a Hale Harrison, Hale-Haven and Redhaven. And some there wasn't that much difference in flavors, but the fact that this one would get ripe this week and this one would next week—because we had that market along where we sold to the customers that drove up, we had to have fresh peaches all the time. We had Elbertas for a long time, which is what everybody thinks of when you say, "Peach," and it was a good peach, but it didn't have anywhere near the flavor of some of the stuff that we had later. And the first few peaches that you had that would get ripe for you are going to be clings, and people don't think they like clings. They have good flavor, but they don't come off the seed; you have to eat it like an apple. You try cutting it in half, you're going to lose half of it when you peel it.

Maniscalco: Really?

McGuire: Yeah, because it's not going to break off the seed.

Maniscalco: What about the apples?

McGuire: Well, we had Red Delicious and Golden Delicious and, again, the newer varieties would be Golden something else Delicious because you didn't want them all to get ripe at the same time. We had Winesaps. (break in audio) Oh, gosh, in June your first apple is a—it's a Transparent, was what it was called when I was a kid. It's a green apple, makes delicious applesauce, but it'll lock your jaw if you try to eat it right straight off the tree. It's got to be ripe, and even then you're going to use a lot of sugar, but it'll make delicious applesauce. But, basically, that's what it was grown for.

Maniscalco: I'm sure, because you just said that you made applesauce, I'm sure you made all kinds of other things out of the fruit.

McGuire: Oh, yeah. The older the person that you talk to—my mother-in-law made great fried apples out of those early apples that you couldn't eat. She'd get them when they were still green enough that she'd slice them and dip them like a piece of French toast in a batter, and then fry 'em real quick, and they were good. Basically, you don't grow early peaches for your roadside trade. They were a shipping apple because—gosh, I can't think of anybody's name right now, but big companies would buy them and process them into applesauce. Winesaps and the Delicious were great. And we did our own cider.

We put up Christmas baskets, and when you're growing them yourself you've got an apple anywhere from this size to this size to make pretty packages for Christmas, and they bring—we shipped them, packed them that way. The school that my boys went to was about eight miles from where we actually lived. While they were in grade school they were always told, whatever grade they were in, Dan or I, one, would call their teachers and tell them, "If you'd like to bring the kids out, you can watch 'em make cider today," or next week or whatever. We had all kinds of little imps running around, and they enjoyed it. Because mom buys an apple in the grocery store, but they'd never seen 'em grown.

Then we got into pumpkins, also, and they loved that because Dan would tell them when they took them out to the field, "You can have, each one of you can have a pumpkin to take home if you can carry it, but if you can't carry it you can't have it." Because like anybody else, they wanted the biggest one out there, but you get a six-year-old kid, they can't carry them. But they each got to take a pumpkin home, and then we'd take them to the shed and give everybody a

glass of apple cider. Of course, this is good promotion for yourself, whether you think of it that way or not, but Johnny goes home and tells mom what fun he had, and then they come back out on the weekend so mom can see.

Maniscalco: Cool. When did you start getting into the pumpkins, then?

McGuire: Probably the late sixties because we were one of the first that grew pumpkins in this area. There's a big pumpkin growing area up around Pekin. And there's one just across the river in Indiana where we bought them for years. And Dan said, "If they can do it, why can't we?" Because it gave you something to do in between apple varieties.

Maniscalco: To kind of get back to the apples and the peaches, do you remember some of the things that you sprayed for specifically?

McGuire: No. I really don't. My job was in the house doing the books. And I've heard him over the years say, "We've got black leaf," or whatever—and don't do that because that wasn't a disease. But there were all kinds of diseases. Some were insect-borne, some were atmosphere-borne that you've got to spray for. It seemed like, to me, we were always spraying for something. And I know that's not politically correct now—and when that first started coming out, people would come out and wanted to buy apples that hadn't been sprayed. We had our packing house and market right there on the highway, and we had maybe two dozen trees in a little orchard right next to it. So we didn't spray it one year. They wanted to buy apples without any chemicals on them, and granddad said, "Let's do that one right there next to the packing house so if they question us, they can go out and look at them." And we had them in the packing house for sale as organically grown, and they were about three times the price that one that we had sprayed was. And one man asked granddad how come they were so expensive, and granddad said, "Because I have to stop and redo everything to go in there. I can't take the same tractor in there that I had over here with spray dope on it."

And it was, it really was a big to-do. You know yourself when you go in a store or a market, you don't want one that's got a big worm hole in the side of it, and if you don't spray them either chemically or with other bugs, you're going to have all kinds of worms in them. And I'm not pushing chemicals because I don't—I'm like everybody else. I don't want it on my food, either, but right there's the sink and there's water and it'll all wash off, or else I wouldn't have let my husband go out there and run on the spray rig. I'll go in now and I look at all this organically grown stuff, and if you read the fine print on their label, a lot of it is sprayed. And they shouldn't get caught doing it, but I grow little tomatoes and stuff out here behind my house. They don't get anything on them because I don't know what to go and buy.

Maniscalco: Now you mentioned people coming to the farm, buying peaches and apples. Now you also mentioned selling them to markets?

McGuire: No, we didn't sell them to markets. Oh, well, we did if somebody came along and wanted to buy a truckload. Our stuff was shipped through the Illinois Fruit Growers' Association, which is just north of Cobden here, and is no longer in business. They took them into the St. Louis market, and we all had brokers up there that handled you and somebody else, and, of course, he asked top dollar for them and you took whatever he could get.

Maniscalco: Do you remember kind of what the top dollar was, then?

McGuire: One instance stands out in my mind. We had a new box for peaches. We had what was called a hydro-cooler. Peaches are warm when you bring them in from the orchard, and you put them in

this wooden box and ran them through a big machine which dropped ice water on them to cool them down in order to—if you had shipped those hot peaches, they're going to dissolve before they get to the market. You want them cool when they left. The first boxes that we shipped like that, and I don't remember how many peaches were in it, our broker called the house that night and said, "Dan I got twelve dollars a box for those," which was a really big price for peaches at that point. And it wasn't a bushel, but it was a two-layer box—wooden box—that could stand the water going through it. And, then, as everybody else started getting hydro-coolers, the box companies came out with cardboard that wouldn't fall apart after it had been through that cold water bath. Not just us, but everybody.

Maniscalco: So it was kind of the high point, then?

McGuire: It was just the fact that that broker called. He was so thrilled. He had never gotten that much for selling them, and, of course, we'd never gotten that much for raising them.

Maniscalco: How did it work with the broker? He had to get a cut, obviously.

McGuire: Oh, yeah.

Maniscalco: What kind of a cut did he get out of it?

McGuire: I don't know. If we got twelve dollars a box out of it, I don't know where he jacked the price to. I don't remember.

Maniscalco: Why weren't you able to take the fruit directly to the markets?

McGuire: Because we raised too much of it. You would have had to have an awful lot of trucks and truck drivers to do it yourself. The bigger you get on the farm, the less you can take care of yourself. And we did sell to other markets that would come around and look at what you had, and he wanted to pay you rock bottom prices for it and still get good stuff. And, occasionally, you did find somebody that was willing to pay what you wanted for them because if they couldn't use it—I don't know how to word this—you have a bunch of different grades that are coming off that grader all the time. This is number one fruit, this is number two fruit, and it would be by sizes as well as quality, and then you have the throw-aways that are going to come off over here. And you had the too ripe to be shipped but it's great for putting out front to sell, and what you're going to throw out is what you and your wife take home and have for supper because it's good and ripe. There is a lot of waste because they get ripe. They continue to get soft from the minute they're taken off the tree until you do something with it. But they make great peaches for supper.

Maniscalco: (laughter) So most of your fruit, then, went through the Illinois Fruit Growers' Association.

McGuire: Exchange. The Illinois Fruit Growers' Exchange.

Maniscalco: Exchange. What's the process of getting started in that Fruit Growers' Exchange, then? Did you have to register, do you have to...

McGuire: I honestly don't remember because that was in business when I got in the business. My father-in-law had been in it, and he and Dan both served on the board of directors down there at one time or another. I don't remember any kind of initiation fee. They took a percentage of what you grew and you all had—everybody had a number that was on their boxes as it came through so that the guys down there handling it knew whose it was by the number. At first we all had them with our names on the boxes. Then, as we got further along, we went by the numbers.

That way if they got a call from Schnucks or somebody that wanted to buy 100,000 bushels, they didn't have to worry about what numbers was on them after they got them shipped out because they knew number thirty had 500 bushels on there. And then it went out under Southern Illinois Apples rather than by a grower's name.

Maniscalco: How many bushels did your farm produce on the average year?

McGuire: Don't ask me questions like that. (laughing) Again, I did the bookwork, and I worked as a salesperson when extra help was needed at the market but—

Maniscalco: You have no idea. Not even close?

McGuire: I saw the checks that came in for fifty bushels or 100 bushels or 500 bushels, and I'm sure that my husband could have told you off the top of his head how many hundreds we put out a year, but I don't know. I just don't remember.

Maniscalco: There's a lot of talk because there's tons of rain this spring, and we were even talking a little earlier about when we go over to the orchard, how it's going to probably be really wet, difficult to get into. What do you do for drainage in an orchard?

McGuire: It's laid out with that in mind. Or ours was. I can't speak for everybody else. But it's hilly down here. And Dan, when he and his dad decided—these are pictures of when we were planting the new orchard—they look at the ground where they're going to put it. If there's not enough drainage there, then they don't flatten it, but they'll fix it so that they've got drainage because we pull too many tractors out that we get hung up. And not just that, oh gosh, one year our trees not only got frozen—it was when our youngest son was about eight or nine years old—the trees actually drowned in one spot. Later we found out that the tree—we'd had so much moisture that year between the snow and the water, they were literally drowning. So we lost the trees altogether. We didn't just lose that years' crop. We had to replace them.

Maniscalco: Wow. Do you remember your husband talking about what he looked for in terms of a place to start planting an orchard?

McGuire: No. He and granddad did all that figuring.

Maniscalco: Okay. Now, you've mentioned some tractors and spray—what was it...

McGuire: Spray rigs.

Maniscalco: Spray rigs, there you go, thank you. What other kinds of machinery do you have in an orchard?

McGuire: When you see a lineman out here working on a line on a bucket that lowers, we had four of those in order to prune the top of that big 'ole tall apple tree. We didn't ever use them for picking, but they were used in taking care of the orchard. We had a packing house with—every time we put something new in the packing house, we knew our new house was pushed away for at least another ten years while you paid for that. Equipment. We had mowers because, again, the big batwing mowers go in those orchards. And we had a tree-topper, which was a series of blades that you pruned the top of the trees with. We had wagons on rubber wheels that you could attach to this tractor or that tractor. One tractor would take them out and leave them in the orchard, and then as they picked into those twenty-bushel bins, they were on the tractors—or on these wagons. And then somebody else would come back out with another tractor and pull them back into the packing house in order to grade them and pack them. I can't think of what other kind of equipment we had.

I'll throw in a little interesting story, and tell me to hush if you want me to. Farmers get a discount on gasoline, or used to, because you're not on the road you don't have to pay the state sales tax or whatever, but you have to apply for it. And one year Dan just simply couldn't get together and get over to Murphysboro and apply for it. So the next year when I got all the figures ready for him, he took it over, and the man said, "You didn't apply for it last year." And Dan said, "Things caught up with me, I just couldn't get over here." He said, "If you bring them in, we can give you half of it, but we can't give you all of last years discount." So he came back and got my figures from the year before, and we got that discount for that year and half of it for the year before. And I don't know who all looks at those figures, but someone in Springfield did, and they decided that farmers did not go through that much gasoline in a year's time. And this gentlemen called me, and he wanted to talk to the bookkeeper, which I was, and he said he wanted to come out and check my figures, but he wanted Dan there. And I said, "Fine. You tell me when, and we'll be here, and I'll get you the figures." Then he called me again and wanted to know how many tractors we were talking about, and at that point I think we owned nine tractors. "Yeah. Nobody owns nine tractors—" on a farm, and I said, "I'm sorry, but we do." You couldn't get it done. When you've got 200, 300 acres, you can't run from here to over there constantly.

So we made the appointment. He came out. And he brought his little black book which was full of the laws and all the t's are crossed and the i's are dotted, and he finally decided that, yeah, we were not pulling his leg. Dan took him over and showed him the tractors, and here's our records from the gasoline company as to what we bought. We could prove everything that we were saying. Then he said, "But you don't have any sales tax to report," and I said, "Oh yeah. We have a market. I fill out a monthly report on what we've taken in and send them their share." "Can I see those?" and I said, "Sure." So I got that out. Then he said, "What about your payroll?" And I said, "What do you need?" And at that point we had five different families living on the farm year-round that had been there forever. And when the laws changed and they said you could take out income tax on people if they wanted it. We didn't have to at that point. Farmers didn't have to. But you could offer, and if you offered and they wanted to, then you could take it out. That's what I was doing. And I showed him my records and he said, "Where's your records for the state of Illinois on income tax?" And I said, "I don't take out Illinois, I take out federal." He said, "You can't do that." And I said, "Why can't I?" And he said, "Because it's against the law. If you take out federal, you have to take out state." No one, not even my accountant had ever told me that you had to take it out.

This is what he got his book, looked up, and he said, "You can't, legally—if you can't show me their income tax forms for last year where you took out federal but not state, you have got to—you yourself have to prove that they paid that." And I said, "I'm sorry." Yeah. "I don't think any of them would have a problem showing me their income tax return," and they didn't. All but one guy who lived over at Murphysboro and was single. He had disappeared off the face of the earth. Where he went, I have no idea, but he wasn't working for us anymore. But I couldn't prove that he paid it. I think it was something like twenty-seven dollars he owed the state of Illinois. "You have to pay it." And Dan said, "I don't think so." And he said, "Yes you do," and, again, he looked it up in his book (break in recording) legally, we had to pay it because we hadn't taken it out of his check. And I said, "No I'm not—" I got on my high horse and said I wouldn't pay it, and we didn't. And the State of Illinois took it out of our bank account. They processed it. They took out the twenty-seven dollars that he owed, and the

months since it had been owed they charged us, I don't remember, it wound up being like something like 500 dollars with the interest and the fine for not having done it.

And legally they were right, I suppose, but I thought I was staying current on all of this. I didn't know that there was a law that said I had to take out state if I took out federal. Believe me, from then on, I didn't ask anybody if they wanted their taxes—the four families that lived on the place, I did both for them, but we didn't offer that service to anybody else. And I was so floored, I didn't know the state could go into my bank account like that and take what they said I owed them, but they did.

Maniscalco: Wow. Kind of to change gears a little bit, you mentioned the packing house. Can you tell me what goes on in a packing house and what goes on in the packing house...

McGuire: You bring fruit in from the orchard, and it's put—by the time we sold out, we had a water bath. They'd bring them in and with a forklift lift it off that twenty-bushel box and very slowly dump it into water that has had ice. Seems like it had chlorine in it because the water had to be changed every day. They're put in there, again, to get the peach fuzz off, any chemicals that might have been still on them, and then they come up out of that water slowly on a chain that's got pockets. And then they're run down across a grader which also has pockets. Big ones will fall in this one, a small one will fall into that chain. The machine automatically graded for size, and then you've got women standing on both sides of this equipment that are picking out bad ones. Rot goes up on the top shelf, again, on a belt, and softs go on the next belt. And, then, whatever is left that gets down to the end is supposed to be a number one peach, and then it goes around the corner and comes back down by these same women who are packing. They've got a box with a cellophane wrapper like an egg carton and a pocket for each peach. And, when she picks that up, by the time she picks it up and comes over here with it, she's supposed to have looked—and I say "she" because it was housewives, usually, that were working for us—she's picked it up and looked at all the sides of it to make sure it doesn't have any blemishes. If it does, then it goes back up on one of those belts that's taking the rot out.

Then we had a hydro-cooler that cooled them if they wanted them that way. We also had our own refrigerator where all that we kept for ourselves to sell. After we packed them, if we didn't have it all ready to go to the exchange to be sold that way, then they all went there in the cooler. Can we stop long enough for me to take a bathroom break?

Maniscalco: Yes. Certainly, yes.

Cameraman: Pause there and I'll take...

McGuire: You'll un-do me.

Cameraman: I'll unhook you.

McGuire: And when I come back I'm going to have a soda-pop, and you all are welcome if you'd like one. I've got—

Cameraman: I've got some coffee here.

McGuire: I've got Mountain Dew and I've got RC.

Maniscalco: I'm actually pretty good.

McGuire: And I'll go out the back door and come in the front one so he won't have to move. I figured that was easier than having to move all that stuff.

Maniscalco: Maybe we'll want to (inaudible speech).

Cameraman: This is interesting period.

Maniscalco: She's kind of got a lot of the financial stuff, which is kind of cool.

Cameraman: She knows the basic mechanics, too. It would be interesting to ask her about the apple cider operation, what all was involved with that. Sort of the machinery involved in—

Maniscalco: I wanted to talk to her about gender stuff next, since she kind of already did that.

McGuire: I'm right behind you there.

Cameraman: Okay.

McGuire: If I suck it in, maybe I can get through. (laughter)

Maniscalco: (Inaudible speech) picture.

Cameraman: (Inaudible speech)

Maniscalco: (Inaudible speech)

Cameraman: Was it that tree planting?.

Maniscalco: Just digging holes.

Cameraman: (Inaudible speech)

Maniscalco: Digging holes for the new apple orchard and went to church, 1969 spring.

Cameraman: There's a calendar up here. "Age comes (Inaudible speech) wisdom, and of course hot flashes, and you toast marshmallows on it." (Inaudible speech) Hey puppy dog. How you doing? How are you? How are you? Little puppy. Yeah. (Inaudible speech) Are your sons up here somewhere?

McGuire: Oldest son, Bradley. Second son, Dana.

Cameraman: I see.

McGuire: Dan and I, son, daughter-in-law, three grandkids, his brother, his sister, his other brother, and my (Inaudible speech) (laughter). These pictures were taken last year. (Inaudible speech) My oldest son, and this is his three kids and his wife. An EMT and a Navy person. We would have had two Navy persons, but Dana has asthma since he was little and he said you can't be a sailor. And I couldn't understand it because we had moved to Arizona, and he'd gotten over most of it, but they told him you don't ever get over asthma. You never know when it's going to hit. You get down in the hull of a ship and a fire breaks out, we lose you.

Maniscalco: I guess better safe than sorry.

McGuire: Okay. I'm coming around.

Cameraman: Okay. (Inaudible speech) So the clip, is it still on the floor? Is that what happened?

Maniscalco: Yeah. Yeah. It must have just fallen off when you had the tear or something. Thankfully I saw it down there.

Cameraman: Well, they don't seal them real tight.

Maniscalco: Yeah.

Irene McGuire

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Cameraman: Well you're doing a great job. This is really interesting.

McGuire: I hope my voice holds out.

Cameraman: Oh, that fell on the counter. The cigarette.

McGuire: Oh thank you. (Inaudible speech) Soda?

Maniscalco: No, I'm fine.

McGuire: Where are you guys from?

Cameraman: I'm originally from Nebraska, and did some work and got bored back there. Did some work in Missouri and moved to Illinois in 1984 and started working at the museum.

McGuire: What part of the state do you live in now?

Cameraman: In Springfield.

McGuire: In Springfield?

Cameraman: Yeah.

McGuire: And you too?

Maniscalco: Yeah.

Cameraman: We just hired Mike. Mike was at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, and he's just finished his master's degree. Had to defend his thesis last week.

Maniscalco: Yeah. Last week.

Cameraman: Last Wednesday.

McGuire: Is he saying you're just a kid?

Maniscalco: Yeah, he's just saying I'm just a kid.

Cameraman: I would say punk, but that's not necessarily very nice. (laughing).

McGuire: You want this closed again. Okay, I'm back, I guess you can hook me up again.

Maniscalco: We'll hook you back up.

Cameraman: You're all refreshed. Good.

McGuire: I almost waited too long. You don't want to do that when you get older. (laughter)

Maniscalco: This one over there. This one right on here. Thank you.

McGuire: This is my apple room. My kitchen has always been the apple room.

Cameraman: You have apple decorations I see over on the wall.

McGuire: Yeah. They know what business you're in, and if they buy you glasses or dishes, they've got apples on 'em. And then you got to put them out because you don't want to hurt anybody's feelings.

Cameraman: We interviewed a beekeeper about two weeks ago, and of course they have a bee décor in their kitchen.

McGuire: In the state?

Irene McGuire

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Cameraman: Yeah, over at Arenzville. West of Jacksonville. Cass County.

McGuire: Okay. Because we used to use a man out of Wisconsin. Can't remember the people's name. But you have to hire 'em to come in, and they bring in a load of bees and leave them so long, and then they come back and get them and they charge you by how many hives they put out.

Cameraman: That's interesting. That'll be interesting to talk about.

Maniscalco: Yeah, we'll get there. (laughing)

McGuire: Okay. Hillerbrand was their name.

Cameraman: Yeah, we're—

Maniscalco: We're good. Okay. All right. Now we were talking about packing house, and you mentioned that it was mostly women working in the packing house. And you've kind of alluded to the fact that there's a lot of men that work in the orchard. I'm kind of wondering what's the divide? Is there certain jobs for men only and certain jobs for women only?

McGuire: Originally, when I married into this, other farmers, other people in the area, their wives looked forward to having that summer job because it gave them a little extra money, and they planned on working at one of the orchards in the packing house. And I'm sure it was because they didn't think that women should be on ladders, and when you pick apples or peaches, as big as we grew the trees back here—which they don't do when you go west, they keep them short—it's like anything else. Compact means more money. Women didn't climb ladders. Men did. Young boys. Again, when we were getting married, your kids could work out in the orchard regardless of what age they were, but you couldn't hire anybody that was less than fifteen to be out in the orchard. But it was men out there, and women in—and we used men in the packing house, but, basically, it was women who did the grading of the fruit.

Maniscalco: Interesting. Did you ever have any women come and say they wanted to work in the orchard ever?

McGuire: Before we got out of business we did, but it would be young people such as yourself that were in college and were looking for something new and different, something they'd never done before. And we did hire a lot of ag students from the university that were on summer break, if they lived in this area. We did keep one or two that were out of the Chicago area that wanted to work all summer, and they'd stay here, but not with us. They had their own apartments. And the first one that we hired, when it was time to go back to school that fall, he thanked Dan for hiring him. And he said, "I want to tell you. You, in the three months that I've worked out here on the farm, have destroyed most of what my teacher—my ag teacher's teaching me in Carbondale." And Dan said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "It's one thing to sit and read it out of a book, have an instructor tell you how to do it, and come out here and put it to practical use." A lot of what—like anything else—what you're learning in the classroom gets thrown out the window when you get out and actually put it to work. Experience means a whole lot more.

Maniscalco: Now do you remember when that time when that first woman came and applied for a job? Was it kind of a little bit of a...

McGuire: It was probably late seventies, early eighties. And, again, it was probably a student out of the northern end of the state because local girls knew without being asked that there was always a job at McGuire's, but it would be in the packing house. I don't know—

- Maniscalco: So at the McGuire's house, when this woman came and asked, "Can I work in the field or in the orchard," was it a big deal?
- McGuire: Uh-huh. Granddad said no and Dan said, "If you can do it, but you've got"—and he tried to explain to her what physical it was going to take out in the orchard. And of course, you're insured up to here because you have to be. You never know who's going to fall off that ladder. And if they wanted to pick peaches, he said, "Brad, your boss, or whoever was foreman over that section, whatever he tells you that's what you have to go by." I took one girl to the doctor one day who decided it would be fun to slide back down that wooden ladder, and she had shorts on and a tank-top, and she turned around and slid back down the ladder. And she had a splinter in her leg that I swear was that long. I took her into the doctor, to a surgeon in Carbondale, and he took the splinter out and cleaned it and got her all fixed up to come home. But from then on, they were told, "Don't turn around and slide down the ladder." Who would have ever thought about doing it? You don't tell them not to do it until you know that it's going to hurt 'em, and...
- Maniscalco: It seems like you had to run a lot of people to the doctor.
- McGuire: We did, but most of it was because they didn't use common sense. But they didn't grow up on a farm like Dan did or his dad either. You learn by making mistakes in this life. A lot of times I took people, and Brad did, to the doctor that didn't need to be taken, but in order to protect yourself—you know, I don't want them to come back and really be hurt, and I don't want to be sued because I didn't offer to take them to the doctor. And a lot of people would say, "No. I'm okay." But you got to get them to sign something in this—in the world out there today, you better have it on paper.
- Maniscalco: That's a very good point. Very good point. Now you mentioned to us, what, we took a break, about beekeeping, and how you had beekeepers come to the orchard. Can you tell me why that was?
- McGuire: Because you don't have enough local bees when you're raising the kind of fruit—as many acres of fruit as we did. Some peaches and some apples are self-pollinating. Some aren't. And in the case where they aren't, you mix in a different kind of tree, and don't ask me what because I can't remember, but some of them would not be pollinated. So ten trees in you would plant a self-pollinating, and when the wind came along it would help carry that pollen down to the trees that weren't self-pollinating. But you get so big that you've got to have other help, and you hire bees who bring the pollen from one tree to the other.
- Maniscalco: Now is that a large expense for the orchard?
- McGuire: Yeah. And it was getting more expensive all the time. The people that we used were in southern Wisconsin, and he'd bring them by a semi-load. It might not all be going to our farm. Part of it might have been going to the neighbor. But then you set the hives out so many trees. A bee will work so many inches, yards away from the hive, and then you had to plant them or set them out in the orchard. But he did it. When he brought them, he used your four wheeler or whatever to set them out, and he'd bring them down in the middle of the afternoon, but he wouldn't touch them until after dark because the bees don't fly after the sun goes down. And he'd put them out for you. And you told him, "I want them for so many days," and then he'd come back and, again, he'd pick them up and put them back on his truck and hand you the bill.

- Maniscalco: Now when those hives are out in the orchard, did you just stay out of the orchard because you were afraid you'd get stung?
- McGuire: Nope. They won't bother you. They didn't bother any of us. I think, Dan I think my husband was the only one that ever got stung, but he was interested in them, and he got him the hat and the smoker in order to learn the right way to handle them.
- Maniscalco: So your husband kind of got a little bit into moving 'em around and everything else.
- McGuire: Oh yeah. Yeah. He was very interested in it.
- Maniscalco: Interesting. And I'm sure that, probably, it was a good thing for him to be interested in it.
- McGuire: Yeah. Anytime you're doing something, even if its bees or chemicals, you need to be aware yourself what it's doing to the fruit, what it's doing to you, what it's doing to the ground.
- Maniscalco: Now you mentioned one other thing that you did on the farm, which was raise Black Angus? Can you tell us a little bit about that?
- McGuire: Again, I kept the books. I didn't go out there and mess with the cows.
- Maniscalco: Well, how many cows did you have?
- McGuire: Oh, gosh. I think that the year that we sold them we had something like sixty females and two bulls, which you kept separated most of the time because you didn't want them to inter—they were registered, which you had to send in to the Angus association so often, and you got a tag that went on each cow and each bull and their babies, and if you let the daddy back in there too soon, she could have another calf by him, but if you waited two years then you had to get a different daddy. Otherwise he's going to be breeding with his daughters if you're keeping any of your stock. And as a rule, you keep the females and every two or three years you replace your male.
- Maniscalco: Interesting. Now what were the Angus being fed?
- McGuire: Grass. Yeah. They were out on pasture. If you came along and said, "I'd like to buy that cow to butcher," then we'd finish it out however you wanted it, on corn or on grass. But we weren't doing it to send to market.
- Maniscalco: Oh, okay. So it was just kind of a side thing that...
- McGuire: Yeah. It was time-consuming. It seemed like whenever they needed the most attention was when we were deep in apples and needed to be doing something besides that. And then the cattle market started going down, and I finally put some figures together, and I sit down and told Dan, "You know, we're spending more because when you're busy in apples, you haven't got time to do it, so you have one of the hired men come in every morning and make sure that they've got water or let them out or bring them in," and we were winding up paying a guy darn near a days wages just to do that. And if anybody wanted the fattened out on anything, then you've got to buy extra feed. We were spending more than we were taking in, so we decided it would be a good time to get out of the cattle business.
- Maniscalco: Now were you selling them to markets, or just to local people, or how...
- McGuire: The word got out if you wanted to buy one you had to buy the whole thing, and you had to take it to the butcher. And Dan's youngest brother lived in Bloomington, was a school teacher up there, and he always had good meat at his house, and the word gets out that Val's brother raises

these. It doesn't take long for word to get around, and that we didn't sell pieces. We didn't sell them butchered. You have to do it. But most of it, if we had bulls, calves, then they were for sale as breeders. But females, as a rule, you use them for so many years and then you want to get rid of them, too. They're old. They're not putting out good babies, or whatever, and that's next year's freezer.

Maniscalco: Now, when you moved onto the farm had there been cattle there prior to that? Something had always been—

McGuire: Yes. Dan's dad and his grandfather had Herefords, white face, and Dan's grandfather was big on Herefords. Won a bunch of medals and stuff. And I'm sure he was selling it as eating meat, but again, he was gone before I ever got in the family. But Dan's dad, I think in the early fifties, decided it was time to get out of the Herefords. Because he liked the way the Angus tasted so...

Maniscalco: Now, was it always cattle and an orchard, or was there a time when just—

McGuire: As far as back as I know.

Maniscalco: As far back as you know. Interesting. That's pretty cool. Now, this is kind of your area in the farm, and that's the finances. Can you kind of explain how the finances work, what you did, and how you...

McGuire: Well. If you've had several good years, then you don't have to go see the banker. You paid him off. But the next time that you need operating capital, you go back to the same bank or whoever's financing you, and you say, "This is what I made last year, this is how far I went into the hole, this is what I need to cover my expenses until I have some income coming in this year." And, as a rule, you didn't have that big a problem because you're paid off anyway, but you've got to sit down and figure out what it's going to cost you to get from January to June when you are actually getting some income. How much is it going to take for you to stay in business until then? I said a while ago that we had some trees that actually drowned. FHA came in, not with just us but a bunch of the growers down here because we had all fruit that died. That's when they got into the lending business, as far as I can remember, with various growers. They were trying to help us replace the trees that had drowned with federal money.

Maniscalco: Now you learned this from your grandmother-in-law—or mother-in-law. How is that process? Did she just come over one day and say, Here, I'm going to show you how to do this, or...

McGuire: No. Again, back when we were first married, the people that are—August, when you got peaches, is when you've got the most problems with your payroll. The guys that are picking the peaches, and they're picking into this bag that's over their shoulder, we had little inch-and-a-half square tickets. If you were number one or number sixty or whatever, you put your number in that bag. Then, when they were brought into the packing house, as each bag is emptied over onto the grader, those tickets are put into another bag which I got to count every night. I literally played solitaire so that I knew how many bags each person pulled that day. And that's what grandma had me doing in order to get—you got to start at the bottom in order to work your way up. She let me count them, and then I would tell her that Joe picked twenty bushels or twenty half-bushels today, and you kept a running track on a daily basis so that on Friday night all you had to do was do Friday's and add 'em in.

I don't think that was original with her, particularly. I don't know how the other people in the area did theirs because I never worked for any of them, but it was our way of keeping books.

And if some guy got mad in the middle of the day and wanted to quit—let's say Wednesday he decided he was going to quit or Dan fired him, they would call up the house and say, "Look up Joe Blow and see how many bushels he's got up to this point. Make him out a paycheck. Today he did this much." And you wrote him a check for what he'd done since last Friday.

Maniscalco: Did you ever have any of the help come up and argue their paychecks and stuff?

McGuire: Yeah. And then I'd get out my figures, my papers, where I had added it all up. And I did make mistakes. Occasionally it was me that screwed up. Most of the time it was because they didn't understand that those bags that they were bringing in were half-bushels, not bushels, and they'd say, "Well, I brought in 150 bags," and that's seventy-five bushels. And they thought they were going to get paid for 150.

Maniscalco: On average what was the pay for a bushel?

McGuire: I don't remember.

Maniscalco: You don't remember. That's okay.

McGuire: Once you're out of it, boy, stuff goes. It goes quick.

Maniscalco: You just want to forget it.

McGuire: Yeah. You just bury it. I can't speak for others, but the year we went out of business, there was a guy in Florida, and I don't remember what he grew, but FHA shut him down. They took his farm. He went to the county courthouse, walked up on the steps in front of the door and took out a gun and blew out his brains. And, of course, I had read about it in the paper, and I brought it up at supper that night, and my husband looked at me and said, "Believe me. I've thought about it." And I said, "Believe me, I have too. But don't you dare do that to me. We've got two kids, we've got ourselves. We can't." We had a twelve-year-old son. You can't shoot yourself. Somebody's going to have to raise that kid. You're the one that brought him into the world, so you're going to take care of him.

But you know if you don't that you're going to have to declare bankruptcy, and that—I'm a Depression kid—that was a dirty word. You don't declare bankruptcy unless you've exhausted every other avenue. And there's shame that goes with it. It isn't shameful to anybody else, but to you, you've lost everything, literally everything that you've ever had. They allow you, when you go and have the sale—the farm auction—FHA allowed us to keep our car and Dan's pickup, our kids, and our animals, and you're out, boy. If you haven't got it buried someplace in the backyard, tough luck.

And we had one of our friends who was a fruit grower, and he said, "Dan, don't tell me that you didn't keep two sets of books." Dan said, "No. Whatever I've lost, whatever I've earned, it's on paper. I would gladly pay income tax." And this guy said, "I've always kept two sets of books. This is what the government thinks I took in, this is what I took in." And Dan said, "We've never done that." And I said, "No, and then with me as your bookkeeper, you better not, because I'll wind up telling 'em the truth. Either that or forget and get the wrong set of books out." Cheating just wasn't done. It was done with a lot of people, but we didn't. We went under, we went under, and there's no two ways about it. You do and you feel shame, which you shouldn't. Everybody makes mistakes along—and when you don't have a peach crop for seven years in a row, you are so far in the hole that there's no way you're ever going

to get out. And it's not your fault, it's not God's fault, it just happened. Suck it in and go on, as my kids say. Suck it up.

Maniscalco: Just suck it up. (laughing) No, that's very interesting. So, there seems to be all sorts of outside things and entities that are kind of bombarding you and trying to pull you down a little bit and everything else, and how did you combat that?

McGuire: You do it because—especially on New Year's when you lose your peach crop—then you really push pumpkins. We had a big patch of tomatoes, which we did “you pick.” You come in and pick them, bring them up here, we'll weigh them, and you pay me. We bought another piece of ground that had Christmas trees on it, so we went in the Christmas tree business that year, but you do this because it's extra income. It allows you to have some income on yours when you don't have peaches. And I keep pushing peaches, and I don't mean to except that if you have a peach crop, you know you're going to make money. It may not be a lot but you're actually have cash left over. Apples you kind of break even on. And, again, all of it depends on what your broker can get for them, but people just don't want to pay the price for apples. They will for a fresh peach.

Maniscalco: That's interesting. Now, you mentioned something that I hadn't thought of before, and that's that you had a “you pick” business, and people came in and would pick their own.

McGuire: We had twenty acres, I think it was, on one of the last pieces of ground that we bought because the insurance goes through the roof when you have “you pick.” We had apples and peaches, tomatoes, pumpkins on that twenty acres. We had to insure it separately from the rest of the farm because we did have “you pick,” and those people are walking in, you've got to protect them. We did a lot of business in apples on “you pick.” Some business on peaches, but mostly people don't realize how much fuzz is on that peach until they have to go out and pick it. Therefore they'd rather pick an apple. They loved coming out and picking pumpkins, they love to come out and pick their own Christmas tree. But, again, it was a source of ready income to get you through till you get your returns on the stuff you send to the market in St. Louis.

Maniscalco: Now I'm sure your husband had to come in and tell you some stories about people going off in the orchard doing something kind of wild. Do you have any stories like that?

McGuire: Yeah. But it wasn't on us. This one was on a friend of ours who's also a fruit grower. He was on his way back to the house one evening, and he saw this car parked in his orchard, and the husband and wife—she had on a dress because Bud said she had her dress pulled up like this—and she's picking apples and putting them in her dress and then taking them back to the car and putting them in the trunk and coming back and get more. And they were both sitting in the car about that time, so Bud just pulls his truck up here and asks them what they're doing. And this guys says, “We're picking these apples because nobody else seems to be wanting them,” and Bud hadn't announced who he was or anything, he just asked them questions.

And he said he walked back over to his pickup and got him a screwdriver, came back over, and he's talking to the man, and he turns his rear view mirror over here and starts taking the screws out of it. And the man said, “Why are you doing that?” Bud said, “Just a mirror hanging here. Doesn't seem to be helping anybody. I figured I could take it off there.” And the guy said, “You can't do that. This is mine!” And he said, “Those are my apples over there, too, and you can't just come help yourself.” He said the man left real quick after he got the apples out of the

trunk. But I thought that was such a good example. You know, “Nobody’s using it.” Nobody was using his rear-view mirror, either.

Oh, gosh, yeah, there are lots of stories, but you don’t want to hear them all, and I can’t think of anything right now. Oh, well, yeah, I can, too. Again, I was the bookkeeper. Everybody’s check—I sign my checks E. Irene McGuire because my name is Elizabeth legally, and that’s the way it is at the bank. Dan was out in the orchard one day, and we had a bunch of young people—and by young I mean eighteen- and twenty-year-olds—picking apples. They weren’t doing it the way he had told them to do it. He came back out and gave them a lecture, and that didn’t sit well with this one kid, and the kid said, “I don’t have to pick them that way. You’re not the boss.” Dan said, “Oh, yes I am.” He said, “No, you’re not. E. Irene McGuire signs my paycheck. If she wants to fire me she can, but you can’t.” Dan said, “You get your butt up [to] the house and tell Irene McGuire what I said.” But the girls down at the shed—of course, this story’s got to go through all the locals—the next day they brought Dan a white t-shirt that they had spray painted, “Irene’s the boss. She signs the checks.” And he wouldn’t wear it, of course, but it was funny.

Maniscalco: That is a good story. So can you kind of tell me, I mean, you’ve mentioned a few times that you had seven bad crops in a row. Can you tell me those last years of being in the farm, and the processes you went through and—

McGuire: Well, again, we put the farm up for sale after—we probably went through four without thinking we were going to have to sell. You always hope that you’re going to get some—next year you’re going to get a better one that’ll start helping pay those bills. Then we put it up as—advertised it. Couldn’t find a buyer. We sold five acres at a time to a lot of different people who were looking for homesteads on places—we have 800 acres, but you don’t have it all in peaches or apples, so you’ve got some fairly decent building spots. And you get more and more depressed each year knowing that the end is in sight, but you don’t know how to get there. It wasn’t fun. It’s not recommended. But you do what you have to do, and my God always said he doesn’t punish you and he doesn’t put any more on your shoulders than you can carry. You get through it. Aren’t you glad you asked me these things? Because I don’t mean to tear up. It’s been, well, twenty-three years, but it’s still mine. You don’t ever completely—you know it isn’t on paper anymore—but it’s still your orchard. It’s still my packing house. And a lot of it is so run down that you wish you hadn’t ever sold out. But if we were in debt up to here then, you imagine how far in we’d be now? (laughter)

Maniscalco: So, in the end, how did the farm end up going? The FHA came in and took it, or...

McGuire: They came in the year that our trees drowned and offered us a better loan than what we could get through a bank because the government was willing to help us replace all those trees that were lost. When you get ready to say, “I’m quitting,” the advisor came over and talked to Dan and said, “You know that you can’t pay this off?” And he was starting to get pressure from higher-ups, “I’m going to have to ask you to do it, or in a years' time, two years' time at the most, they’re going to come in and take it away from you. So you can either sell out gracefully now, or you can wait and walk off with nothing.” So we started looking around for auctioneers and setting a date to get it sold.

Maniscalco: Now the farm was sold as a complete orchard, or how did it...

- McGuire: No. We would have liked that, but we couldn't find a buyer that had enough money to do it. What the auctioneer and the man from FHA did was come in and say, "Okay there's eighty acres here, there's ten acres of something else over here," and they put it up as sections that were planted, sections that were bare, but each one was offered separately.
- Maniscalco: So, then, it's kind of been piecemeal and divided up.
- McGuire: Yeah. I would say there's probably only one—out of all the people that bought ground that had trees on it, there's only one that's still actively keeping it as an orchard. The rest of them have either sold out theirs to him, or they've sold out and gotten out of it themselves.
- Maniscalco: Can you tell me what are some of the pleasures that you had in running this?
- McGuire: You worked side-by-side. The men don't ask the women. Granddad and Dan would come tell grandma and I, "There are eighty acres over there that we'd like to buy." It's a done deal. Again, you have to remember how old I am, and the husbands made the decisions and told you about them. They didn't ask. When we went broke and got out of the business, then our decisions were made together. Whether we'd buy a new car, whether we were actually looking for a place to buy or rent, this kind of thing. I think it overwhelmed both he and his dad how much they had and they didn't trust women's decisions. They knew best. If that sounds like a feminist speaking, I am, because by the time we'd gotten in that far, in eighty-five, Dan and I had been married almost thirty years. I felt that my opinion should count for something, and I know that Grandma's should have because she had been there longer than that, but men made the major decisions. You were the help mate.
- Maniscalco: So you went through some really hard times on this farm. What kept you in it? What kept you going for it for as long as you did?
- McGuire: Because it was our legacy, his legacy, and he didn't want to give up. Right up to the last day he didn't want to give up. I didn't either, but not nearly as much as he didn't want to. Plus, when we made the decision, he and I, that we were going to do it, I was sitting up at the house one day and he said, "I don't know what I'm going to do. How am I going to support you and that twelve-year-old kid? I don't know anything besides raising fruit." And I said, "How many horticulture magazines do we get monthly?" And he said, "I don't know. Why?" And I said, "I think our best bet would be for you to put an ad in all of 'em. Tell them how old you are, how many years you've done this for a living, and that you would love to move west, northeast, whatever. You are looking for a job as either a supervisor, a manager, whatever. You've got the experience. That's what you have to sell. Not yourself." And basically that's what we did.
- Maniscalco: And that's what you did, and that's how you ended up in Arizona.
- McGuire: The orchards that were getting on their feet out there, some of the big wigs saw the ad and called. We went out and had an interview as a family, and then we came back and they called and said they'd hire him. And don't ask me how much because I don't remember what they offered, but it sounded like big, big money to us because we were down to nothing. And the orchards grew for four years out there. More people putting more money in all the time. And then all of a sudden they realized they were spending money, not taking it in, and they started just letting the orchards sit there and go dry and die. And about that time is when the AgTech Company asked Dan if he'd like to go to California and not do fruit, just sell equipment.
- Maniscalco: Interesting. You've raised a family both on and off the farm, and I was wondering if you could compare and tell me what are some of the good parts of that and the bad parts of that?

McGuire: Well, even after we went to Arizona with a twelve-year-old kid, he had chores of an afternoon. Like you said, we'd already raised one kid. That knew he got off the school bus, had this much to do, and then he had to do homework before he could go goof off. Dan found jobs for Dana to do on somebody else's farm or on the farm that Dan was overseeing. Of course he wasn't on the payroll, but it was still—you have to do this every evening after you get home from school. And then he got a little bigger, and when they started raking brush and trash out of the orchards, Dan put him on the payroll so that he could grow up with the experience of living on a farm and working on a farm. Both boys rode four wheelers and tractors long before they were old enough to go and get a license to drive on the highway. They got the experience of working with animals. We had cows back here, the people out there had pigs. Of course I'm prejudiced, but I think that every kid ought to grow up on a farm where he's allowed to have—when he's allowed to work and have days off when he can go out and just screw around and not be responsible for anything. Just go out there and daydream. At least he's not out on the street doing drugs or peddling drugs.

Maniscalco: You've seen lots of agriculture, especially with the variation in businesses that your husband's been involved in, so what kinds of changes—what do you see for the future of farming?

McGuire: People always have to eat. That was our slogan for an awful lot of years. Of course now, you go to the store, your peach may not be from here, it may be from Chile or Argentina, but that's because of the season. When local stuff comes in, the stores—some of the stores, not enough of them—will tell you that it is local stuff. I don't know. I still think there will always be farms because people have to eat, and even though we didn't raise wheat, we did raise soybeans every once in a while, and we raised hay because we had cattle.

I did hear one woman, oh gosh, many long years ago when Caesar Chavez was blowing off in California and he was going to unionize all the workers all over the country, I heard a woman in the grocery store one day say, "They can put the farmers out of business. I don't care. I'll just come to the grocery store and get it." And I wanted to so bad to turn around and shake her and say, "Lady, where do you think it came from? Even if it's in a can, somebody grew it somewhere. It didn't just magically get in the store." Again, common sense, she was definitely taking the union's side rather than the farmer's side.

Maniscalco: What kind of changes do you expect for the future of farming?

McGuire: Well, again, having lived in California, there's still a lot of hand-labor in everything. You can mechanize just so far. You've got pecans that you can shake off a tree. Occasionally you can get away with that with apples, but you're going to get bruises. I don't see any way that they're ever going to be able to hand-pick peaches without a hand there. Strawberries still need to be bent over and picked. Asparagus, stuff like that, you can come in and cut it with a machine, but you're still going to have farm labor if you've got a farm because there's just too much stuff that needs to be done by hand.

You're going to see a lot more mechanization.

And, again, you have to take into consideration that if you're replacing fifty people that were cutting asparagus yesterday, that that piece of machinery that you're going to take in there next year, it's going to be a lot of years before you get that machine paid for from the labor that you're not using. And, sooner or later, just like the gas and oil stuff that's going on right now, you got to have it, so you will pay whatever—up to a point, you will pay whatever they ask for

it. With farming you can't do that because most of your stuff is perishable. If you ask twenty dollars for this bushel of peaches, and they offer you ten, and you say, "I won't have to take it," but, sooner or later, you're either going to take the ten dollars or you're going to dump it and be out everything. But the general public needs to realize that if that peach is costing more this year than it did last year, and it's going to cost more next year because they still have things that they have to—the machinery, the chemicals, they've still got to pay for all that stuff. I don't see any way that farms are not going to be farms, but they will be modernized.

Maniscalco: Well, Irene, this has been a lot of fun doing this interview with you. I have one last question for you, and it's the question that I ask everybody, it's kind of a standardized question for everybody. Since this is an oral history interview and it's going to be a record for hopefully years and years and years and years to come—

McGuire: That's why I've tried to stay away from dates because I'm so unsure what day, what year we did do those things.

Maniscalco: The last question I want to ask you is—give you the opportunity to put whatever you want in this interview and give you the opportunity to say whatever you want in here because one day one of your great-great-great-great-grandkids might stumble across this and say, "Hey, there's grandma Irene. Okay, let's hear what she had to say."

McGuire: I can't say what they would expect me to say because they know that grandma is—I've always had a big mouth. Both of my sons have big mouths. They've got more tact than I have. If you want to be a farmer of any kind, go for it. Don't expect it to be easy. But if you want to be a musician, go for it, but, again, it's not going to be easy. I don't see how any young person in today's world gets into the orchard business without it being family-owned because even to farm ten acres anymore, you've got to have at least one tractor. You've got to have a plow, you've got to have some brakes. You're talking big money before you ever turn the ground. But, then, if you want to go into a car dealership, you're going to have to have big bucks behind you. So, it's on that level now. Better have some rich grandparents or rich parents, somebody that'll loan you money for nothing. But if you really want to, there's no more satisfying thing than to look out that front door and say, "That's mine. I did that." It's almost as good as raising kids. Because we all get, when they're little and they turn around and look at you with that "I don't have to" look, and then they finally grow up and one of them is a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy and the other one's an EMT on an ambulance, and they know so much more than I know, and I'm so proud of 'em.

Maniscalco: Well, thank you very much, Irene. This has been a lot of fun.

McGuire: Thank you. It was fun doing it, even if I do take time out to cry.

Maniscalco: That's fine. That's fine.

Cameraman: Very good.

McGuire: Thank you. Edit out all the tears.

Maniscalco: (laughing)

Cameraman: (laughing) We can use white-out for that.

(End of Audio File One; Audio File Two begins)

