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PREFACE

This manuscript is the result of a series of tape-recorded interviews conducted by Mrs. Dorothy Burris for the Oral History Office with Mr. Charles B. Shuman in October 1972. Mr. Shuman reviewed the transcript and helped edit it for final typing. He also donated some related materials to the Oral History Collection.

Mr. Shuman was born at Sullivan, Illinois in 1906, and was reared on his father's farm in Moultrie County, Illinois. He attended rural Moultrie County schools, Sullivan Township High School, and the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois. Upon completion of his master's degree in 1929, Mr. Shuman returned to Moultrie County to operate his father's farm. In addition to his farm operation, Mr. Shuman was active in the Moultrie County Farm Bureau, served on the Illinois Agricultural Association Board from 1940 to 1945, and as president of that organization from 1945 to 1954. He served as president of the American Farm Bureau Federation from 1954 to 1970. He also served on local school boards and the Board of Regents of the State of Illinois.

Readers of this oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Sangamon State University is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor of course, for views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

Charles B. Shuman, October 16, 1972, Sullivan, Illinois.
Dorothy Burrus, Interviewer.

This is Mr. Charles B. Shuman whom I am interviewing at his farm home near Sullivan, Illinois on October 16, 1972.

Q: Would you please tell me about your ancestors and how the farm came into your family.

A: Well of course, if you go back far enough, everyone has many ancestors. One of my ancestors fought in the Revolutionary War and several of them in the Civil War. The Home Farm here in Moultrie County, Illinois, came into our family in 1853 when my great-grandfather came here from Lexington, Kentucky. He brought his wife and children with him and bought the land that's incorporated, at least in part, into our farm from an early settler who had come here somewhere between 1835 and 1845. So we were second owners of the land. It was entered by Mr. Elder who purchased it from the Federal Government.

My great-grandfather farmed the land and his daughter, my grandmother, whose name was McPheeters, married a young man who had come west from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was the son of a German immigrant and his name was Charles Shuman. After he had taught school a while, he also engaged in farming, although he didn't stay with it very long. He later became County Treasurer and established a bank here in Sullivan, the First National Bank which is still operating.

This Charles Shuman was my grandfather and his son, Bliss Shuman, was my father. He operated the farm from 1903 until 1922.

I graduated from the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois in 1929 and came back to the farm. I've lived here ever since, and operated it for almost 20 years with very little hired labor.

I had a management contract with a young man who operated it when I became involved in full time Farm Bureau work in the Illinois Agricultural Association. For a few years we had a manager-tenant relationship with the both of us living on the farm and with him doing the active work. After college, my oldest son and, later, two other sons came back and established a partnership which operates the farm at the present time. We were pleased that this year the State of Illinois' Department of Agriculture initiated the Centennial Farm Project and we were one of the approximately 2,000 farms in Illinois that had a record of 100 years' continuous ownership in one family.

My great-grandfather, Addison McPheeters, had considerable previous experience in agriculture. In 1833 he had gone from Lexington, Kentucky to near where Columbia, Missouri is located. There was no town there at that time. He bought a tract of land from the government, cleared it, built a house and farmed there for several years. He was one of the militia, the Missouri Volunteers, which served in the Blackhawk Indian War--the one that Abraham Lincoln was involved in. After that my great-grandfather sold his farm in Columbia, Missouri and settled near Winchester in Scott County, Illinois, on another farm. He finally went back to Lexington, Kentucky because

his wife was ill and felt that she wanted to live closer to her friends. His wife later passed away in Lexington, Kentucky.

When my great-grandfather remarried, he and my great-grandmother moved back to Illinois. So a lot of things happened before 1853 in our family as far as agriculture is concerned.

Q: How many acres do you farm here?

A: The original farm that came down through these years was 456 acres. Recently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers preempted, took over and condemned, 80 some acres for the Shelbyville Reservoir Project. That reduced the original acreage somewhat. However, in the meantime, we have bought some additional land; we have about 75 acres where our present home is located and a little over 200 acres west of the original farm. So we have around 650 acres total. Then of course my sons who have the farming partnership, farm additional land, other than this that is owned by us. I'm not sure exactly how many acres they are farming now, somewhere in the neighborhood of 1000 acres.

Q: What are the principal crops that you are now raising?

A: Corn and soybeans. They're [the sons] primarily grain farmers but we do have, and I'm in partnership with them, a herd of commercial Angus cattle. We have a little rough land and lots of corn stalk refuse so we have approximately a 55-cow commercial Angus herd. We raise the calves and feed them out. In addition to that, my youngest son, who is fourteen years old, and I have a little hog partnership going. Last year we raised a few feeder pigs in addition to his 4-H litter.

The farming on this farm has undergone many changes in the last hundred years. Originally, when they came here in 1853, my great-grandfather and the other settlers valued the timber land more highly than they did the prairie land. The result was that they bought as much of the rough timber land as they could. There was several reasons for that, of course. One was that the plows of the time were not quite capable of plowing under this heavy prairie soil. They also had to have lumber for their buildings. There were no railroads nearby at the time. They were also of the mistaken impression that the timber soil was a better soil for farming. They later found out differently. So this farm has a good deal of rough land on it.

By necessity, agriculture was largely self-sufficient in 1853. They raised beef cattle, hogs and a few dairy cows. Much of the agriculture was the grazing of livestock but they had a few acres in cultivation. They cleared the timber land in order to have acreage for cultivation. They used the prairie at that time, mainly for grazing. Later on, we gradually evolved to where this is a grain farming area. While my father was farming the land, he was primarily a livestock farmer.

When I moved into the operation in 1929, we fed practically all of the grain we raised. Today, that is not true. We are cash grain farmers first and livestock people second. I sometimes regret the change and I'm not sure that it's sound, but nevertheless, that's the way it's gone.

Q: When your father and your grandfather were here, the implements were most primitive. Do you have any of those old implements on hand or have you traded them all in?

A: Unfortunately, we don't have any of the original implements. I can remember seeing some of them around. They were not preserved; many of them were wooden-framed and when left out in the weather, decayed rather rapidly. I occasionally pick up a shovel from an old cultivator or some part of an old horse-drawn piece of equipment that is still around in the soil. Of course, when I was a youngster, all of our farming was done with horses and I have driven horse-drawn equipment of almost every kind. Our first corn cultivators were one-row cultivators. I can remember when the two-row cultivators first came and they were horse-drawn, too.

It was customary in the spring and late fall to chop the corn stalks. That was a rough, dusty, dirty job. A corn stalk chopper would take two rows at a time. Next the farmer plowed the ground and then began the very laborious process of working it down. The plow was followed by the harrow—that was a dirty job! Then if we got a shower of rain we would go in and disc it with a four horse team. After the discing was completed we usually harrowed it again and then planted the corn. If it rained you'd have to disc it all over again. So it's no wonder that one man couldn't operate a very large acreage.

I bought one of the first Farmall [IHC] tractors that was sold in our county in 1929 when I started to farm. This was approximately a 20 to 25 horsepower tractor and it was one of the first tractors that had cultivating equipment on it. However, I didn't depend upon the tractor for all of our power. We had, in addition, eight horses in 1929. We planted corn with horses, we did some plowing with horses, and also most all of the harrowing and part of the cultivation of the corn. Our

usual acreage of corn around that time was about 100 acres which was considered to be a rather large acreage. Today, it would be insignificant.

Again, in the mechanical line, I hated to shuck corn by hand. In fact, I couldn't shuck very much in one day compared to some of the good huskers who could roll out with 100 to 120 bushels per day. So at the first opportunity, I purchased a two-row International Harvester Farmall Mounted Corn Picker. It was the second one that was sold in this area and I used the corn picker for the harvesting. It was very difficult because of the breakage. The machines were not well tested and well developed at that time. But we did husk quite a bit of corn at that time with the corn picker.

Q: Some of the corn was broken when it was picked. Did you put hogs or cattle in the fields to pick up the residue?

A: Yes, we always used the cow herd to clean up the stalk field, and we still do. After the picker goes through, we turn the cattle in and they survive on that for two or three months. I did use the procedure of so-called hogging-down corn in small lots, occasionally. When I was farming I raised quite a few hogs. We marketed from 150 to 350 hogs a year. That was considered to be a pretty large hog operation, at that time, between 1929 and 1945.

Q: You mentioned farming with horses. In those times, it took quite a bit of hay and grain to feed them for a year.

A: Yes, when my great-granddad came here in 1853, agriculture was

almost entirely self-sufficient and was a way of life. In other words, very little was marketed. I remember my grandmother telling me that her brothers, who were twins, and who later served in the Civil War, worked all summer for their father and his pay to them for the summer's work was one large load of ear corn each. They loaded up this corn and hauled it with a team and wagon all the way to Terre Haute, Indiana which was the nearest cash grain market at that time. Before they came home, one of them spent his money on a pair of new boots and a hat. The other brought his money home.

Well, by the time I began farming in 1929, farming had become more of a business and it was more specialized. It was geared to produce a higher proportion of the product for commercial sale but we were still self-sufficient for many things. We had our own gardens and our own meat and milk. I was never in the dairy business as such commercially, but about the middle 1940's, I had a cow that produced our own milk and butter. We had our own chickens for eggs, and our own beef and pork, and we produced the feed for a good part of our power. I'd say we produced perhaps a third of our power requirements in the cultivation and planting and harvesting of crops. About a third of the power was horse power and the feed for the horse power was raised on the farm.

Today, with my own sons' operation, very little of the requirements are produced on the farm; there are no chickens and only the hogs we raise here. Farm operators today are dependent upon commercial purchase or outside inputs for their power, for their fertilizer, for their weed control; they hire very little labor. They have no poultry, no gardens, well, I shouldn't say that because each of them has a small garden, but

no eggs and no milk; that's all purchased. I'm not condemning this change. I'm just recognizing it. I believe that our agriculture today is more efficient by having specialized. Let the ones that have the ability and the desire produce the milk, or the poultry products and so on. It certainly doesn't pay from the standpoint of economics for a busy grain farmer to have a home garden. I think sometimes his wife or children can do so profitably. These highly mechanized, specialized operations of today cannot be self-sufficient: they're commercial operations.

Q: What type of fertilization or rotation program did you use in the 1930's to build up the soil?

A: We were very strong advocates of the University of Illinois' College of Agriculture Soil Fertility Program which was the Cyril G. Hopkins formula of lime, legumes, and phosphates with whatever animal fertilizer or manure we had. One of the first things I did on the farm was to begin spreading limestone because that had not been done by the previous operators. We limed the entire place. The first limestone we spread had to be hauled out from the railroad car on a siding in Sullivan, four miles away. It was spread very laboriously with a horse-drawn spreader. We scooped it out of the car that was on the siding--there were no hopper cars for limestone then--and hauled it to the field with teams and wagons. It was a long drawn-out job. A few years later, sometime in the late 1930's, there were a few custom operators who would spread limestone by truck. From then on we hired this done by custom spreaders.

As for commercial fertilizers, under the lime, legume, phosphate program advocated by the University at the time, they pooh-poohed the idea that commercial fertilizers would be of any value. I didn't begin to use commercial fertilizer until the late 1930's or early 1940's. I began the use of commercial fertilizer somewhat before the University came out strongly for it, because I had started, in the 1930's to produce hybrid seed corn and began to see that you could not get the maximum benefit from hybrid seed without the use of commercial sources of nitrogen, phosphate and potash. It had to be readily available, and more of it than you could get in any other system. I began to produce hybrid seed corn mostly to supply it for our own use and for a few neighbors, but later developed a small business.

I continued in the hybrid seed corn business until I was elected President of the Illinois Agricultural Association. This is the Farm Bureau in Illinois and that was a full-time job. At that time I had to develop a different management pattern on the home farm. I also had to do something about the seed corn business and I decided to discontinue it, because I could see at that time the business was going to larger operators, and mine was not a large operation. I think the most we ever produced was around 1,100 or 1,200 bushels of seed corn.

Q: Do you remember how your grandfather or your father picked their seed corn?

A: Yes, in fact, as a kid I helped my dad select the seed corn. In the beginning, they would have a little box in the front end of the

wagon when they were shucking corn, and when they'd come to a good looking ear--I mean good-looking from the standpoint of the appearance of the ear on a stalk that was standing of course--they'd throw it in the box. When they came in with a load of corn these selected ears were stored in a separate place and this would be their source of seed corn for the next year. If they didn't get enough of it that way, they would go through the crib and look at the corn as it came out to go to the hogs for feed, and would pick out the better-looking ears. It was simply a sight selection from the ear characteristics. The University and other educational institutions did a great amount of work in pointing out to the farmers the ways in which to select the best ears.

A little later though, the University emphasized the importance of field selection and we did some of that. We would go out in the fields, in the latter part of September or early October and pick the outstanding plants and select an ear out of the field from the observation of the standing stalk. That was a better way, but of course, hybrid seed corn has outmoded all of that.

Q: Would you have any way of testing to see whether it would grow the next year? Did you use any certain method?

A: Yes, the Moultrie County Farm Bureau, and I think Farm Bureau in most counties in Illinois, began a seed testing program soon after it was established. I think the Farm Bureau here started about 1917 or 1918 and within a year or two they had a seed testing laboratory. You could take your corn that you selected, number the ears, pull a few

grains from each ear and take it into the seed testing laboratory. They would germinate it to determine whether or not you had a good germination. They would also check to see whether or not there were diseases showing up. These disease organisms would germinate along with the corn and they would show up in the testing. So we had this service quite early, I'd say in the 1920's, and it was a valuable service and helped improve our seed markedly.

Q: Wasn't there a crude type of thing that the older people used—taking a piece of cloth and dampening it and putting the seed in that?

A: Yes, I have made these "rag-doll" testers myself as a kid on the farm. We did that, but that was before they had the seed testing lab at the Farm Bureau. We took a piece of an old sheet or some other cloth, tore it into strips, and marked it with squares. The grain to be tested was put in the little squares -- about five or six grains from each ear in each square. Each ear was numbered and the squares were correspondingly numbered. The cloth was then rolled up into what we called a "rag-doll", tied and placed in a bucket of water and kept in a warm place behind the stove or someplace. This method did not provide the kind of testing that would give much indication of disease infection of the ears but it was a good germination test.

Q: Did you do a similar thing with oats and wheat, or did they bother with that?

A: Most generally they didn't bother. At least I don't recall that we germinated oats, but after we had the seed testing service at the Farm Bureau, we germinated everything that we were going to plant.

Q: Of course there were the older crops of corn and wheat and oats and different hays, but when did you start with soybeans? It was a newcomer.

A: Moultrie County was one of the early counties that started in the soybean business. It was somewhere before 1920, I think around 1918 or 1919, that the county agent here, who was partly paid by the Farm Bureau, got a few samples of soybeans. There were a few progressive farmers like the Bolin brothers, Louis Seass, and W. R. Bone over at Bethany, who were early soybean growers in our county. My father, who was in charge of the operation at the time, wasn't particularly impressed with soybeans. At that time the varieties we had were primarily hay type and tended to lay down on the ground, and then we didn't have combines for the harvest. In the beginning, you had to mow them down and rake them up and haul them to a threshing machine, which was a very difficult job. A few [farmers] were growing them by 1920 here.

I grew the first soybeans on our farm in 1929 when we planted a few, and they were becoming fairly popular by then. There were also a few combines operating in the county by 1929. I didn't buy a combine but employed a custom operator to combine our soybeans. From then on we raised a few, although we have never raised as many acres of soybeans as we have of corn.

Another crop which was a little unusual and was pioneered here in Moultrie County was sunflowers, for seed. More recently, in 1972 in fact, sunflowers have been rather widely grown in Illinois because they're permitted to be grown on the acres diverted under the govern-

ment programs. But we raised sunflowers in this county rather extensively through the 1920 period, and I raised a crop of them in 1929. The sunflower weevil, however, practically put us out of business. We didn't have spraying equipment. While we had combines, nobody would have dared try to combine sunflowers because they were so rough and tough that they would have damaged the machine. We cut them by hand and threshed them either with a threshing machine or corn-sheller. There was a fair market for them in poultry feed, bird-seed, for roasting, and a limited amount for oil. They were a popular item in a few city markets as roasted sunflowers. It's interesting to see them come back after about 40 years.

Q: When you first started raising sunflowers, did the elevators take them in and dispose of them for you?

A: Yes, the elevators handled them. Mr. Earl Crowder of Bethany, Illinois, pioneered sunflower production here. He was a man with some considerable imagination and he thought of them as a potential crop. The first few years that they were raised most of the crop went for seed to other farmers who wanted to go into raising sunflowers. During that period of the 1920's the price of corn and wheat was not too satisfactory, and sunflowers at three or four cents a pound--some years they were even higher than that--were a very attractive crop, because you could raise about as many pounds of sunflowers then as you can now. I think our crops ran from 1,000 to 2,000 pounds per acre. It was a very attractive crop. Of course, it was less attractive after everybody got supplied with seed and we had to turn to the commercial market. It was far less attractive when the weevil moved in as it

destroyed from twenty to fifty percent of the crop.

Q: Did you have any difficulty with sunflowers spreading to undesirable places?

A: We didn't have too much trouble that way. Of course, there will be some volunteer sunflowers after a crop of sunflowers. But if that field is worked down early there will be few problems. The volunteer sunflowers come up fairly early and when they are small, the plants are easily killed. I've heard some of that concern this year. I don't think that we're going to have much problem; there'll be a few of them, but actually the type of sunflower that is raised for seed is not a bad weed. Now the Kansas sunflower is something different; it's a wild weed. But this sunflower is a different type plant.

Q: You were born and raised here in this county. Can you tell me something about the early schools or the schools you attended here?

A: I'll go all the way back to when my great-grandfather came here in 1853. There were, at that time, a few local schools, but they did not follow a definite pattern. They had provided for a school every two miles, but they weren't all established. My great-grandfather gave the land from the corner of our farm for the first school in our neighborhood. Up until that time the children were assembled and taught in private homes or not at all.

The first schoolhouse was a small building on the corner of our farm and my grandfather who came from Pennsylvania was one of the first teachers. He was one of the few men in the neighborhood, at that time, who was educated a little beyond three or four grades. He had gone to

schools in Philadelphia so they gave him the job of teaching in the wintertime. He worked on the farm for my great-grandfather in the summertime, and later, of course, married the farmer's daughter. The school was named Pisgah after the church near Lexington, Kentucky where great-grandfather's family worshipped.

It wasn't long after that when the neighborhood became more thickly settled,and the little schoolhouse on the half acre of land that he had donated was too small, and it was a little too remote from where most of the children lived. So another farmer in the neighborhood furnished an acre of land and they built another schoolhouse. One time my grandmother told me that out of the 35 children in the school, all of them had the one name, Purvis, except herself and her name was McPheeters. In other words, the entire neighborhood was settled and populated by families by the name of Purvis, except for the one McPheeters family. The name of the school was changed to "Purvis."

This school building was the one that I later attended. My grandfather taught in the first school; later on, my mother attended and taught there, and then later I went to the same school. It was located about a little less than half a mile across the fields from our home. By road, it would be almost a mile. So my sisters and I walked across the field and attended this school. A few of the teachers that I had in school are still living in this community. It was a one-room, one-teacher school and the teacher boarded with the families in the neighborhood. She did her own janitor work or else hired one of the larger boys to help her clean up and bring in the fuel. Some years she, or he in the case of a man teacher, would have eight grades all reciting the

same day in the same schoolroom.

However, they normally tried to consolidate some of the grades where they had fewer pupils. This is how I went through eight grades of school in seven years. One year there were only three of us in the third or fourth grade and after talking to our parents the teacher decided that one of the three would be moved back and the others moved forward—so we skipped a grade. It really wasn't too difficult, because in a one-room school you heard all the classes recite, first through eight, and by the time you got to the fourth grade or the eighth grade as the case might be, you'd heard all of it anyway.

We had what they called final examinations that were distributed by the County Superintendent of Schools. The same examination was given to all of the eighth grade students; it was a requirement for graduation.

Not too long before I graduated from eighth grade, there had been established in our area the Sullivan Township High School. Before that there was a Sullivan High School and the country school children could go if they wanted to but they were not encouraged to do so. If they went, they paid some tuition. But with the coming of the Township High School there was more encouragement for all the children, both town and country, to go. However, they had to furnish their own transportation, of course, and if they lived any distance from Sullivan it was difficult.

I remember well the referendum on the location of the Township High School! There were three sites from which to choose. The one where the junior and senior high schools are located now, at the north edge of Sullivan, was the one chosen. The building was constructed and my

sister and I were in about the fifth or sixth class that entered this new school building.

After I came back to the farm in 1929, I served on the board of directors of the local one-room country school and, of course, that was quite an experience. One of the directors had been on the school board for more than 30 years; he was an old-timer. He was very deaf--could hardly hear it thunder--and he could not read or write, yet he had been on the school board for 30 years. I didn't serve with him but I came on the board when they finally succeeded in getting him to retire. We ordinarily had good school boards, they were interested in better education. And while this old fellow could neither read or write, he was reasonably interested in maintaining a good school. After I had served on the school board for a few years, we noticed the tendency of the attendance to go down. The enrollment in the rural schools went down as the number of farms declined and people got tractors. The tractor mechanization revolution began in the 1920's and carried through the 1930's, resulting in fewer families on the farms. They were farming larger farms and attendance at our school dropped until we had less than 20 students, and that was generally true with all the rural schools around.

Another member of the board and myself got the idea of forming a consolidated district. With the support of the Illinois Agricultural Association [Farm Bureau], legislation had been adopted which encouraged the voluntary consolidation of local school districts into a consolidated district. We explored this legislation and discussed it with neighboring school districts and their boards of directors. We met with the parents and finally submitted the question to the voters in each of the

six original districts. These were all one-room school districts serving a two mile square area. In addition to the Purvis district the others were Two Mile, Julian, Miller, Bolin, and I can't recall the name of the sixth one. Somewhat to our surprise, the voters approved the referendum.

After we had done it, the people in two additional districts decided that they'd like to come in, too. The proposition was first approved in eight districts, but later on two of the eight withdrew. There was a lot of excitement about this at that time. It was a hot issue—whether there should be a consolidation or not. Many people didn't want their local school closed. We promised that we were not going to close all of them as we were going to use the existing schools. We finally did use three of the existing schools for several years and bought a small bus. By this time we were involved in World War II and you couldn't buy a school bus for love or money. We bought a type of enlarged car, like the airport limousines. We hauled the children to three of the schools and hired three teachers. The beginning grades, one through three, I believe, were put in one building; two miles away, in another building, we had the middle grades. The junior high grades were in the third building. This worked very successfully; we had problems but it worked very successfully. Finally the legislation in Illinois was changed so as to encourage further consolidation and the present unit district was formed. Our consolidated district was the forerunner of the unit schools we now have.

One of the things that we did after a few years of operating three schools in three different places was to move two of the existing buildings to a

new site and build a third room in between. Then we had a three-room building and all the children came to one site. After the unit consolidation in Sullivan, this three-room building was bought by the Moultrie County Farm Bureau and turned over to the 4-H Foundation and is now the Moultrie County 4-H Center. It is used for all kinds of rural meetings as well as the 4-H show.

One other thing about the early schools that perhaps ought to be mentioned was that many times the teachers were not too well trained, and often inexperienced.

By virtue of the fact that they would often stay out of school in the fall to shuck corn, or in the spring to help plow and get ready for the new corn crop, many of the students only went to school in the wintertime. The result would be that some of them would be going into eighth grade when they were quite a bit older than the eighth grade pupils of today. In fact, it was not unusual when I was in grade school for eighth grade students to be seventeen, eighteen, twenty years old--sometimes older than the teacher and far stronger and bigger.

It wasn't an easy life to be a teacher in a one-room school. In addition to having to conduct all of these different kinds of classes, she had a discipline problem with her older pupils. Also, since it was so unhandy to go to high school, it was sometimes a practice to continue going to the eighth grade. Or some after graduation from the eighth grade, would continue coming back to school the next winter when, if the teacher was capable, she would offer a course to them in mathematics, geometry or something like that.

One year our teacher was Donald Butler of Sullivan, who later went to the University of Louisville and became a dentist. After all these years, he is still practicing in Sullivan. Butler was an athlete at the University and was on the basketball team. When he came to our school he got all of us interested in track events and baseball and we had our own competition between some of the neighboring schools in track.

Another interesting thing developed after that. It didn't start in our school but we later took it on. One of the music teachers, Mrs. Gregory of Lovington, and there were others, undertook the job of traveling from one one-room school to another to conduct an hour of music training once a week for us. So our schools were not so bad. In fact, as I look at our schools today, I think they stacked up pretty well; they were pretty good schools by the time I was in the grade school. The preparation we had through grade school and high school enabled us to hold our own quite well at the University. In fact, due to the fact that we had to concentrate to get our work done in a one-room school, with all the diversions of the various classes, we were probably better fitted for mental concentration than are the students of today.

Q: It also built self-reliance, don't you think? You were on your own, you didn't have somebody supervising you every minute.

A: That's right. Much of our study and much of our work had to be done at home at night because during the day the teacher used the upper grade students to help her with her classes and to help the other kids with their studies or something else in school. So we had to do the larger portion of our studying at home. I don't think that did any great harm, either.

Q: Yes, I remember hearing the youngsters spell or even helping a slow reader. What about the entertainment at the one-room school? Was that the nucleus of the community at that time?

A: Yes, the whole area of community development in rural Illinois is interesting. In the beginning, in 1853 when my great-granddad came here, there wasn't anything much in the way of organized community activities but there was plenty of unorganized activities. Whenever a new settler came and wanted to build a house or barn he had a barn-raising and the neighbors pitched in and helped. The same was true with the crop work even through the time that I was farming. Until the late 1930's, we had a threshing ring here and all of the neighbors participated and furnished some help. It was a great social activity; you usually had a picnic or party of some kind after the harvest was over. There were a lot of informal activities and neighborhood functions.

Then, of course, from very early times some kind of activities centered around the school. Later they called it the PTA [Parent Teachers Association]. In the beginning they were just a school club or something like that. I don't think many of these so-called PTA's were affiliated with the formal PTA organization, but they used that name. Normally during the school year we would have a meeting once a month with some kind of a program. The teachers and parents would plan the program and everyone in the neighborhood around the school would come and even some from adjoining school districts. They would have some singing or music planned and recitals, speeches or poems by the children. Some of the children would participate in the program and they'd quite often have an outside speaker. The County Superintendent of Schools or a judge or

any interesting person would make a little talk and then there would be simple refreshments afterwards--cake, pie or something else.

At least once a year there would be a box supper where the girls in the neighborhood brought in decorated boxes with sandwiches, pie and cake in the box. They would be auctioned off and the money that came from the auction would be used for things needed to help improve the school.

Of course, the excitement of the auction was that the boys would try to buy their favorite girl's box so they could eat with her. Some of the more playful adults would try to make the box cost more than the young folks could afford. These were very interesting social affairs. There was always a Christmas program and sometimes an Easter program. At the close of school there would be an end-of-school picnic, and of course, the graduation exercise for the eighth graders was usually at the county seat and that was a gala day.

Later on, the schools became smaller as the rural population went down and the number of children declined so that these activities became of lesser importance. In fact, as somewhat of a replacement for these many PTA's, the Farm Bureau in the county organized township Community Clubs which somewhat supplanted the old PTA--but not entirely. As long as there were one-room schools there were a number of local school clubs. There was plenty of activity. In fact, perhaps there was more local community activity then--well, I know there was more--than now. Today there's a great deal of activity centered around the school but it's a larger area and it involves more athletic events, musicals and plays than it does purely social activities. The old one-room school was a social center.

Q: You mentioned the programs at night. There was no electricity in those days so what did you do, carry a lantern and take lamps?

A: Yes, most of these activities were at night--of course, a picnic or something like that would be in the daytime--and sometimes the Christmas program would be in the afternoon, but most of them were at night. The school, from the time I knew it, was lighted with pressure gasoline lamps. I'm not sure when the mantle was first invented but the Coleman gasoline pressure lamp, which was pumped up with a little air pump, was used. The lamp had an ash mantle and when the gasoline flame went through that mantle it made a really brilliant light that was more powerful than most electric lights today, so we had plenty of light.

Getting to the place was another matter. Before we had automobiles, we went by horse and buggy or horse and wagon and we had to carry a lantern along in case of any difficulty. Or we walked across the fields to get there through the dark, which wasn't a bad experience if the weather wasn't too bad. Going to school was sometimes a rather traumatic experience, especially for the youngsters. We had boots and rubberized raincoats, of course, but in the spring or winter it could be rather difficult, especially if a rainstorm had come up about the time we had to go to school or come home. Occasionally the children couldn't get to school because of the weather, but the attendance was really remarkably good. Sometimes the parents would come after them if it was particularly bad, like a snowstorm.

Our roads were very poor. Today our secondary roads out through the country, in fact this road in front of our house here, is an oiled road.

A low grade oil is sprayed on the surface. This holds the surface intact for about a year; then next year they'll oil it again. It's fairly expensive to maintain but that's the type of road we have here. Some places they have gravel roads. When I was a boy, and even after I started farming, we had very few of this type road; our roads were mud roads. The result was that after October, along in November and December, the roads would break up and become very muddy, and you didn't go very much then except by foot or horseback.

We would drive the team and wagon, or a team and surrey--a two-seated, horse-drawn conveyance--four miles to Sullivan, our nearest shopping place,about once a week. Sometimes, if the weather was bad on Saturday, which was the day to go, we wouldn't make it but once in two weeks.

It is almost impossible to describe these roads to anyone today, because the mud was so deep. By the time a few wagons and buggies had gone over them and they would freeze and thaw a little, the ruts in the road would be almost up to the axle, so you went only with great difficulty.

Q: Did you have any of what we used to call corduroy roads, where they put logs or poles in the low spots to get through?

A: We didn't have any here in this area although occasionally when they got so bad, someone would come in with some chunks of wood and put them in the holes. There was, as long as I can remember, a gravel road from Sullivan two miles east to the Illinois Masonic Home. From the time the home was established, they had to have coal to heat the place and they had to have a road to haul the coal over. But where we lived we didn't have that advantage.

My folks bought a car fairly early, back in about 1920, but that car was jacked up in the fall and stayed on the jacks until spring because we couldn't go anywhere in it in the wintertime; we drove it only in the summer. My grandfather bought a car before that. He lived in town at this time and was president of the bank. He bought a car in about 1916 or 1917. I can remember quite well that it was one of the early cars that I'd seen. It was a Maxwell with brass trim all around, straps to hold the top down, and gas-type lights. It was cranked by hand to start, of course.

I can remember the first airplane that I saw was in Sullivan when one of those barn-storming pilots brought an airplane there for an exhibition at the fairgrounds. The interesting thing which most people today don't realize was that the airplane came about the same time, and in some cases a little earlier, than the automobile. I can remember this about the first airplane that came here. It must have been around the 1916 to 1918 period. There were very few automobiles, probably not over a dozen or 15, in the rather large crowd that came to see the plane. Practically all came by horse and buggy. And that's something that's always been strange to my children and other younger people—they think the automobile's been around a long time, but it really hasn't.

Of course, we had difficulty getting to school when we went to the high school in 1920, because we still didn't have all-year around roads in our neighborhood. My sister and I drove a horse and buggy to high school for the two years that we drove from where we lived on the farm.

In 1922 my folks moved to town. The reason that they moved to town was that my grandmother was in poor health and they moved into her home for a period of time to help take care of her. Later they moved to Urbana where we children were in school. During that short period of time our farm was leased out to another operator but my father kept very close track and was down on the farm a great deal.

Q: You mentioned going to Sullivan about once a week to purchase supplies when the roads were so bad. I suppose if you had any produce, eggs or butter or cream, it went in at the same time.

A: Yes, we normally sold cream from our milk cows. In the wintertime it wasn't too bad to take it to town once a week. In the summertime we delivered it more often and (laughs) even then it wasn't quite enough. The way in which we kept things cool was interesting. We had no electricity, of course, and any refrigeration we had would be what you'd call occasional in the summertime. In a few years we did put up ice off the pond that was on the farm. We had a room in part of one of the barns where we had some sawdust and if we got a good batch of ice, we'd cut it off the pond and store it there and the next summer we'd have ice. We had an ice refrigerator--that was quite a luxury. When we didn't have ice off of our pond--if there wasn't enough frozen in that winter— we'd occasionally buy a chunk of ice and make ice cream and try to keep our dairy products from spoiling. We also had what we called a milk house that had a long cement trough in it. All of the waste water that was pumped, and some additional water that we pumped from the well, would go in this long trough and we placed the crocks of milk, in which the cream was rising, in the

trough. We also kept the cream there. So we had some improvised cooling.

The marketing of grain had to be done when the highway or the road was fairly solid. It was almost impossible to drive a loaded wagon over the roads in the wintertime. When they were frozen they were very rough, and of course when they were thawed out, it was impossible to go over them with a team and wagonload of grain because it was too soft and too hard to pull. So about the only thing we could do in the wintertime was go to town with a horse and buggy and get what we had to have in the way of supplies.

When it came time to market cattle or hogs in the wintertime, we normally drove them to the nearest railroad loading yard. Since I began farming in 1929, I have driven both hogs and cattle to the loading yards in Sullivan. Otherwise, we had to load the hogs in a wagon and haul them in and we had some difficulty in the wintertime doing that. But the grain was largely marketed when the road was passable.

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Q: How did you handle corn?

A: The corn was all shucked by hand and it was planted in rows 40 inches apart with 40 inches between the hills and checked. It was unusual to get yields much above 50 bushels, in fact 35 was pretty good and 40 was real good. Then we had to haul it into the crib. Most generally it was scooped by hand into the crib, but there were a few farmers who had dumps and elevators where they could dump the

load and elevate it with a power elevator driven either by horse power or a gasoline engine. It was much later that it was common to use dumps and elevators that were powered by electricity. It was much later before we started shelling in the field with the combines.

After the ear corn was stored in the crib and dried out through the winter, it could be shelled. Custom corn shellers would come around and we would have the corn shelled and either hauled with wagons or later with trucks to the nearest elevator.

Threshing was quite a complicated procedure in that a threshing machine required a number of wagons, teams and workers to bring the grain from the field where it was cut with a binder and shocked. We had to have a rack wagon to haul the grain to the threshing machine and then had to have a grain bed or tight bed as they were called to haul grain from the threshing machine to the elevator or to a storage bin if it was stored on the farm.

The threshing crew would usually run, depending on the size of the threshing machines, 20 to 35 men with their teams and wagons. The crew would come and thresh grain on one farm and then move on to the next farm. We would send our crew of whatever manpower and equipment we had to each job in the threshing ring. In a big threshing ring there would be 30 days or more of oats and wheat threshing. Some of the smaller machines didn't require as many workers and did not serve as many farms. The size of the crew depended on the capacity of the machine. If it was a big capacity machine it would thresh the grain rather quickly, but more farmers were involved and that usually re-

quired a longer period of time. Threshing was a social event, but it was also an efficient way to get the grain harvested. This practice was uniform throughout our area until the combines came.

Q: Did they use horses to propell the early threshers or steam?

A: Well, as long as I can remember, steam or even gasoline or kerosene was used to power tractors. I can't remember when there were not some of the early petroleum powered tractors. However, I have seen horse powered threshing machines that were used before they had the steam powered threshers. Most of the outfits in use when I was a youngster and even when I began to farm were steam powered, but later on most of them were tractor powered.

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Q: Could you tell us something about the early churches?

A: Yes, my family, from the time they first came here in 1853, was very much involved in the church. In fact, one of the main reasons they settled here was that there was a Cumberland Presbyterian Church located in Sullivan at that time and my old great-grandfather was a strong Presbyterian. He was not satisfied with the Paris or Charleston communities where other members of his family had settled because they didn't have as good a church. So he came on over here. Of course, I'm a Methodist because my father, who was a Presbyterian, married a girl who had been in the Christian Church and they settled on Methodist as a compromise. Our community here had many rural churches when

I was a young fellow. Very few of them survived but there are one or two outstanding exceptions; the Jonathan Creek Christian Church is probably 125 to 130 years old and is a very thriving, very good church. However, since we were Methodists, we went to Sullivan to the Methodist Church and this church was established in about 1850.

Mechanization and the coming of tractors to the farming community reduced the population very drastically and rapidly. As the population went down, the number of churches declined, too. Farmers acquired automobiles very rapidly in the period from 1916 to 1920. The Model T Ford is what did it--when the farm family bought a Model T Ford they no longer had to go to the nearest church. They could go to whichever church seemed best to them. So these two things--the reduction in farm population from about 1917 or 1918 through the 1930's and the coming of the automobile--caused the abandonment of many churches that were scattered throughout the countryside. The automobile also made it possible for people to engage in other activities on Sunday which probably reduced church participation. But we did have a number of good churches and we still do. Rural people have generally supported their churches fairly well and the church has had an outstanding role in the development of the local community, here as elsewhere.

Q: At that time was the church not only a place of religious worship but also a place for social gatherings?

A: Yes, the church and the school were the centers of the community social activity and we had very few other kinds of entertainment or social activity. The school had its monthly meetings and picnics in

the spring and hot dog roasts in the fall; the church had its prayer meeting in the middle of the week and its Sunday night services and young people's meeting. Almost every year, we'd have a week or two of Evangelistic campaign where outside speakers and singers would come in, and then the old Chautauqua was in existence about the time that I was a young man.

Chautauqua was a big institution and an important activity in the community. It would run for a week or so during the summertime. It was a combination lecture and entertainment course supported by season tickets and single admission sales. People came from all over the country. We had Chautauqua here at Sullivan and they had Chautauqua at Lithia Springs near Shelbyville. Almost every county seat would have a Chautauqua. In the wintertime the high school and the community together would sponsor various kinds of cultural events. We ordinarily had a series of concerts and lectures at the high school building; that is, after we had a high school.

Of course I shouldn't forget, in the way of social activities, the family itself. Families were large and we had relatives scattered all over the community and they weren't as far flung as relatives are today. Many Sundays through the winter, and also summer, we would go to one of our relatives for Sunday dinner or they would come to our house. Then, in addition to our relatives, we had friends that would visit back and forth. It wasn't unusual in the wintertime, after the chores were done, for a family to hitch up the surrey or the wagon and drive two or three miles to visit friends they hadn't seen for awhile. There was a great deal of social activity in our neigh-

borhood and all through the rural community.

Q: You attended the high school at Sullivan all four years?

A: Yes. When I started there in 1919, the building was relatively new since they had recently formed a township high school district and built a new building. Before that it had been Sullivan High School, just a city school; now it was a township school. My sister and I started there in the fall of 1919; she was two years younger but she had skipped a grade; in fact, she skipped three grades and I skipped one in grade school. It was not unusual to skip a grade because the teacher would consolidate students where they didn't have enough for a good class. We drove a horse and buggy to high school for two years. As I see the high schools today, this school was quite modern.

There were some things that were different, but generally speaking, it was not too different from the high schools today. We had less activities but we had plenty of activities. We had a football team, a basketball team and a track team; we had chorus. We did not have the vocational-agricultural training or the FFA[1]. program that the country boys have today. In the wintertime we had hot lunches available in our school although most of the year we took our lunches in a lunch pail or sack. The town boys and girls walked back and forth for lunch.

We had a Star Course or some other type of music and lecture program during the winter. There were four or five of these events that stu-

1. Future Farmers of America. Ed.

dents could go to but it was for the entire community. There was no band program but there was a good chorus program for music. Typing and bookkeeping were some of the vocational subjects that were offered, as was woodworking or manual training as they called it. We didn't have some of the other activities. We very seldom went on trips to other schools which today is quite common with the athletic teams and band and other groups of students. Once a year we would be involved in a basketball tournament, and many of the students would manage to get to Decatur on the railroad for the basketball tournament. Some of them had cars but most of them would ride the train. The high school was a good institution, well run, and it was directed towards preparation for college or for work in an office or store. It was a general liberal arts type of education. In fact, it was in some ways superior to present day secondary education because we were really expected to work hard; the assigned work other than classwork was much heavier than it is today.

Q: From there you went to the University of Illinois?

A: Yes, I had had in mind and was encouraged by my parents, to think of going to the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois. I started there in the fall of 1924, not having had much experience other than that in which my parents had been involved. Because my father had had a problem with his health at this time, my family moved to Urbana. They lived there during the time I was in the University so I was a town student in Urbana. My father was ruptured and the first surgery was not very successful so he was physically handicapped for a few years. That's the reason he left the farm at that time and

rented it out for the period of time that I was going to the University.

The University of Illinois was in the beginning of its huge expansion at the time I was at the school. They had built several new buildings in the year or two before I went there in 1924 and Red Grange was at his peak. If he had graduated from the University, he would have been in the class of 1927. The Red Grange influence on the University of Illinois was considerable because it focused attention on athletics and on the University. I think probably more than any one thing, it was responsible for the liberal appropriation from the legislature for a few years for various things. Then, of course, it also helped stimulate the alumni to greater support.

The Memorial Stadium was financed by contributions from alumni and friends of the University and that took place before the Red Grange era although Red Grange played in the Stadium. It was finished in about 1923 or 1924. What is now known as Mumford Hall was the new Ag building. I was going there in 1924 and I think it had been in use for one year.

The enrollment in the College of Agriculture was not too large at this time because from 1920 to 1929 farmers had a real depression of their own that preceded the Great Depression of the 1930's. Most young folks from farms could not afford a college education at the time I went up there. I was fortunate in that my family was able to finance my attendance. I doubt if they could have if it had not been for the fact that they moved to Urbana and my father worked at the University Farm as a farm hand. During the summers I worked practically

full time at various kinds of work.

One summer I did odd jobs--mowed lawns, cleaned house, washed windows---everything you can imagine. Another summer I worked for a Bloomington manufacturer of furnaces in making a survey of the Champaign-Urbana area, calling house to house. This company manufactured oil furnaces and they were just being promoted at this time. The purpose of this survey was to uncover prospects for the sale of oil furnaces. Another summer, in fact two summers, I worked for the University of Illinois.

One summer I was in the Rock Island-Moline area where the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was undertaking a study. They were financing a study made by the University of Illinois of agriculture and business relationships and the possibility of developing markets for locally grown farm products in the city area. This was quite interesting and it was in line with my developing interest in agricultural economics.

One summer I worked for the College of Agriculture Agronomy Department in making graphs and charts and compiling statistics of the agricultural market, prices and trends. I did about everything in the way of odd job work.

I remember well one summer when a University professor in Commerce employed two of us to help remodel the house that he had bought for rental purposes. The house was coated inside with calcimine--many people today wouldn't know what calcimine was. It was a colored plaster coating that went over the rough plaster walls. The stuff looked real good when it was new, but when it got older and got water splashed on it,

that made marks. The owner wanted to remove all of the calcimine and then he was going to paper or paint. You couldn't put paper or paint over calcimine and removing it was a long-time, dirty job and the pay was not very high.

Before I went up to the University of Illinois, the year or two my folks lived in Sullivan, I worked on a farm at a dollar a day plus board. That seems very low today but the dollar bought more then than it does today. As I recall, the pay for this type of odd job work was about 25 cents an hour and we thought we were doing pretty good. I really hit the jackpot when I went to work for the furnace people with the survey because they paid around 50 cents for every survey blank that was turned in. They weren't simple blanks--there were several pages in this survey--but I remember making as much as $5.00 a day and I thought that was tremendous pay; and it was good pay for a college boy working during the summer. So with all these activities I did earn a fairly high portion of the cost of my tuition, books, clothing and things of that kind.

The University of Illinois was not a large school in comparison with today. I think there were something like 120 in my graduating class in General Agriculture. There were some other specialized groups in agricultural education and, of course, home economics girls were in agriculture. Our Ag College was a close-knit group; we knew all the other students and most of the professors on a personal basis. There was a great advantage in this because, unlike college education today, the undergraduates were in close contact with the professors many of whom had their doctorate degrees. We had opportunities that are not

available to college students in a large enrollment institution today. The University itself was a large institution and when we took required courses or elective courses outside of agriculture, we ran into the big institution complex. It was an interesting experience in two ways—to be a part of a large institution, and also to be a part of a smaller one, the College of Agriculture.

I worked hard in my school work and got fairly good grades. I got a good enough grade average to get into the honorary agricultural fraternities that were operating. I had some outside activities other than the schoolwork. I was involved in the Ag Club which was the organization of ag students and I was active in helping put out the Agriculturist. It was a magazine published by the College of Agriculture students for the students, faculty and some outsiders. However, I didn't work on the editorial side of it, I worked on the business side. I helped sell advertising. I was the candidate, unsuccessful candidate I might say, for business manager in my senior year. The other boy got that selection.

I also was somewhat involved in other activities. The junior class sponsored a welcome party for Ag College freshmen and they called it the Peanut Banquet. It was held in the Stock Judging Pavillion and they invited all the incoming freshman students, both boys and girls, to this night of fun. The refreshments they served were peanuts and cider and it was a nice event. I was chairman of that when I was a junior or senior.

I never joined a fraternity until I was a junior and I joined the Farmhouse Fraternity which was a professional ag fraternity. There

wasn't very much advantage in joining a fraternity when you lived in the town.

One of the outstanding things that happened to me in the Ag College was when a professor--now deceased--by the name of Roscoe Snapp who was in beef cattle at the time, apparently recognized that I had some writing ability. He asked me if I would write an essay for a national contest sponsored by the Saddle and Sirloin Club which is a Chicago ag-related organization. I entered this contest, wrote the essay and was fortunate enough to get the first prize. Perhaps that, more than anything, convinced me that I could write if I wanted to.

The interest that the faculty people, especially top faculty, took in students then was one of the outstanding things in my college career. Perhaps this did more than anything to help me in later years. Most of these men are now deceased and all the others are retired. Until just recently I was able to go back anytime and find a number of professors that had been my friends, and I mean personal friends, in college days. Very few students can do that today; that's the difference in the times, not the difference in the people.

As a result of living in Urbana and being there in the summertime, I did, during two summers, in addition to working full time, take summer session work and got some extra credits so that I had enough credits to graduate one semester before the regular time in 1928. But I waited to graduate with the class and went ahead to take some graduate courses in agriculture. When you graduate in June, you can't start farming then; you have to wait until the next spring. So, I went ahead in grad-

uate school and got my masters degree at the end of the first semester in 1929. I did my graduate work with a major in agronomy and a minor in agricultural economics. The graduate work in agricultural economics was particularly valuable to me. The graduate work in agronomy was not worth too much in long time value although it was very interesting. I got my masters degree in 1929, and I started farming in the spring of 1929.

Q: Of course the farmers had known a depression for a number of years previous to that, but by that time, the country as a whole was feeling that depression. How did that affect you or hinder you in getting started in farming?

A: It certainly caused me to be concerned because the depression in agriculture had hung on all these years. Immediately after World War I we had a collapse in farm prices. World War I was of short duration and we were in it just long enough to get geared up to produce more and then it was over. In addition, Congress made a very bad mistake from the standpoint of farmers when they decided at the end of World War I to protect domestic labor and industry by increasing the tariffs. We had several pieces of legislation in the 1920's to increase tariffs on imports of foreign goods. The effect of this, of course, was to shut off or close our markets to foreign manufacturers and these countries were very poverty stricken. They didn't have any money except if they could sell to somebody, so they stopped buying our farm products. That's why we had this agricultural depression in the 1920's. It was not just something that happened; it was something that was brought on us by the protectionist action of the Congress of the United States.

And, of course, having been in college at the time this was going on, and having had the opportunity to study the economics of the times, I was not too overly optimistic. At the same time I didn't, and no one at the time did, foresee the tremendous crash we had in 1929 and the Great Depression of the 1930's.

So when I started farming, the business community and the economy was booming quite highly. In 1928 and 1929 there was a real boom on. When I look back on the prices I paid for the used farm equipment I bought in the spring of 1929, it's hard to realize that it was the beginning of a huge depression. We didn't really know that we were hit until some time later. The farmers would remark that it wouldn't hurt them too much because it had already happened to them. I had some of that same misapprehension when I started farming in 1929 and the bottom dropped out of everything else. I commenced to think that farmers had already had their depression, but we hadn't seen anything yet.

The first crops I sold in 1929 brought pretty good prices compared to what they did later and it wasn't until 1933 that we really hit bottom for sure. It was difficult for me to begin farming because my father, due to his health, had discontinued active farming in about 1922. While I had done a lot of farm work even after that by working on my uncle's farm during the summer, I was not too familiar with farm work. There was a lapse of several years when I had not been involved in actual farm work. In that same period of time, the tractor had come into general use. My experience in farming had been with horses. I had done about everything there was to do with horses and so I came on the

scene at a time when it was a little difficult for me. I employed a full-time hired man because we were going to be farming about three hundred acres of crops and that was impossible for one man to take care of.

I think I purchased eight horses to work with. I bought a new Farmall tractor. It was only the second or third year that Farmall tractors had been in use in our county. I bought the plow and the disc that went with it. The rest of the machinery I bought at auction sales--used machinery.

As a result of my inexperience, I made a few mistakes. I also bought a few bred gilts and started in the hog business. Then, in the course of the next two years, I went to a few pure-bred Angus auction sales and bought what was the foundation of our present Angus herd, some 43 years later. I bought five cows that were bred, some of them had calves by their side, and proceeded to learn the livestock business the hard way. I was fairly successful with cattle; I had a good calf crop and we had rough land on the farm so they were taken care of without too much in the way of buildings. We fed out the calves that we raised and saved the heifers until we had enough to amount to something. In the hog business, I increased that until we fed up most of the grain we raised on the farm.

The first year was a rough one because in the year 1929 it rained and rained and rained in the spring and by starting in the spring I had no fall plowing done and with a two-bottom tractor and one horse-drawn gang plow, we didn't get quite all of our land in cultivation that

year. However, some of the experienced farmers were in the same boat. It was a year that if you had enough power you could have gotten in it, but very few farmers at that time had the kind of power it took to put a crop in in just a few days. By having wet weather and delayed planting, our yields were not too good. I started farming by borrowing $5,000 and later, as the depression wore on, I didn't get out of debt entirely. At one time I was in debt $7,000 which was the highest; that sounds like peanuts today, but $7,000 was a lot of money in 1933.

Q: What were the interest rates in 1929?

A: The interest in the beginning was 3 1/2 percent, I think, on this operating loan. Interest rates in the last 30 or 40 years have varied more or less with political considerations. Since we've had the Federal Reserve System there's been quite a bit of manipulation of interest rates by the politicians. I'm not criticizing the Federal Reserve but I'm just recognizing the facts. I have paid varying rates of interest from 2 1/2 percent to 7 or 8 percent. At that time they were fairly low and they did go lower later on.

Q: As the Depression hung on, how did that effect you in general? Could you expand your farming operation?

A: Actually, due to the very low prices of farm products, there was very little in the way of expansion that I could do or anyone else could do. In fact, we were retrenching more than anything. The argument raised sometimes is that the lower the price, the more you raise—the more crops you raise. That's just not true; that's a fabrication.

It is true, of course, that agriculture responds rather slowly to changes in price because it takes quite awhile to get in the livestock business and it takes a year to raise a crop. But we were not buying fertilizer and we were not buying limestone. We were not buying new breeding stock, and we did not use as much protein in our livestock rations as we would have if the prices of livestock had been better. We didn't buy new machinery. Once I got started in 1929, I didn't buy any more equipment for several years.

The worst shock that happened to us, I think, was after the election of Roosevelt in 1933 and he announced the Bank Holiday and all the banks were closed. Fortunately for me, the bank I did business with re-opened rather quickly. However, nobody was hurt too much because we didn't have much in the bank and things were at such a level that a good deal of barter was going on anyway, even before the banks closed.

I don't know--we were happy during the Depression. People who were dependent upon jobs were unemployed and on relief, but in the 1920's and 1930's, farmers were still very self-sufficient. We raised our own meat, milk, poultry and eggs. We always had a garden and we lived pretty good although we didn't have much cash money to buy other things. Clothing was low-priced but we made do with what we had; we didn't buy too much new clothing. The most expensive thing I, as a farmer, had to buy in that period was the fuel for the tractor and the fuel and upkeep for an automobile.

But we lived on very little cash and yet we didn't suffer. It was kind of a joke; the banks closed and everybody had a big time out of

it because we compared notes as to how much cash money we had in our pockets at the time the banks closed. The Depression wore on rather discouragingly. After the big shock of it and the big stock market crash, most people expected a recovery; we didn't expect it to go on as it did.

When I came back from the University in 1929 I was not married. In 1933, in the depths of the Depression, I married Ida Wilson who was the math teacher in the local high school. I got acquainted with her after I got back here on the farm but it did take quite a bit of nerve to get married in 1933. However, as a mathematics teacher, she'd saved up some money and at least we thought we could get along. We did manage to get along although as I said before, we did not anticipate that the Depression would continue as long as it did. Actually, the Depression of the 1930's was not relieved materially for farmers until World War II broke out in Europe.

Q: At about the end of the Depression, the rural electricity project came through the country. Did you have electricity before that? Some people had Delco light plants.

A: Yes, soon after we married, we bought the house that we live in now which was on forty acres adjoining our farm. It had some rudimentary plumbing but no electric wiring. A year or two after we bought it, in 1934 or 1935, I got the idea of installing a Delco plant and we bought one and put in some wiring for a few lights. We crippled along with that until about 1936 when we first got electricity off the high line. We might have used the Delco plant two years, but I

forget. After the REA[2] legislation was passed, some of the leaders in Farm Bureau and the Extension workers in this area began to discuss the possibility of organizing a rural cooperative. I, being active in the Farm Bureau, helped in the organizational work and helped sign up neighbors in the REA cooperative. We finally got it organized in late 1935, I think, and got the first lines constructed in 1936. We were not on the first phase of it, but not long after that we had high line electricity. This made a great difference in the rural community and rural family living.

While many people had developed some type of elementary plumbing and some had Delco plants, most of them had very inadequate water and lighting. I guess about half of my life I've lived with kerosene lamps and gasoline pressure lamps and stoves. I wouldn't want to go back to it but it's not quite as primitive as many people today would think it would be. Of course the water systems were rather elementary; they were very inadequate by today's standards. We had a pressure tank in the basement that pumped up by hand and about every day we would spend twenty or thirty minutes pumping up the pressure. We used that water very sparingly; we didn't use it freely as we do today because the more you used the more you had to pump. Most of the farm homes had neither electricity nor water. Today, most of them have both.

Q: After you came back to the farm, you started with your Farm Bureau work?

2. Rural Electrification Administration. Ed.

A: Yes, in fact my interest in the Farm Bureau predated my coming back to the farm. In the beginning of the Moultrie County Farm Bureau in about 1918 or 1919, my father signed up as a member of the Farm Bureau. This was when it was almost entirely an extension service sponsoring organization. In fact, I think I still have the receipt in my bank box when he joined the Farm Bureau when it first started.

I was aware of the organization and somewhat interested in it when I went to the University. One of the annual meetings of the Illinois Agricultural Association, which is the Farm Bureau in Illinois, was held on the campus of the University of Illinois. Their meetings were held in the Stock-Judging Pavillion on the ag campus. I attended one of these annual meetings back in 1922 or 1923. Sam H. Thompson was the president. I remember well his annual address; in fact, I think his enthusiasm and his fervor were what inspired me to be interested in the Farm Bureau. So when I came back to the farm in 1929, the first thing I did was join the Farm Bureau. Soon thereafter I was elected from my township to the County Farm Bureau Board and started to participate in the activities of the organization. I'm not sure which annual meeting of the IAA [the Illinois Agricultural Association] I first went to, other than the one at the University. I started to attend the annual meetings of the IAA and eventually moved up in the organization.

It might be of interest to mention a few things about the County Farm Bureau in the early days. Our County Farm Bureau, as I said, was organized primarily to sponsor the extension service. Extension service

was developed during World War I as a means of helping the farmers increase the food production to help supply our allies and help win the war. A county agent, or as we called him in Illinois, the farm adviser, was employed for each county. He was paid by funds supplied by the Federal government in part, the State government in part, and local sources for about one-third. Later on, the Farm Bureau paid a higher proportion because the State and Federal funds didn't increase as rapidly as the cost of the program. We had the encouragement of the government to start an organization-sponsored extension program. In most counties in the early years the Farm Bureau was principally an extension sponsoring educational operation to demonstrate better practices and help sell farmers on the idea of using limestone, phosphate and legumes, and better practices with the livestock.

This was very useful and very valuable, but even in the early days some of the county agents or farm advisers and some of the early Farm Bureau leaders got other ideas as to what the organization could do. One of the early activities in our county was ordering seeds in carload lots, especially potato seed. One year when the emphasis was on everyone raising their own potatoes, we bought a carload of potato seed. Later on, the Farm Bureau did soil testing and seed corn testing.

Our county agent was a very aggressive business-type fellow and at one time he started a hatchery. The idea was that the farmers themselves could produce better strains of poultry and do it more cheaply than they could buy them at the hatchery. This probably was a mistake; in fact, it was a mistake because when he got his hatchery going real good, he resigned as farm adviser and moved the hatchery out of the Farm Bu-

reau and started in business for himself. He took advantage of that situation.

These early days of the Farm Bureau were a struggle to see what could be done to help farmers. The extension service of the College of Agriculture needed an organization to sponsor the extension for several reasons. One was they needed money; they didn't have enough to hire these workers unless they could get local funds. In some cases they went to the local banks and local businesses to get money but that was not a reliable source so they needed an organization of farmers that would help pay the adviser. Secondly, the extension service rightly believed that they would have more impact and do a better job of getting acceptance of new practices if they had an organization that would support them. Farmers, by putting their money in, would be interested in making use of the new ideas. And then third, the extension service recognized that they had to have local leadership who would be innovators, who would try new things. They felt they could uncover these leaders through an organization. All these were valid reasons.

I don't think very many of the early extension leaders conceived of the Farm Bureau as being a farm organization that would become a political action organization. A few probably did, but not too many. So after they were organized in the County Farm Bureau, it was natural that farmers would have other ideas about the uses for an organization other than just promulgating new methods. This is why in the very beginning of the County Farm Bureaus they began to think about a State organization and also began to think about business service activities

such as purchasing supplies and marketing. All these things were developed in the early years. One of the first organization-type activities of our county--the Moultrie County Farm Bureau--was the organizing of a livestock shipping association. That shipping association continued in active operation for about 20 years. These were some of the beginnings here and we had our ups and downs.

The county agents or farm advisers that we had--some of them were good and some of them not so good. If you had a good one, your organization did well and if you didn't have a good one, it didn't prosper. I mentioned the fact that Sam Thompson was the first president of the Illinois Agricultural Association or State Farm Bureau that I had contact with. There were others before him and it might be of interest to note that when Sam Thompson came into the State Farm Bureau organization, it marked a turning point. That coincided with the turning point that was coming about in the county organizations.

Some of the early state leaders in Illinois were such men as Harvey Sconce who was a real personable man. I knew all these fellows later, but I didn't at that time. Harvey Sconce was a business-type, promoter-type man from a well-to-do family in Vermillion County. Then there was Danforth from Danforth, Illinois. He was from a long-time farm family and was a gentleman-type farmer, more than some of the others. Then there was Sam Thompson. Sam Thompson was a banker as well as a farmer, but he was a farmer type. He was a rough and ready character who said what he thought and with considerable emphasis. He, like the others, knew farm people because he was a farmer. However, most of these early

leaders were fairly well educated and had come from long-time farming families. Another man in these early days that I knew slightly that ought to be mentioned was Frank I. Mann. He was from Gilman, Illinois, and was one of the early leaders in applying better practices in agriculture. He went all over Illinois speaking at Farmers Institues--which were an institution of the time--advocating better crop methods, rotation of crops and use of limestone and phosphate.

Now there's a little difference between the type of person like Frank I. Mann and men of the Thompson-Sconce-Danforth caliber. Frank I. Mann didn't seem to see the need for any organization, at least as I knew him. He only thought of the Farm Bureau as an extension tool. These other fellows developed other ideas--they were practical farmers. Like Mann, they believed in new methods, but they were not satisfied that better farming alone would solve all farming problems. So there was an early issue in the organization and as a result of this, the organization moved into the political action and business service field. The counties were involved in this, in fact, the counties were always pushing forward and demanding more and more in the way of organizational services.

As I came into the Farm Bureau in the early 1930's, I was part of that pressure to do more and more. I think it might be interesting to note some of the characteristics of some of these early Farm Bureau leaders as I knew them. I've mentioned that Harvey Sconce was a business-promoter type, but he was also an articulate person and could speak real well. That's one thing that farmers were generally not strong on--public appearances. When one of their number would give evidence of

such characteristics, he quite often was elected as a county and then as a State leader. These men were generally well educated and they were strong supporters of the extension service. They came from long-time farm operator families and they were operating farmers although many of them had other interests such as banking or business interests.

These leaders were not professionals and this is one difference between the Farm Bureau movement and the Labor movement; the Farm Bureau has hired professionals to help with their staff work but they have not placed professional organizers at the head of their organization. These men were not professional organizers. They were inclined to be idealistic and they were devoted to helping farm families get a better income. They believed very strongly in the wisdom of farmers in making organizational decisions. I remember this about all of them: while they were strong people, they still believed that the farmers could decide for themselves what direction to go in the organization. They were also the type of fellows that had leadership instincts, that is, they'd speak out. They were articulate and they had the ability to think on their feet and that's one thing that an organization leader has to have. They could think on their feet well--even when they were under fire.

There was a rather interesting thing about this early leadership in the organization. They considered farmers and agriculturists as a fraternity. Having had some experience in fraternities, I do recognize this characteristic of the early organization. The early leaders had righteous fervor for equality for farmers--that was the watchword. These early leaders were all different, but these are some of the character-

istics that they had in common. The turning point, as far as the kind of organization the Farm Bureau was in Illinois, started with Sam Thompson and continued with Earl Smith. The early leaders changed quite often. They served for only short periods of time and the leadership and the staff of the Farm Bureau in Illinois was relatively unstable until the administrators Sam Thompson and Earl Smith.

Sam Thompson more or less triggered the trend towards a business-service-political action organization. But Earl Smith in his 20 years as president of the Illinois Agricultural Association was the man who really shaped the organization into a political action-business service as well as an educational operation institution. Well, this outlines some of the period before Earl Smith. The name of Earl C. Smith was synonomous with Farm Bureau in Illinois for a long period of time and he is the man that I followed as president of the IAA.

Q: Before we go on with Mr. Smith and the Illinois Agricultural Association, I wanted to ask you about the 4-H in its early years. Were you connected with the 4-H in any way?

A: When I came back to the farm in 1929, the 4-H program had been going for a year or two. When I was a boy on the farm, we didn't have the 4-H Club program, at least not in our county. The local bankers sponsored a Jersey Calf Club at one time and I got myself a Jersey calf but it never amounted to anything. They called that a Calf Club but it wasn't 4-H although it probably copied some of the 4-H rules. When I came back to the farm, in the four or five years that I'd been gone, the county agent had organized the 4-H Clubs. Leaders for 4-H Clubs were scarce and hard to get, thus I had only been back here a

year or two when the county agent or farm adviser came to ask me if I would lead a 4-H Club. Since I was interested in livestock and feeding cattle, he suggested that I help organize a 4-H beef-calf club, and that we did. We had a County Beef Club with about 20 or 30 members that I led for a few years until we finally went to the community club organization. Then I was the leader for a Club which is still going called the Brushy Bend Gang. It was organized in this area--the north part of East Nelson and parts of Sullivan Township. It was a rather large group and I continued to lead it until about the time I went to the Illinois Agricultural Association on a full-time basis as president. In other words, I led that Club about 17 or 18 years.

Q: Getting back to Mr. Smith; was he with the Farm Bureau organization in his local area before he went with the IAA?

A: Yes, Earl C. Smith was born in Tennessee, I believe, and he was the owner of a fairly large acreage of land in Pike County, Illinois. I think he came here at an early age but he had many of the characteristics of the southern leaders I've known through the years. He was a college graduate, I believe, at least he was well educated and an active farmer although I can't quite see him in overalls. I'm sure he did work on the farm for many years before he was elected president of the IAA.[3] He was blessed with having a natural ability to speak; sometimes he was a little long-winded but he could command the attention of an audience quite well. He had an analytical mind that enabled him to think through to analyze things and figure out solutions quite logically, and he was dedicated to improving the welfare of the farmer.

3. IAA - Illinois Agricultural Association. Ed.

Being a farmer, he understood farmers. Serving that long as president, 20 years, Earl Smith almost became a legend.

As I said, I heard Sam Thompson make his annual speech at the University at Urbana and Earl Smith was the vice-president at that time. Soon after that, Sam Thompson was elected president of the AFBF[4]. from which he later resigned to accept a spot on the Federal Farm Bureau Board which was set up during the administration of Herbert Hoover in about 1929. So Sam Thompson was not president of the IAA or the AFBF very long and Earl Smith took his place as head of the IAA. There were some tremendous things that took place in the administration of Earl Smith, both in the IAA and the American Farm Bureau Federation. Many of these changes and many of these trends must be credited to Earl Smith's leadership. A little about the man might be in order. He was an impressive looking fellow, and was fairly reserved in his approach. He never had very many friends, at least not very many close friends, and he was a real tough minded person—I mean by that he was a strong personality. When he decided that something was right, you couldn't change him very easily and most of the time he was right and would win out.

One occasion, I recall, after I was on the IAA board, he proposed something that I didn't agree with. I must have felt strongly about it because usually I would accede to Smith's judgement because I was relatively young and didn't feel like standing up to a fellow that was this strong and usually right. But on this occasion I didn't think

4. AFBF - American Farm Bureau Federation. Ed.

he was right and, for some reason or other, I was supported in this by Otto Steffey, who later on became vice-president and then president of the IAA. Otto was a respected leader at that time on the IAA board. So the two of us teamed up and we were the only two on the Board that challenged Smith's recommendation. The interesting thing that developed was that after we challenged it, Smith suddenly decided it was about time to adjourn for lunch. We did adjourn for lunch and when we came back after lunch, Smith came in with an entirely different approach. He decided that we were right and that he should propose a compromise. That's one of the few times that I participated in an activity that caused him to change direction. But in most cases, this strong personality and this strong standing-up-for-what-he-thought-was-right proved to be an asset.

Before Earl Smith, the organization had had rather wide fluctuations in membership. There had been rather short tenure in the leadership of the organization and in the staff; there had been a lot of rotation. There were very few business-service programs for the farmers and the Farm Bureau largely depended on the county agents or the farm advisers and the extension service. National legislation was the only thing that they took an interest in and they did not take very much interest in that until Sam Thompson's day, and even more so with Earl Smith. There wasn't much in the way of a State legislative program until the Earl Smith years. There wasn't too much in the way of leadership training programs for the county people. All these things developed during the years of Thompson and Smith.

I think perhaps it might be characterized by saying that before Sam

Thompson and Earl Smith, Farm Bureau had been a do-good organization dedicated to helping farmers improve their business practices and their technical know-how; better methods primarily, with a slight emphasis on service to the farming business. In fact, up until that time they looked upon farming as a way of life. Well, certainly during the 20 years of Earl Smith's leadership, the Farm Bureau became dedicated to the idea that farming is a business and that anything the organization could do to help improve the farming business would be in the right direction.

Another characteristic that Earl Smith had which enabled this organization to go forward as well as it did was that he could pick good men. Some of the men that were staff people during his term were Donald Kirkpatrick, George Metzger, Dave Mieher who headed up the insurance company, Paul Mathias who was later general counsel, Wilfred Shaw, Oscar Brissenden, Lloyd Marchant and I would name a dozen more. These are the caliber of men that Smith attracted and used to help build the organization from the standpoint of business-service and political action. I should also have mentioned Chet Becker who followed Marchant in the FS or Farm Supply Company and Vernon Vaniman who was an organizational genius who developed under Smith. While he had this ability to pick good men, Earl Smith had one other characteristic that was a handicap. He was too tight-fisted when it came to the salaries of people, and he lost some of these good men. He was a tremendously good financial manager but sometimes he was a little too tight when it came to salaries.

He initiated the tremendous business services--now I say <u>he</u> did, whereas

it was initiated during his term. I know that he did not have the ideas of many of these business services—they came from staff people or from farmers themselves. But it was through the guidance of Earl Smith and through his sound business judgement and his ability to sell ideas to farmers that these business programs originated. Smith was a good salesman to groups of people. He wasn't as good a salesman man-to-man as he was in a group where he really would shine. Another characteristic of Smith's was that he had tremendous respect and faith in people who had developed specialized knowledge, particularly in the universities and especially in the field of agricultural economics. Not being trained as an economist himself, he probably had more faith in the economists and their ability to work out economic formulas than was justified. I say this because, as I knew Smith, he became a tremendous advocate of political action through government to get parity prices. Parity was a formula, which he accepted, that was worked out by the economists as a measure of fair farm prices.

Q: Can you tell us a little more about what parity is?

A: Well, parity is a ratio. It's developed by taking the relationships that farm prices have to other prices--industrial product prices. In 1910 to 1914, during that five-year base period, parity was one hundred percent. They figured out what the price of corn and all farm products was and how it related to the prices of these industrial products in that base period. Then they take any year afterwards and find out what the ratio of the price of corn and all other farm products is to the base period. If the ratio is now 80 percent, then the parity ratio is 80. Earl Smith had great faith in this formula. Today we

know that the parity formula is not a realistic tool to fix prices. It's a good measure; it indicates which direction we're going. But I think most farmers themselves think that 100 percent parity based on 1910-1914 conditions is not realistic today with the modern machinery and methods that we have. Anyway, Earl Smith had great faith in the economists' formula and he was a believer that political action could solve some of these problems. He was one of the main leaders in the battles through the New Deal days and later.

He was a hard fighter in the political arena. He and Ed O'Neal, the president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, were a tremendous team. They both understood politicians. In fact, I've often thought of Earl Smith as being a typical southern politician. The politicians from the South are very adept and very capable. After the Civil War they had to learn to cope with the northerners. They did it through developing their political ability; they couldn't defeat them in battle, but they've succeeded ever since then in more than matching them in the political arena. If there ever was a northerner that was a southern type politician, Earl Smith with his Tennessee background and inclination, was one. These battles in the Congress of the United States for farm legislation were based on the premise that the government could make up for the favoritism which was being shown by the Congress to certain other groups; notably at that time, business, and indirectly, labor.

But Earl Smith had some other characteristics that rather endeared him to farm folk—I say endeared, but it's probably not the right word because Smith was such a reserved person and had only a few close friends.

He seemed to always stand at arm's length from you, but he became a legend and the farm people respected him for his tremendous strength and his ability. He was a very hard worker; he made great sacrifices. Transportation from his farm home to Chicago was not good in those days. He would spend an entire week in the Chicago offices of the IAA and perhaps get home for a weekend and be compelled to go to some county for an annual meeting on Saturday and be back Monday in the office. His wife had to carry quite a burden because she maintained their home in Pike County all through the twenty years. He was completely unselfish in his dedication to the improvement of life for farmers. I think this dedication and unselfishness was why the farm folks in Illinois held him in such high esteem. No one has ever indicated that he had any financial or personal motive in his leadership, and he didn't. He was a man who served with rather modest compensation, and he never was concerned as to his future—politically or any other way.

While he was a Republican in politics, he was as nonpartisan when it came to trying to judge the politicians on the basis of their service and what they'd done for agriculture as any man could be. So I had a high regard for Earl Smith. At the same time, I recognized that he had some limitations. In addition to letting some good people get away from the organization because he was unwilling to pay them a decent salary, he also was somewhat of a dictator in some ways. Being a strong man, you had to be strong to stand up to him, and so people with new ideas were sometimes pressed down or became fearful. They didn't always sell their ideas as strongly as he did; very seldom did people stand up against him. So there were disadvantages to his period

of leadership. He decided though, that he was going to retire at the end of twenty years and he did. As I indicated, I followed him as president of the IAA and I was somewhat fearful when I was elected to follow that strong person. I was fearful that the organization and the county leadership would expect another Earl Smith which I certainly couldn't be.

END OF TAPE

A: In addition to being fearful that the county leadership would expect too much out of a new president, I was fearful that Earl Smith, as strong as he was, would tend to dominate the thinking and would probably be unhappy with the direction that I took. But I would have to say this: I couldn't have wanted any better attitude on the part of any predecessor than Earl Smith. I know that he disagreed with many of the decisions that I made, but he never did anything to undermine or undercut. He expressed his disagreement to me occasionally, but he never went out publicly to attack the administration that followed him. World War II broke out during the administration of Earl Smith and the war years dominated the scene in agriculture. It would have been possible for Smith's administration to have just been a matter of holding the line, but all through these years, the leaders in the Farm Bureau and the staff and Smith as president were working and planning for better opportunity for farm people when the war was over.

You see, the government farm programs that started in the Roosevelt

administration in 1933, had not worked very well. Some of them had been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and some of them had been overthrown by the Congress and some of them had just limped along. Smith and others knew that the same problems were there that had been there in the beginning and they also knew that after the war was over, these problems would not have been solved, and so a variety of activities took place. Before the war, some of the business-service activities were started, but they hadn't really been developed. It was during Earl Smith's tenure that the tremendous insurance program for Farm Bureau members was started and got its strong impetus.

It was also during his administration that the Farm Supply purchasing program for petroleum, fertilizer, feed, and other farm supplies was initiated and developed. Also, much of the co-operative marketing activities in Illinois started or were launched during Earl Smith's tenure as president. Not all of these programs were successful, although Earl being a tremendous salesman didn't dwell on the relatively few failures. One that was a notable failure was that attempt to start a soybean marketing pool. Soybeans were a new crop and it was thought that farmers could pool the sale of them and spread it over the year to get a better price. The theory was all right, but they couldn't keep enough farmers in the pool to make it succeed and it did fail. On the other hand, the marketing programs in livestock and grain were fairly successful and the business-service programs were outstanding successes. In the field of national legislation, the team of O'Neal and Smith, together with other allies in agriculture, made a tremendous impact on the political scene. O'Neal from Alabama and Smith with his

understanding of southern political procedure made a great team as president and vice-president of the AFBF.

Farm legislation, as it was adopted during the Roosevelt years and in the immediate post-war years, was largely a reflection of these two men and the organization that they represented. It proved to be faulty in many respects--that wasn't anything that can be charged up to the leadership or the organization. It was because of inexperience or lack of understanding as to how far government can go in the area of economic policy making. Perhaps the turning point as far as farmers were concerned, did not come until after World War II. Most farmers look back upon the Depression years and the farm programs then as being successful. They had not experienced the tremendous surplus build-ups that we had later under the farm programs after World War II. Actually the surpluses were building up under the Triple A programs of the Roosevelt administration but they really didn't crash down on us because the war demands from other countries drained off some of this surplus. We didn't feel the full impact of the failure of the control programs until after World War II.

This is a kind of summation; it's brief, but it touches some of the high points as I recall them. I do value very highly the years I spent from 1940 to 1945 as a member of the IAA Board. When I first came back to Moultrie County, I joined the Farm Bureau but it was two or three years before I was elected director for my own township. About that time the Depression was at its worst and our Farm Bureau membership went down to about 100 or 120 members, so it wasn't any great compliment to be elected to the Board of Directors. In fact, many people

wouldn't serve on the board because they thought the organization was going to go out of existence anyway. But I was elected to the board and finally became the president and served four or five years as president. We have a rotation policy here in Moultrie County, and I rotated off the board and out as president of County Farm Bureau but I continued to be interested in the activities in the district and state organization. When Eugene Curtis from Champaign County, who had been on the Board of Directors of the IAA, announced his retirement in 1940, I was elected to the board.

The five years that I spent on that board was perhaps the most highly educational period in my whole life. The IAA Board of Directors is very active in setting the policy of the organization and it is made up of very capable people. Under the leadership of Earl Smith this was a highly efficient, effective organization and it was a real education. Why I was selected as president when Earl Smith announced his retirement, I don't know, except that perhaps I was born at the right time, was the right age and had the right amount of experience when the opportunity opened. Though one may have some abilities, it's not that, as much as it is being there at the right time.

As far as my service as president of the IAA is concerned, this was a nine-year experience for which I had had very little preparation because it was a full-time administrative job. As an active farmer for almost 20 years, I had not had administrative experience, so I had to learn those skills. I farmed from 1929 through 1945, which was 17 years of actual farm work, and then I operated with a manager for another year or two after I became president. To transport a person

from full-time farm work--riding a tractor, taking care of the hogs and cattle and all that sort of thing--to an office administrative job is quite a change. It is fortunate that I made the adjustment as well as I did, although it wasn't easy and it wouldn't be easy for anyone. However, I think this policy of the Farm Bureau of Illinois of requiring that their president be an active farmer is a good policy. That happens to be the policy of both the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Illinois Agricultural Association.

Q: Weren't some of your children born when you farmed full time?

A: Yes, all of the older children were born before I was elected president of the Illinois Agricultural Association. My wife and I had four children: Charles W. who was born in 1935; John and Paul who are twins, born in 1937; and Janet, my only daughter, born in 1942 about the time I went on the IAA Board. Unfortunately, my wife in those years, after we'd been married 21 years, passed away in 1954; just a few months before I was elected president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. She had a form of rheumatic fever when she was a child and there was residual heart damage which didn't show up until a few years before she passed away, and this was the cause of her death. She carried a heavy load all through the years and especially during the nine years that I was president of the Illinois Agricultural Association.

Q: Did the family continue to live on the farm?

A: Yes, the office of the Illinois Agricultural Association was in Chicago at that time. First it was at 608 South Dearborn in leased

quarters in what was called the Transportation Building. After I became president, we purchased a building on the near north side on Ohio Street, I believe it was 43 East Ohio. We were outgrowing headquarters in those years about as fast as we could get them. We outgrew the space we had at 608 South Dearborn and by the time we got in the new building we had outgrown it.

During these years I followed the practice of going to Chicago Monday morning or Sunday night on the train and returning Friday night to Sullivan. We maintained our home here on the farm all through the years. I found that the farm operation--the management of it--was too big a responsibility for my wife, especially with her developing health problems. So, after I had been the full-time president for a year or two, I went into partnership with a young man who was trying to get started farming. I furnished the equipment and some of the management and we were in partnership in the livestock except that he had a small dairy herd. We had a very successful relationship for several years and then my oldest boy came back from college and started farming.

After I was elected president of the Illinois Agricultural Association--although I did very little actual farm work--I was actively involved in the farm operation and management all through those years, but spent full time during the week away from home. As long as I was president of the Illinois Agricultural Association there were many engagements downstate; sometimes I would be in Chicago Monday and Tuesday and come home Tuesday night and drive the car to the various places in Illinois for whatever meetings we had scheduled. There was a lot of travel within

the state and of course, at the same time, I was on the board of the American Farm Bureau Federation and four or five times a year was involved in the AFBF Board meetings or other national activities.

Q: In 1945, farmers were vexed by problems like price controls, rationings and shortages. Could you comment on that?

A: Yes, in my responsibilities as president of the Illinois Agricultural Association, we of course, were concerned mostly with the State of Illinois problems and two or three of the major issues of the time stand out. One of them was the source of revenue for highways, both the state system and the county and township roads. One of the major positions that the IAA took was to insist that farm-to-market roads share in the gasoline tax revenues and be given emphasis in the highway program. We were victorious in this and the fact that Illinois farmers have good roads today is the result of this historic battle. Another problem, of course, in those years was the war and the need for increased production by farmers and also the shortages we had in equipment and other supplies that farmers needed. The county Farm Bureaus were urged to work with the local draft boards and local rationing boards. The American Farm Bureau Federation was active in seeing that farmers' interests were protected in the rules that were handed down in rationing and that sort of thing. But there were always problems and we were involved in many of those battles.

That, of course, was the period before I became president of the IAA, but there was some continuation of these problems after 1945. Perhaps one of the most significant areas of discussion and final action by

the state legislature was the reorganization of schools. We had, in Illinois, one-room country schools. As I've indicated previously, the rural population was declining and many of these schools had a small enrollment and therefore were not very good schools. The Illinois Agricultural Association, while I was president, appointed a State School Study Committee that did a very comprehensive job of analyzing the situation and making recommendations. Many of these recommendations were then included in the legislation that was adopted by the state legislature in the School Reorganization Act. The IAA and the County Farm Bureaus took leadership in seeing that County School Study Committees were appointed under this Act, and I think deserve much of the credit for the success of school reorganization in Illinois.

Of course it didn't come about just as Farm Bureau people wanted it to, but it was a step forward in our educational system. I think this was one of the most controversial issues of the time because not all farm people were favorable towards consolidation of schools and it took quite a bit of courage on the part of Farm Bureau leadership at all levels to go ahead with the needed reforms. While there was much opposition, a great majority of the farm people wanted to improve their schools and I think that there were definite improvements as a result of the consolidations.

Other problems were becoming acute. During the war years we had an increase in production of farm products and then, as the war ended, the threat of lower prices became real. That was translated into further agricultural legislation. The farm programs of the 1930's

were not well adapted to the post-war period. There was a long period of political maneuvering to decide what kind of farm program would be continued. The IAA, under the leadership of Earl Smith, had been very active and influential in deciding what kind of farm legislation we would have in the 1930's and in the early post-war period. The IAA continued to have a good influence on decisions made by the American Farm Bureau Federation. I think it would be interesting to make a little assessment of the 20 years that Earl C. Smith was president of the IAA, and the policy direction that took place during those years, and then perhaps draw out some of the changes that took place as years went by and the administration of the organization changed.

I think one of the basic facts about any organization is that men make the organization. In the early years of Farm Bureau when the counties were first organized and before there was a state or national organization, the men who made the Farm Bureau were primarily interested in bringing about greater efficiency in production through the use of better methods. They were oriented towards the agricultural extension work of the University of Illinois. They saw the need to put the findings of research into operation more quickly and to get them accepted by more farmers. This meant that the county Farm Bureaus and the early state organizations were influenced very much by the county agents or farm advisers, as they called them in Illinois, and by such leaders as the men who had been in the Farmers' Institute circuit carrying on demonstrations to show better methods. It also meant that some of the early county Farm Bureau members and state leaders were a

combination businessman and farmer.

During the early years of the organization--particularly after the Illinois Agricultural Association was formed--the state organization was pretty much given over to developing leadership. Men who had vision and ability were trying to find ways to implement the interests of the county Farm Bureaus in state legislation including the problems of roads, schools, taxes, and many other things. There began to be a change in direction at the state level when the American Farm Bureau Federation was organized in 1919. After its organizational growth years, the big issue during the 1920's facing the AFBF was the depressed farm income after World War I. It was depressed largely because the Congress had adopted high protective tariff policies. These high tariffs resulted in foreign countries not being able to sell their goods to us. They retaliated and did not buy farm products as they had during the war. So we in agriculture had real depression. This situation spawned a new breed of Farm Bureau leaders who felt that there should be some way to assure farmers of what they called equality--equality for agriculture--that was the slogan of the 1920's.

The men who came into leadership in that period in Farm Bureau were oriented toward political action and this, of course, was a turning point in the history of the organization and the history of agriculture in the United States. During the period of 1921 through 1929 the cry for equality resulted in the campaign for the McNary-Haugen Bill and other legislation of that type. Essentially, this proposed legislation was an export subsidy to provide for a two-price system--one price for domestic products and another for exports. The idea

was to assess farmers, or rather farm products, a tax to provide enough money to pay an export bounty or an export subsidy. This legislation was very strongly supported by Farm Bureau in the late 1920's although in the beginning the organization didn't support the McNary-Haugen idea because the South was reluctant to go along.

The southern cotton producing states said that if cotton was to be taxed in order to provide for an export subsidy, the cost would be quite high because almost 50 percent of the cotton crop was sold for export. The export bounty type of legislation would work quite well for wheat and corn and other crops where a relatively small portion of the crop was exported. It was only when the idea of a government operated fertilizer and power plant at Mussel-Shoals, Alabama on the Tennessee River, came forward that the South finally agreed to go along with the McNary-Haugen Bill for export subsidies as an offset to the tariff in return for getting the AFBF to support the Mussel-Shoals development. This is an interesting chapter in history and one of the good references on this is Kyle's book: The Farm Bureau Through Three Decades.

As I look at this whole period--and I knew the men involved in Farm Bureau, in Congress and in the U.S. Department of Agriculture--I tend to pick out some turning points as they relate to Farm Bureau, farm program legislation, and to the history of agriculture of the period from 1920 through 1970. I wasn't actively on the scene in the 1920's; I was in the University College of Agriculture, studying what was going on. One of my professors at the time was Dr. Charles L. Stewart,

in the Agricultural Economics Department of the University. He was one of the authors of an export debenture plan which was similar to the McNary-Haugen proposal. As I was doing graduate work in 1929, I had close association with Dr. Stewart and the development of his ideas.

One of the turning points in the farm history of this fifty-year period was the McNary-Haugen battle in the Congress to provide agriculture with an offset to the protective tariff which benefitted labor and industry. This battle resulted in the passage of the McNary-Haugen legislation by the Congress but it was twice vetoed by President Coolidge. These vetoes and the battles in Congress to try to override and pass another round of the McNary-Haugen legislation consolidated farmers and caused them to get together. This helped Farm Bureau develop into a national voice for agriculture. It is interesting to speculate about what might have happened if the McNary-Haugen bill had been allowed to become law. I think it would have been a sounder solution to our problems than was the Triple A acreage control legislation which was later adopted. But the McNary-Haugen plan was rejected by the President, and Congress didn't have enough votes to override.

One of the things that the Farm Bureau did in this period was to organize a so-called "Farm Block" in Congress. It was an organized group in both the House and the Senate. They met in the AFBF office in Washington and planned their strategy. The Farm Block was fairly successful in passing legislation. In later years, even up to the present time, it is rather popular for news reporters to label any nonpartisan coalition in the Congress that's working on farm legislation as a "Farm Block". This is inaccurate because there is no such thing as a "Farm Block" in any

organized fashion today and there hasn't been since 1927. One of the turning points that I look to in the history of this period is the defeat of the McNary-Haugen Bill with its provisions for farmer financing of export subsidies. It would have kept the domestic market free but it would have been, in a sense, a dumping of our surplus production onto the world market.

After it was defeated, the 1928 election put Herbert Hoover in the White House and he realized that the farm people of the country were disturbed over the turn-down of the McNary-Haugen Bill. So he proposed an alternative which was the Federal Farm Board of 1929. The Federal Farm Board legislation provided for assistance for cooperative marketing organizations and it also provided for the purchase and storage of some of the surplus farm production of the country. It may have had some benefits but it was very inadequate and it did not succeed. So this was a turning point where farmers were defeated in their attempt to cause market prices to go up by an export dumping operation.

The next turning point after the failure of the Federal Farm Board and the election of Franklin Roosevelt as President was the Triple A legislation—the New Deal farm programs as they have been called. It's interesting to note that they were originally financed by farmers through a processing tax on wheat and hogs and other farm commodities. The funds from the processing tax were used to finance the adjustment payments that were made. Of course this legislation was finally overturned by a Supreme Court decision in 1936 in the Hoosack-Mills case.

Since I have mentioned these turning points, I must mention the men who were involved to some extent. The American Farm Bureau Federation

was rather strong in the 1920's and even in the 1930's; despite sizable drops in membership in the Depression years, it was a very influential voice in the Congress. Ed O'Neal from Alabama was elected president of the American Farm Bureau Federation in 1931 when Sam Thompson, who had been president of the IAA, resigned as president of the American Farm Bureau Federation in order to accept a spot on the Federal Farm Board. Sam Thompson was a fighter for agriculture but he was not a compromiser who could bring the various factions of the Farm Bureau and agriculture together. Ed O'Neal, on the other hand, was a southerner with all the southern traditions. He was a very affable man, a fluent orator, interested in bringing the various factions of the Corn Belt together with the South and, hopefully, with the Northeast and the Far West. He succeeded quite well while he was still vice-president of the AFBF. He helped organize the "Farm Block" in Congress which was a coalition of southern Democrats and northern farm-area Republicans. And while he was probably not too enthusiastic for the McNary-Haugen program, he supported it because the South was going to get the Mussel-Shoals legislation.

When Ed O'Neal became president of the American Farm Bureau Federation he, of course, was thrust right into the middle of the New Deal effort to make good on Roosevelt's promises to agriculture. This had been one of the strong promises that Roosevelt made in his campaign--he was going to do something to give equality to agriculture. I, of course, was farming at the time and active in Farm Bureau at the county level so I was exposed to many of the issues and campaigns going on at that time. I think it's fair to say that the American Farm Bureau Federation

under Ed O'Neal and Earl Smith, who was the vice-president, were probably more influential than any other group in shaping the legislation that was adopted in 1934 as the original Agricultural Adjustment Act. Their influence was directed towards fulfilling their desire to have what they thought of as temporary farm legislation.

We never heard very much about the need for a permanent farm bill, all of it was to be temporary. This was based on the mistaken assumption that the problems in agriculture were caused by a temporary surplus producing capacity. Also, farmers were convinced that the tariff discriminated against them. The concern of Farm Bureau leaders was to preserve the competitive market system, not to replace it. This is clear in all of their speeches, many of which I heard. I can remember well when President Franklin D. Roosevelt came to the American Farm Bureau Federation convention in Chicago and made quite a farm speech. He emphasized the importance of making the market system work. The concept in the Triple A legislation, the New Deal farm program, was that there would be voluntary programs to adjust production, financed by a processing tax, with the money obtained from the processing tax being used to compensate farmers for their reduction in production. There was no thought among Farm Bureau leaders of fixing the price at that time. In fact, the price supports were set at a relatively low level--around 50 or 60 percent or parity as we later came to figure parity. There was no thought in Farm Bureau that this would be a long continuous thing. The original administration of the Triple A was to be carried out through the extension service with voluntary committees of farmers; no vast bureaucracy was contemplated. Now

they were mistaken in these ideas as it was later proved, but nevertheless it was what they were thinking of in the beginning. It was a farmer-financed program with voluntary adjustment of production to reduce the surplus so as to cause the market price to increase.

The next turning point was the Supreme Court decision which declared the Triple A legislation of 1934 unconstitutional. This came in 1936 and this decision forced Farm Bureau and other organizations, Congress and the administration, to take a new look at what they could do to carry out the objectives of the previous legislation. As a result, the legislation that was adopted had many of the same features of the previous act incorporated into it. But it did introduce one new thing which we've been plagued with ever since and that was the financing of the programs that would be done directly by the Federal Treasury. The taxpayers now would pay the cost of the farm program. The voluntary features were still maintained although it did edge over a little to some degree of compulsion. It was provided that the ones who participated in the program would be the ones most benefited by the program. The AFBF leadership, O'Neal and Smith, were very instrumental in shaping this legislation. In fact, the Triple A legislation of 1934 and the legislation that followed the Supreme Court decision were first drafted in the AFBF offices in Washington by an attorney that was employed part-time by the AFBF.

The next turning point that came was quite a few years later, after the war. World War II bailed the farm programs out of trouble; it covered up the fact that they were not working very well. During

World War II the emphasis was on increased production, not on cutting down.

One of the other developments of the period before World War II that is worthy of note is that as the Farm Bureau increasingly turned to Congress for the solution of some of agriculture's economic problems, the extension workers in agriculture and the University people did not have such a close relationship with the organization because they were still charged with increasing production. However, in the original farm programs, the extension service did have an important role. This didn't work out because as these programs began to be put into operation it became apparent that they would require full-time administrators and the extension workers could not be taken from their essential tasks of helping farmers learn new methods. It also became obvious that it's impossible to operate a government control program with voluntary committees. The Triple A committees could not do the office paper work efficiently and so it was necessary to have a bureaucracy whether farmers liked it or not.

Then came World War II and the renewed emphasis on production and the need for more food and fiber put the extension back into an important role. During this period it probably would have been better if we had completely abandoned the bureaucracy that had been built up to administer farm programs. But, as with all bureaucracies, they were quite clever in finding ways to justify their continued existence. Their proponents in Congress and in the farm organizations too, argued that we needed to keep the structure intact because after the war,

which everybody thought would be over soon, we would need to have a period of re-adjustment and would need the program. They also justified their continued existence by saying that they could use the same program, which was called an agricultural adjustment program, to bring about increased production. Of course this is pure nonsense because the only thing that stimulated increased production in the World War II period was increased prices; the memos, proclamations and assignments of quotas had practically no effect on production. In this period of time, I think that we in the Farm Bureau made a mistake by not moving to terminate the bureaucracy with the idea of starting all over under new conditions after the war. But we made that mistake along with a lot of other people.

The separation of the extension service from the Farm Bureau began in this period. Farm Bureau was pursuing the will-o-the-wisp of government help for agriculture through political action and the extension service was not able to fit into the new structure that was being built. This doesn't mean that the Farm Bureau didn't continue to support the agricultural extension service--it did. But it meant that there were new interests and naturally the two grew apart and never again was there a close relationship between the extension service and Farm Bureau like in the beginning years when the major emphasis of the organization was on improved efficiencies in production.

Along with this appraisal of the men that make an organization and their influence, I think it's appropriate to mention again Earl C. Smith. He was really the strong man in the AFBF during this period

of the 1930's and through the World War II period. Ed O'Neal was the president and Earl Smith was the vice-president. Ed O'Neal was the compromiser, the salesman, and Earl Smith was the man who stood firm and had more influence on policy. He was chairman of the Resolutions Committee each year of the American Farm Bureau Federation, and being a strong, very confident-of-his-own-opinions type of man, he had a great deal of influence in the policies adopted by the Farm Bureau through these years. Earl Smith's philosophy with reference to government and agriculture was based on the idea that government intervention for business and labor had given special favors to those groups and therefore intervention for farmers was justified. He didn't realize or hadn't had the chance to see as yet that this intervention for business and labor really worked against their long-time best interests.

Earl Smith believed in the market system--he wasn't a Socialist. He didn't believe in replacing the market price system but he felt that government supports could be used as a supplement or floor. He was not a man who favored extremely high supports; he wanted the market to operate above the support level. These objectives show up in the Triple A legislation and in the legislation that followed the Supreme Court decision, and also in the legislation that was adopted to provide for transition after the war. Thus the war period was one of marketing time and maintaining the federal bureaucracy while making some payments and taking other actions to stimulate needed production.

All through the war, whenever agriculture program legislation was discussed, the argument came up that we would need it after the war for a

period of adjustment. They were remembering the period after World War I when suddenly farmers' markets were undercut by the destruction of foreign markets. The argument was made that after the war we'd need two years of price supports at a high level in order to help the farmers make adjustments. The price supports had been raised during the war to help stimulate production and after the war, Congress continued the high supports "to permit farmers to make adjustments." Actually, when they continued high price supports after the end of the war, they made sure that farmers would not adjust to new conditions because as long as the price support was there, they were going to produce in response to that price support.

The next turning point came in the year that Ed O'Neal finally retired as president of the American Farm Bureau Federation in 1947. This turning point came during a debate at the AFBF convention on farm programs in which Allan Kline—who was then vice-president of the American Farm Bureau Federation and president of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation—took a leading role. The southern delegates generally were arguing for continued high price supports; in fact, they felt that the government should guarantee farmers high (100% of parity) prices. They reiterated that they were willing to pay the penalty by reducing production to the extent necessary in order to justify that price. Ed O'Neal retired as president of AFBF. He probably stayed on a couple years longer than he should have—as his health was not the best and he was getting rather old and a little senile. The last two years of his administration, from 1945 to 1947, were not strong years in his record. When he retired in 1947 there were two significant events at the AFBF convention. Mr. Kline,

chairman of the Resolutions Committee, won the debate on a new direction in farm program policy. He was elected president to succeed Mr. O'Neal.

This was a turning point in Farm Bureau policy because it meant that from then on the Farm Bureau would be for price supports and controls only as a means of providing a floor under market prices. The other viewpoint of government fixed prices that the southerners had generally taken was defeated. This wasn't a sharp turning point because this debate continued for several years, but that was the first time it was decided on the side of letting the market system operate.

In the Congress, meanwhile, decisions were a little bit longer coming than they were in the Farm Bureau, but that's natural. For instance, in the McNary-Haugen battle, the Farm Bureau finally supported the bill in about 1926 or 1927. Congress later passed it and they continued to support it until the Federal Farm Board legislation was passed. The New Deal legislation,the Triple A Act of 1934, barely squeaked through the Congress. It took all the pressure off Roosevelt, Farm Bureau and others to get it adopted and even then it was under attack because the next year an attempt was made to repeal it. In 1936 it was knocked out by the Supreme Court. By that time, however, there was a fairly good majority in the Congress to support some kind of agricultural adjustment legislation. After Congress once got sold on the idea of adjustment, it took quite awhile to convince them that it was not working satisfactorily. Congress' attitude is reflected in its votes, of course, and many Congressmen from rural areas became convinced that government farm programs were important political issues for getting

votes and if they voted for a popular farm program they would be returned to Congress. This is essentially why it takes some time for Congress to find out that farmers have changed direction.

1947 was a critical year and it was the beginning of the change in direction of farmer thinking. After the convention in 1947, the Farm Bureau proceeded to draw up a draft of another bill which was known as the Aiken Bill. It was supported and presented by Senator George Aiken of Vermont, who is even today in the Senate of the United States. This provided for flexible price supports at certain percentages of parity. I was involved in the decision of the 1947 convention and in the work of the AFBF and the Board of Directors in drawing up the provisions of the Aiken Bill and in trying to get it passed through the Congress. It was adopted by the Congress in 1948.

Along with this recounting of the turning points, we have to recognize the changes in the overall political climate. When President Roosevelt died, he was succeeded by Harry Truman who was the Vice-President. Truman was elected in 1948 for a full four-year term. President Truman interpreted his election as a mandate to continue controls and high price supports. He got this impression from the fact that he won quite strongly in many of the farm belt states. He had as his Secretary of Agriculture an attorney by the name of Charles Brannan. Brannan was oriented towards a government-placed economy. He was not trained in economics and had no respect for the market system. His boss, President Truman, thought that the farmers had voted for high price supports and controls, therefore it was natural that Brannan would try to evolve such a plan. It was also natural that he and the President would do

everything they could to sabotage the Aiken Bill which Truman had signed before the election in 1948.

Truman's interpretation of the farm vote in 1948 was, I think, very faulty because the farmers were not really voting for a farm program or against a farm program. They were voting against Tom Dewey and his little moustache as much as anything and they didn't trust an easterner. Anyway, Brannan and Truman felt that they had a mandate to go towards a new direction in farm policy and that brings me to the next turning point that I see, and that was the battle for the Brannan Plan.

Charlie Brannan and his advisers in the Department of Agriculture drafted the Brannan Plan with very little or no consultation with farm leaders or members of Congress. When he proposed his scheme to the Congress and appeared to support it, they were amazed and shocked because it was a completely new policy direction. It turned away from the idea that market price should be supported by adjustments in production and that farmers should receive payments only for adjusting production. It turned away from this concept that had been well accepted up until this time. It proposed that the market price be permitted to fluctuate where it would and that farmers be compensated--they called them compensatory payments--to make up the difference between the low market price held down by surpluses and the parity price. The federal government would make a direct payment to farmers for the difference in the market price and the price that had been established by legislation.

This shaped up to be a real knock-down, drag-out battle because the Truman administration had a majority in the Congress and the more liberal left wing elements in labor and in agriculture lined up behind Brannan and Truman to try to pass this legislation. Allan Kline, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, was a man who was very forthright; he said what he thought on anything and he took the consequences. He also was well trained; he was an economist, he studied finance and money; he understood credit. He knew about all of these things. It was this economic understanding that Secretary of Agriculture Brannan didn't have, and neither did Harry Truman. By the way, Harry Truman was an ex-county agent years ago. The battle moved to the Congress and Farm Bureau was practically the only organization working against the proposed legislation. Farm Bureau won and the Brannan Plan was defeated. The Aiken type of legislation continued through the Truman administration.

The next turning point in agricultural policy came during the campaign of President Dwight Eisenhower for the Presidency. The Farm Bureau then, as now, did not take a position supporting any candidate. We were very much interested and concerned with the platforms of the two parties and what the candidates said about agricultural legislation.

The reason I say that the Eisenhower campaign was a turning point is because in 1952 he made a speech at the national plowing match at Kassen, Minnesota--a speech on agriculture. Somebody wrote into the speech two or three lines which committed President Eisenhower to continue the present farm program for two more years. It was really

sabotaged because President Eisenhower knew very little about agricultural legislation. He'd been a great military leader and a great military administrator, but he didn't understand the politics of Washington very well. He read this speech with those two lines which flatly promised to continue farm programs as they were for two more years. Unfortunately, those two years were the only two years in which he had the majority of his party in Congress. By the time 1955 came around, the Democrats who were by this time committed to the Truman-Brannan high price support philosophy, were in a majority and Eisenhower and his Secretary of Agriculture Benson didn't have a chance to bring about any reforms in agriculture legislation.

The Farm Bureau was very much incensed; they felt that they had been double-crossed by these two or three sentences in the Kassen, Minnesota speech. It took several years to find out who put it in. I think it's pretty well recognized now that Clifford Hope, a Representative in Congress from Kansas, had been the author of this paragraph. It, of course, is one of the main reasons that the Eisenhower-Benson years were somewhat of a debacle as far as legislation was concerned.

Q: In the 1950's you made a trip to Europe. What were your feelings when you returned?

A: Yes. In 1950, I was a representative of the American Farm Bureau Federation to the International Federation of Agricultural Producers meeting. This organization is a loose organization of farm organizations in the various free countries, and this was my first trip to Europe and the first contact that I had with the farm organizations

of the other countries.

I would be putting it rather mildly if I said I was very concerned and almost shocked by the way in which farm organizations in other countries had accepted the idea that agriculture could not exist in a market economy and that farmers had to be subsidized and managed by government. This idea was almost universally accepted. The Canadians were much farther in that direction than we were. The United Kingdom farm organization was almost totally committed to a government managed agriculture, as were the farm organizations in France and several of the other countries. The only allies we had--and they weren't as strong as we were for a market system agriculture--were New Zealand, Australia and one or two other smaller countries. South Africa was betwixt and between. It was an eye-opening experience and it wasn't very encouraging to see the direction they were going and the results. They were not in any better position by having a government managed agriculture than we were. The IFAP had been started when President Allan Kline, as vice-president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, represented the AFBF at the first meeting of the organization. The organization has some value in that it provides a forum for the discussion of ideas and problems that farmers have in other countries. As far as being an active organization, it never was and should never have been thought of as that.

During the Eisenhower administration, Ezra Benson received a lot of blame for farm surpluses. Despite the fact that the Eisenhower administration's hands were tied as far as making any constructive

changes in farm programs, Secretary Benson tried to move in the direction of a gradual return to the market economy. Of course with a hostile Congress for six years, anything he did was subject to criticism and any time the price of any farm product went down, it was charged to Secretary Benson. Obviously this was an unfair tactic but it is the kind of thing one expects when government is in a management role in agriculture. The politicians try to squeeze as many votes as they can out of every issue that comes along.

The next turning point that I saw, and this was one that I was very intimately involved in, was the 1963 wheat referendum. I was elected president of the American Farm Bureau Federation in 1954 when President Allan Kline resigned due to the condition of his health. He had a serious heart problem which would not permit him to continue the type of activities required in that position. This was in the midst of the Eisenhower administration and there wasn't very much in the way of constructive action possible in the Congress. It was just as well during the first two or three years that I was president because I was a novice and had to learn a new leadership role in Farm Bureau and I had to find out how the organization functioned.

Q: Could you tell us about the food promotion campaigns that the IAA sponsored during the 1950's?

A: This calls to mind the fact that Farm Bureau policy during these years—from 1930 through 1956—had its action and the excitement directed towards legislation at the national level. However, there were other significant things going on in the organization and this

idea of helping yourself through things that you can do as a group was developing quite rapidly. In the IAA administration of Earl C. Smith, many business-service activities were started: the purchasing of supplies, fertilizer, fuel, feed and biological seeds was begun. The marketing of farm products through grain and livestock marketing programs, the insurance service and farm record-keeping programs at the county level were also started. We weren't depending entirely upon national legislation.

Farm Bureau was also working on the promotion of food and attempting to build better markets. While this promotion work didn't make the headlines and one didn't hear it debated at the annual meeting, a fairly good portion of the staff of the state organizations, and particularly the IAA, was working on projects to increase the consumption of food. This was in cooperation with the affiliated cooperative associations and some independent promotional organizations such as the ADA [American Dairy Association] and the National Poultry and Egg Board. Meat promotion was carried on in cooperation with the National Livestock and Meat Board which the Farm Bureau originally helped to organize. These were rather effective programs. Then, of course, I've mentioned the state legislation campaigns and the school reorganization which required much state Farm Bureau time and effort.

Another thing that I shouldn't forget was the concern that the IAA and other states' Farm Bureaus had regarding rural health and medical services. Doctors were scarce and the requirements of the medical colleges were rather strict. We had many communities that did not have an ade-

quate number of physicians and in some cases had no physicians. It was while I was president of the IAA that the Illinois State Medical Society approached us to see if there was anything that we could do together to help relieve the shortage of physicians in rural areas. Together we established a loan program for medical students who would agree to return to rural practice. It started out with ten students who were given long-term, low-interest loans to be repaid after the student graduated from medical college and was in practice in a rural community. In order to get the loan, he had to agree to go back to a rural community where there was a need. The University of Illinois and other medical schools in the state welcomed this program. In fact, they helped us to go one step further by agreeing that if a medical student would contract to practice in a medically deficient area, the University would waive some of their strict and high entrance requirements. The result was that we succeeded in getting 15 to 25 medical students enrolled each year who were under contract to return to deficient areas. This program is still making a considerable impact in reducing the shortage of physicians in the rural areas of Illinois.

May we now turn back to the wheat referendum of 1963 as the next turning point in national farm policy direction? During the Eisenhower-Benson years, not much of anything happened except continual bitter fighting. The President of the United States elected in 1960 was President John F. Kennedy. By the way, I have known personally all of these Presidents and the Secretaries of Agriculture since Roosevelt—I did not know Roosevelt personally although I heard him

speak several times--but I've known all the others and all of the Secretaries of Agriculture in this period of time.

Jack Kennedy, being an easterner and a Harvard man and having had all his associations and previous experience outside the field of agriculture was rather a novice in this area. He turned to one of the men that he owed a political debt to for Secretary of Agriculture and that was Orville Freeman. Orville was a very capable governor in the state of Minnesota and had close contact with agriculture, but was not a farmer and had not been involved directly in national agricultural issues. He did not know where the bodies were buried! He did not know the people involved in the earlier battles. Freeman came in with a background of the older farmer-labor concept of politics from Minnesota which is basically Socialism. He had no confidence whatsoever--in the market system. As did Brannan before him, he felt that the government should manage agriculture and should fix prices. Mr. Freeman brought into the Department of Agriculture Professor Willard Cochran from the University of Minnesota as his chief economic adviser.

Professor Cochran was a highly respected economist of the government planner-type. There are some economists who believe that government can plan things better than the farmers by themselves and there are some economists who believe that farmers would do better if government left them alone and permitted the market demand to guide their decisions. Cochran was of the former conviction; he believed that farmers were not capable of making the right decisions under market pressures and therefore the government should manage them. He also had great confidence that economists could chart out the way that they should go.

Freeman and Cochran developed a legislative proposal that Farm Bureau labeled as the Cochran-Freeman Plan. The label stuck!

This plan abandoned flexible price-supports and the voluntary concept. It proposed compulsory controls on production through mandatory acreage controls and bushelage quotas. It was an attempt to bring all of agriculture under the control program. In the original Triple A legislation there were only six crops mentioned, the so-called basic crops. These were wheat, cotton, corn, rice, peanuts and tobacco. The original act had a hog program in it, but that was later taken out so only the six basic crops remained under control. The Cochran-Freeman Plan envisioned the extension of these controls to all of agriculture.

This made an issue with Farm Bureau because Farm Bureau policy, since 1947, had been to support a market system agriculture with price supports, not as a means of fixing the price, on a voluntary basis. Farm Bureau policy had not changed in this period of time, although there had been several attempts made to reverse this direction. This issue was joined in the Brannan Plan battles of 1949 and Allan Kline led that fight. Here it was again joined on essentially the same issue, compulsory controls on all of agriculture plus government pricing. The legislation passed by the Congress provided for submission of the mandatory control issue to a referendum of wheat growers. Wheat was to be the first to be brought under the compulsory program. Farm Bureau had a good deal to go with making sure that there was to be a referendum—we couldn't stop the legislation but we did succeed in getting it submitted as a referendum. Farm Bureau took the leadership in trying to defeat this referendum, and it was defeated by the wheat growers in a very hotly contested campaign.

President Kennedy got involved and used his influence to try to cause farmers to vote for the wheat referendum. Orville Freeman campaigned all over the United States. It required a two-thirds majority of wheat growers to carry; it did not even get 50 percent; only 47 or 48 percent approved the plan. Farm Bureau won that battle and I think it was at this point that the Congress turned completely away from high price supports and compulsory controls. I don't think that there has ever been any real chance that high price supports and compulsion would be used in agriculture since that time.

Q: That really shook up the Kennedy administration. In fact, I read somewhere that it was the war between the farmer and the bureaucrats.

A: Yes. You see, Jack Kennedy and Orville Freeman were so confident that they could win this referendum because they had a vast bureaucracy of county and state farm program committees to rely on. This bureaucracy was out in the field contacting farmers and working as hard as they could to get a 'yes' vote. Freeman had assured Jack Kennedy that the vote would be 80 percent for the wheat control program but it didn't get 50 percent. In some of the wheat states it failed miserably--when the 'no' vote came in it really shook the whole administration to its foundations. But, of course, Congress continued to pass legislation--they didn't immediately take the wheat referendum mandate as a turning point--but it proved to be a turning point as far as Congress was concerned. From then on farm program legislation commenced to lose its glamour as a political issue.

Q: Were there other farm organizations beginning to crop up that were

going to make themselves heard?

A: Well, there have been farm organizations for many, many years going way back to about 1850 or 1860 when there were several farm organization movements. The National Grange was the first farm organization of national recognition that amounted to much. It hit its peak back in about 1880 to 1885. The National Grange was a fraternal organization and it is still in existence today, but it is not really a farm organization. It is a rural social society; there are more town people by far than there are farmers in its membership and it is only organized in a few areas.

About 1910 the National Farmers Union was formed. It began, strange as it may seem, in the South but finally moved more to the western Plains States. It never has been national in scope but it has always been to the left--quite far to the left. Farmers Union joined with the Farm Bureau in supporting the original Triple A legislation but they weren't very happy with it because it did not go far enough to suit them. They want prices to be fixed by government and they want to use a cost of production formula for fixing the price. How they thought that anybody could agree on the cost of production, I don't know, but nevertheless that's what they were for. Farmers Union, of course, supported the Brannan Plan because it provided for more government management. They were for a 'yes' vote on the wheat referendum. The National Grange hasn't been involved in too many of these major issues because they weren't strong enough to make much difference.

It is only in recent years that the NFO--National Farmers Organization--

came into existence. It came in on an entirely different issue; it didn't come in on the farm program issue. It came in on an issue of marketing in which Farm Bureau was also interested.

END OF TAPE

Q: You've made many trips to Washington and you've mentioned that you've known personally the Presidents and Secretaries of Agriculture. Would you tell us about some of them?

A: Yes, as I knew President Harry Truman and his Secretary of Agriculture, Charles Brannan; they were two different types. Harry Truman was the typical city machine politician, a man who would accommodate to the pressures he felt were the greatest and a forthright fellow who always said about what he thought and in rather powerful language. I don't think he ever bothered to understand the issues in agriculture very well. Brannan, on the other hand, was to me, a dedicated interventionist, if I might use that word; some would call it Socialist. An interventionist is one who believes that the government can do things better than will result from private decision making in the marketplace or under a free economy. Brannan was a very forthright person and I could say, stubborn. The reason he and Allan Kline clashed was that both of them knew where they wanted to go and would not be deflected from that course. When they clashed it was like a freight train hitting another freight train; sparks flew and there was quite a conflict. Charlie Brannan was a man whose temper wasn't too flexible--he was rather short tempered--but he was quite competent on his feet. Allan

Kline was also quite competent on his feet.

If you turn to Eisenhower, as I have indicated, he was a great military strategist and he knew how to administer the army. He believed in staff operation. He would let his staff thrash things out and bring a recommendation and then he'd either accept or reject or send the recommendation back to the staff. This works fine in the army but it doesn't work too well in government. And so the government during the Eisenhower years, as I would interpret it, lacked direction. He was letting it go whichever way the political pressures were the greatest. Eisenhower did, however, to his everlasting credit, stay firm in support of Ezra Benson who was from Utah.

Benson had a county agent background and then he'd been the Executive Secretary for the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives for several years. He had a background of extension service, farming and church work experience. He was an LDS member, a Mormon, and was very devout. He is now a member of the Council of Twelve of the Church of the Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City. I'm sure that Benson, like many of us in these trying times of agricultural battle, turned daily to God in prayer to look for inspiration and direction. The only difference was that, as I knew him, once Ezra Benson found the direction he was looking for, he was convinced that this was what God intended and he had a religious fervor and conviction that wouldn't permit him to change or compromise. I admired him for this, but it was not a happy characteristic for a man in the political arena trying to administer a vast bureaucracy.

Yet Benson held the line so that there wasn't any further drifting toward a government management concept. In fact, I guess I'd have to say that all through these 40 years since 1933, the greatest credit agriculture can take is that we were exposed to the temptations and the sales efforts of those who wanted to take us down the road to Socialism and we stood it off! There haven't been many countries in the world where that occurred. In most cases, when Socialism gets its nose under the tent, it goes ahead until it completely nationalizes an industry. That has not happened in U.S. agriculture. In fact, we have, in recent years, moved slightly away from Socialism in agriculture.

President Jack Kennedy was a great and personable man. He was a charming person. I liked Harry Truman and his forthrightness but I liked Jack Kennedy as a man and I knew him as Senator and later as President. Kennedy brought in Orville Freeman. Again, he was a man that I liked--one with a pleasant personality and who was a much more capable politician than Charlie Brannan. Orville Freeman knew how to get his way in the political arena, and he knew how to deal with opposition. My relations with him, when I was president of the American Farm Bureau and he was Secretary of Agriculture, were cordial. I found him usually to be a man who, if he agreed to something, would do it. Now you had to follow through and be sure that he remembered because he would forget. Once or twice I had occasion to cause him to remember his committment, and he always stayed by it. He also was a rather positive fellow with a good deal of stubbornness in his makeup but I guess that is a good thing in some of these spots.

Jack Kennedy, of course, wanted to avoid issues all that he could. He wanted to be a popular president. It's hard for most Americans to remember, but his administration was not very popular at the time he was unfortunately assassinated. There was a good deal of question as to whether he was going to succeed in being re-elected and that's one of the reasons he planned the trip to Dallas, Texas--to start his campaign. Orville Freeman was a man who was not easily turned away and he was a capable politician. He usually got his way with the Democratic majority in the Congress. He was a tremendously powerful political opponent.

Moving to the more recent past, President Lyndon Johnson was a typical Texan, and again I would describe him more as a machine politician. Kennedy was the personality boy and the fellow that tried to keep everybody feeling good; Johnson was more of the Truman-Mayor Daley of Chicago type of politician. Johnson's own personal activities were probably beyond question, but he knew that the machine that supported him had lots of crooks. His only injunction was to keep your nose clean and if you get in trouble you will not find me supporting you. He was like that in agriculture. He insisted that his administration be run in a way which would try to satisfy the "powers that be" in politics and Orville Freeman was a good man to do that. Lyndon Johnson continued with Orville Freeman as Secretary through his administration.

The administration had not changed directions while Farm Bureau had done so years before. The Congress, after the wheat referendum, had not made a radical change in direction, but they altered their course.

The Kennedy-Johnson-Freeman administration did not alter direction; they continued to think in terms of a government managed agriculture. They left a legacy which was not a political asset in the campaign that followed when Hubert Humphrey took on Richard Nixon.

I don't think that there is evidence to show that farm program issues have been important in the last several Presidential elections. They may have been in a few isolated Congressional elections but they have not been important in Presidential elections. Hubert Humphrey did not do well in agricultural areas and part of the reason was that he was flogging a dead cat. He was trying to make an issue out of government-managed agriculture which he said he was for which farmers had long since abandoned. All the farmers wanted then, and all they want now, is the payments. They don't want the controls, they don't want the regimentation, they don't want a socialized agriculture. They do like the payments and if Hubert Humphrey had just promised payments and nothing else he might have done better.

Nevertheless, the first Nixon administration seemed to hope that farm program issues would go away. President Nixon is a very capable politician. He brought in, as Secretary of Agriculture, Cliff Harden who had been Chancellor of the University of Nebraska. He had an Ag College background at Purdue and at Michigan State in agricultural economics. He, like Brannan of years ago and like some of the other Secretaries, didn't know what the issues were or where the people lined up. Apparently his sole charge from President Nixon was not to rock the boat and try to please as many people as he could--not to propose any radical changes, just roll along. Well, this got him

into trouble and he was not a popular Secretary of Agriculture. He went out on a trade-off; he went to the Ralston Purina Company in St. Louis, and a member of their board went in as Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary Earl Butz. Now I don't mean this was a pernicious thing at all—it's just one of those interesting circumstances. I have known Earl Butz for many, many years and he is a rare combination of a man who has a background in agricultural economics and a good knowledge of farmers from his long service at Purdue University College of Agriculture. He's a man who has the ability to think and speak on his feet; he's been a popular public speaker. He is a politician by inclination and by some practice--he ran unsuccessfully for Governor of Indiana. In his beginning years as Secretary of Agriculture, he has been an outstanding success. He is implementing, if I judge rightly, a new concept and that is to let the farm program continue to become less and less significant. I don't expect him to propose legislation to mandatorily end farm programs but I do expect him to continue to let them die a natural death if he continues as Secretary of Agriculture.

All this leads me to observe that we have been in the position, through these 40 years, about like the old adage that goes something like this: If you would mount a tiger, you should first have made plans for dismounting. When we started in this long period of government intervention in agriculture, we thought of it as a temporary program, but there is no such thing in government. Government programs and bureaucracies become permanent. We had no plans for getting out of it. Most of the arguments for the last 20 years, and especially

during the time that I was the president of the American Farm Bureau and even today are, how do you get rid of it? More and more people agree that we would be better off if we didn't have it, but they can't think of any painless way to get off the tiger.

Farm Bureau had been moving in a new direction. It started before 1954, when I came in as president. It started in 1947 during the administration of Allan Kline as president of the AFBF. It was based on the recognition that government political action will never solve farm problems. You can't legislate good prices and good income for farmers. That is going to come through things we do with our own resources. This new direction was also based on the slow but final recognition that our farm problem was not really one of surplus or the capacity to produce a surplus, it wasn't low prices. Our problems in agriculture have been marketing problems. That relates back to the fact that the IAA and various state and county Farm Bureaus have, for many years, been working at promoting increased consumption of food and fiber products. And it relates back to the issue that Allan Kline highlighted more than any other leader that I know of in agriculture when he emphasized the need to expand export markets. This was why he was interested in the International Federation of Agricultural Producers. This was why he worked so much with the Department of State and why he was concerned with fiscal and monetary problems; because they're all related to trade.

So Farm Bureau had more and more, moved in the direction of trade expansion. We developed a department in the AFBF to try to develop new outlets for farm products that's been copied by several state

Farm Bureaus. When we got off of the government program as a solution kick, we recognized that marketing was the real problem--marketing both at home and abroad. We had for too long produced what we wanted to or what some government bureaucrat told us to, and then went to the market after it was produced and said, "What will you give me for it?" This is no basis for any business to survive progress.

Beginning in 1960, the American Farm Bureau Federation organized the American Agricultural Marketing Association. It attempts to develop marketing programs which will put farmers in the position of pricing their products and negotiating for fair prices, rather than accepting what somebody wants to hand to us. I would say that today this is the new hope of the future in agriculture. It won't be necessary to repeal all of the farm program legislation--it's going out of use quite rapidly anyway--it will simply mean that we need some implementing legislation which may make it easier to organize and develop an organized marketing approach.

Well, this is somewhat of a capsule summary of where we've been in the last 50 years. I was in a position to help decide for about 30 years of that period. In the previous 20 year period I was involved as an observer or student, though I participated in some of these programs. I didn't oppose government in agriculture in the beginning; I started out convinced that we had to have a government supported agriculture. I was for the McNary-Haugen Bill as a student in college. I thought that the export debenture program would be the salvation of the farmer. When I started farming in 1929, I was very excited about the first Triple A, in fact I served on the first committee that was

appointed to develop a wheat control program in our county and served for two or three years. I was involved in the convention of the Illinois Agriculture Association when we voted to support the control and price support programs. At that time I was somewhat disillusioned with the idea that we would make much headway with government programs, but I felt that there was no alternative at the time. However, I was a member of the resolutions committee at the 1947 convention when we did change directions. I was on the side of those arguing for continued confidence in the competitive market price system and opposing government price fixing and management.

Later on as I became president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, I was pleased that our voting delegates continued on this policy path. Each year for the last 10 or 15 years, it is noticeable that in the policies of the AFBF there is less and less reference to government pricing and controls and more and more reference is made to marketing programs, expansion of markets and international trade. These are the important issues in Farm Bureau today. At the last convention that I attended in 1971, the time spent on government farm programs by the delegates was insignificant. The major time was spent in discussing marketing, promotion of new markets, international trade and the fiscal policy of the federal government. We've come quite a ways but we're not out of the woods yet. But certainly things look better today to me--with my confidence in the market system--than they have at any time for at least 30 years.

Q: Weren't you remarried after you became president of the American

Farm Bureau Federation?

A: Yes, after the tragedy of losing my first wife, my four teenage children and I lived almost two years with a housekeeper, maintaining the home where we still live. I was blessed by getting acquainted with a lady who was a secretary in a law office in Chicago for quite a few years and who was a farm girl, originally from Milford, Illinois. We were married in 1956 and we were blessed a couple years later with a little boy of our own, George, who is now 14. We've been married over 16 years. I was at that time--1956--president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. My first wife passed away before I became president. In fact, we had no inkling that President Kline was going to retire until I went to the convention that year.

Q: Another milestone in the history of IAA was the new building in Bloomington. Were you president of the IAA when this building was in the planning stage?

A: The history of the home office of the IAA is somewhat interesting. I don't know why, but I suppose the reason why it was originally established in Chicago was because of transportation; the roads weren't too good back in the early 1920's and the railroads were the main form of transportation. So Chicago was accessible to Washington and was accessible to any place downstate. The IAA office was established in Chicago before Earl Smith became president. During the period that I was on the Board of Directors, the IAA was at 608 South Dearborn in an office building. When I came in as president of the IAA, suggestions were made that our quarters were getting inadequate and

that we needed some more space and couldn't get it in the building where we were located. We looked around to find a satisfactory building either to buy or to lease. The price on that kind of property in the Loop area was rather attractive and the IAA had a good surplus so we purchased a building on Ohio Street.

None of these steps were taken with the idea that this location would be permanent. However, I was happy with the offices in Chicago and I felt that we were probably more accessible in Chicago than we would have been in any downstate city. Perhaps even more of an overriding reason why I never initiated any idea of moving was because of the dislocation of the staff. By this time, the IAA was a huge organization with a staff of something over 1,000 people including all of the affiliated companies. I knew that if we moved downstate, which a lot of people suggested from time to time, we would lose a lot of these people and that would be a major setback. So I cannot take any credit for developing the new IAA building; in fact, I opposed the idea when it first came up, although I didn't oppose it vigorously. There were a few times when study committees were appointed during my administration, to look at downstate locations. One of the reasons that some of these studies didn't bring many changes was because of the rivalry that the committee members knew would develop between various cities—Champaign, Bloomington, Peoria, Springfield, Decatur—all of them wanted to be considered.

It was not until a later administration, after Otto Steffey came in, that a downstate move was discussed seriously. When Mr. William Kuhfuss was president of the IAA, he actively promoted the idea and

it was agreed to by a majority of the delegates and they did move downstate. Of course they suffered a tremendous loss of staff for a couple of years—the loss in personnel hurt the organization very badly and it made the cost much higher. But I think now that it is done, it's a good move. I certainly didn't do anything at the time to try to hamper the move and I'm not unhappy that the IAA moved downstate. Once the move is made, that's the best place for them to be. The only thing was that I felt we had more important things to do and that we could not afford to sacrifice the valuable staff people who would not move with the organization.

Q: Could you tell us about your address at the Delaware County Farm Bureau at Muncie, Indiana and about politicians not having the answers to the farmers' problems?

A: That statement was based somewhat on the situation as of late summer or fall of 1972 when we were in the middle of a national Congressional and Presidential campaign. I said that politicians did not have the answers to farmers' problems and that the family farmers and particularly the young farmers shouldn't look to the politicians of either party to solve the price and production problems; in other words, economic problems. We'd had 40 years of experience in which we'd tried every conceivable scheme to manipulate production and manipulate prices through federal government control programs and these manipulations had resulted in a consistent record of failure. I pointed out that the parity ratio was 75 and that is only slightly above the level of the depression years of the 1930's. The producers of those crops, mainly soybeans and livestock, that

had not been under government programs were not in as bad a shape; they were in better shape than the producers of the crops that were under federal programs.

That is one of the real evidences that farm programs don't help farmers. That's where all the trouble is in farming today--in the government controlled crops. I went ahead to say that despite the unhappy results of the government programs, neither political party had offered farmers anything except more of the same. Senator George McGovern promises 100 per cent parity with compulsory controls, despite the unfavorable experience that came when this route was followed in the Cochran-Freeman years. President Nixon promises to continue shoveling out multi-billion dollar subsidy payments in an attempt to partially offset the market depressing dumping of Commodity Credit Corporation grain stocks. Both of these are dead-end roads. Although they are disillusioned with political panaceas for curing the economic ills of agriculture, farmers must still look to the federal government to maintain a favorable economic climate for our markets.

I urged that the farmers support those candidates who are pledged to check inflation because that's part of the economic climate, and to support those candidates who are pledged to expand foreign markets for farm products by reducing tariffs and other protective devices. I pointed out that inflation definitely falls heavily on farmers who cannot pass the increased cost on to others; that the wage and price control program is a failure and should be terminated; that inflation can't be checked by controls because it's caused by excessive govern-

ment spending and that therefore the only way to check inflation is to cut down on government spending and the expansion of the supply of money and credit. I went ahead to say that both the Democratic majority in Congress and the Nixon Administration had to share the blame for the huge federal deficits that have been triggering and are triggering another round of inflation.

Another factor which has contributed to this dangerous inflation and threatens our system as a free nation is the excessive monopolistic power of the huge labor unions. Farm Bureau has never been anti-labor and I'm not anti-labor—I believe in organization. But we've had legislation that was passed at the end of World War II which for all practical purposes, commits the federal government to maintain full employment. We lack the courage to follow through, we have even authorized labor unions to follow policies that encourage people not to work. Minimum wage, closed shop and high settlements in labor disputes have put thousands of workers out of work. When they are out of work, the federal government is obligated under the Full Employment Act to step in to stimulate productions, and that means inflation. I also called attention to the fact that consumers have reduced their purchases of goods that reflect extensive wage increases and this results in more workers being laid off.

Because of the political pressure to maintain full employment, the fiscal and monetary authorities are persuaded to pump more money into credit and into the economy. Inflation seems to have become a political necessity in order to avoid unemployment and we are caught in a trap. Because of inflation caused by deficit spending and easy

money is an easy route, the politicians are reluctant to look for a sound cure. The restrictive policies of the labor unions create unemployment which in turn frightens the politicians, which causes them to continue with inflation--it's just an endless circle. I believe fully that our hope for a free and prosperous economy depends upon whether or not we have the courage to reduce the monopolistic power of the compulsory check-off financed labor unions. Overall I'm confident that there is going to be a good future for the family farmer and for young people going into agriculture if we can get government to move into this area of maintaining a favorable climate but not directing the business of farming. I'm sure that there is no future for farmers if we are cut back to produce for the domestic market. This disaster could happen if we return to protectionist tariffs and trade policies which stifle international trade.

I'm convinced also that government farm programs are delaying the solution of the marketing problems which have plagued farmers for generations. As long as politicians are involved in the pricing and production decisions of important farm crops, it is very difficult to expand export sales on a sound basis. Competitive pricing is the key to expanding markets both at home and abroad. Neither production subsidy payments nor export subsidies are of long term value to farmers because they are not dependable--political decisions are completely unpredictable. As long as farmers depend on government subsidy payments for approximately one-third of their net income, we are in a hazardous situation. Government mangement of agriculture almost always results in low farm prices because the politicians think they

can please the most voters and consumers, by holding down the price of food.

Q: Was it in 1970 that you resigned from the American Farm Bureau?

A: Yes, December of 1970. I'd been in 16 years and I'd been president of the IAA for 9 years; that's 25 years. My children were small when I started in this full time work for Farm Bureau. I'd been away from home three-fourths or more of the time. I was no longer young, and the jobs of President of IAA and President of the AFBF are very demanding jobs. One is under constant pressure and it involves a great deal of travel. I was also conscious of the fact that some of my predecessors and my colleagues had overstayed their time and that one ought to quit while he was still ahead of the game. So I decided it was time to resign.

Also it was a good time as far as the organization was concerned; we were doing well, our membership had been gaining each year, we were at an all time high in membership, and the finances were good. The farm policy battles in Congress were pretty much over. There'll never be any more as sharp battles as there were over the wheat referendum. I just thought it was time for a change in leadership while everything was going good and I haven't regretted it since.

Q: You have been Regent of three universities in Illinois. Would you tell us something about your advocation of competition within the educational system?

A: One of the things that you find when you retire is that you have

to develop new priorities and new interests. We have no provision—and I think it's exactly right—for a former Farm Bureau president to continue as a so-called consultant or anything else. You go right off the payroll and you're not part of a continuing thing and I think that's best.

So I came back to the farm and was too old to start farming again on a full time basis. So other people commenced to see that I had some time available and they had lots of thankless jobs that needed to be done. The Governor of Illinois, whom I knew slightly, appointed me as a member of the Board of Regents, which is one of the States boards of higher education. I think we have five boards of higher education; the board of the University of Illinois is one, the board of Southern Illinois is another, and the Board of Governors—which has jurisdiction over Eastern and Western and some of the Chicago schools—is another. Then there's the Board of Regents, which I was named to, which has Northern Illinois University, Illinois State University at Normal and the new Sangamon State University in Springfield. Then over all is the fifth board which is the Board of Higher Education.

This posed a challenge and a responsibility to me. The board meets usually one day each month but it takes more time than that to keep up with your homework and to keep informed. It is not a paying job; you donate your time and they pay expenses only. I point out these things to indicate that it takes a lot of nerve and some sacrifice to serve on one of these boards of higher education, especially with the educational climate in the universities the way it is. I've learned a few things, I think, in one year. One thing I have learned is that

the administration of a university by committees of faculty is one of the reasons why we've had so much trouble on college campuses. Administration by committees is impossible anywhere--in a university or a business or anywhere else.

I've also become convinced that the competitive market system is beginning to operate in higher education and this will be good as far as students and the taxpayers and the nation generally are concerned. We've had too long a period of time when the colleges and universities have been operated with little or no concern for efficiency and accountability. Now that money is getting scarce, the State Legislature doesn't know where they are going to get money for all the needs and they've had to cut back on appropriations to the universities and colleges. The citizens generally are demanding that there be more economy in the operation of these schools and I think this is a good thing. There's been a lot of fat and a lot of wasted money in many of our schools and of course, we've seen the dissatisfaction of the students with the big diploma mills that some of the state institutions have become. Students want better institutions with more practical courses and I'm for that, too. So I'm encouraged that we're making a turn here that will be good for higher education in the state universities, particularly where they have to respond to the market. It's showing up this year in that the enrollment is down in some schools and up in others. I think this is a good barometer that shows which schools are doing the best job.

Overall, I'm also pleased to see private universities--schools that are in competition with the public institutions. The politicians

that move in on the public schools try to use them as devices to advocate their ideas and their schemes. They can't do that in the private schools. It's good that we have private schools that can be independent and can be competitive with the state institutions. One of the examples of how politicians move into the school system is the current controversy over busing to achieve integration. It has been a challenging experience. One of the things that we've done on the Board of Regents this year that will pay dividends, is that we have tried to strengthen the administrative powers of the presidents and their staffs. Two or three years ago we found that the faculty, by and large, was running the university.

The faculty of the university should be involved in making decisions, particularly in reference to courses of study and educational policy. The faculty is not in a position to carry out the business side of the institution. The administration must be under a somewhat professional administrative staff and that's what a lot of the trouble in the last few years has been--faculties have been trying to run the universities as a community. It can't be run as a community; it has to be run as the business that it is. These universities spend millions and millions of dollars each year and enroll thousands of students--it must be a business operation.

Well, these and other experiences have been rewarding to me and I appreciate the fact that people are giving me opportunities to get involved in other things. Not that I'm not interested in keeping close to the Farm Bureau too; I follow everything that's done and if I see something that isn't going in the right direction I don't hesi-

tate to say so. But I'm just another member of the organization now, I'm not part of the administrative or policy staff.

Q: Over the years you've had many honors and plaques and degrees bestowed upon you. Would you like to tell us something about these awards?

A: Yes, I appreciate the recognition that has come my way. I don't always think that I've deserved all the things that have come. I'm not trying to be unduly modest when I say that I never have really believed in honorary degrees issued by universities, because I think in a way it takes something away from the earned doctor's degree that some students spend several years achieving. However, as long as honorary doctor's degrees are given out, I do appreciate the recognition that I've had. I think I have received an honorary doctor's degree at one time or another from Illinois College at Jacksonville; Illinois Wesleyan University at Bloomington-Normal; from Millikin University at Decatur; from DePauw University at Green Castle, Indiana; from Missouri Valley College in Missouri; and more recently, from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Most of these were given in recognition of my years as head of the Farm Bureau. But I sometimes kid a little, saying that the reason they give an honorary doctor's degree is to pay you for making the commencement address. But that's somewhat facetious. I have not made commencement addresses for all of these degrees; some I've gotten without anything of that kind.

It was interesting that I received an honorary doctor's degree from

DePauw University at Green Castle, Indiana, at the same time that Prime Minister McMillan of Great Britain, U.K., was similarly honored. This gave me the opportunity to meet Harold McMillan who had, as many people will remember, married an American girl. I think she had gone to DePauw.

Some of the other honors that I've appreciated very much include the Distinguished Alumnus Award at the University of Illinois, which I got a number of years ago. Then I deeply appreciated the fact that my own high school alumni group here at Sullivan High School saw fit to put me in their Hall of Fame as they call it. I have had many other trophies and I guess all that they mean to a person now is memories, but I appreciate them nevertheless.

I served on many commissions appointed by the President or the Governor. I've had the rare opportunity, as I have mentioned previously, of meeting and knowing fairly well, most all of the Secretaries of Agriculture since Henry Wallace and the Presidents since Roosevelt. Then, of course, in working as head of the farm organization, you get to know many other leaders in other kinds of activities, such as the American Medical Association, the National Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO's George Meany and Walter Ruther who was killed in a plane accident. I knew Walter and his brother Victor fairly well. I've known many other members of the Cabinet in several administrations. Henry Fowler, who served under Johnson as Secretary of the Treasury, and I served on the Commission on Money and Credit several years ago and I knew him quite well. Also, Maurice Stans, who was recently in Nixon's cabinet and Governor John Connally of Texas and so many that

I shouldn't start to name them. But all of these things give you satisfaction, of course.

At the same time, the greatest satisfaction that I had in serving these 25 years, was the support that farm people gave me as I tried to carry out the policies they adopted. This support hasn't always been easy for them to give because many times the members—after they've decided on a policy and you start to carry it out—say that they didn't know that you were going to be that vigorous in supporting it. So we had our problems, but overall mine has been a rare experience.

Not that I think it was something that "I did". But this matter of being elected president of an organization like the Farm Bureau or, as far as that goes, being elected to be Governor or appointed Secretary of Agriculture, is very much a thing of being born at the right time. But you've got to have some abilities. You can have the same abilities yet not be on the scene at the opportune time and not be recognized. I think everyone ought to remember that. Whether or not you take advantage of the opportunities is your responsibility but being there at the right time is important and accidental.

Q: I see a beautiful antique silver container that you were awarded. Was this for work done on the state level?

A: Yes, that reminds me that I overlooked a very important area of activity when I was president of the Illinois Agriculture Association. That was to get a revision in the antiquated constitution of the state of Illinois. At one time you could only submit one proposition for

amendment to the constitution at a time. To be adopted it had to be approved by a majority of all the people that voted in that particular election; not just those voting on the issue, but of all the folks that went to the polls. The result was that our constitution stayed the same from way back in 1890 to the present time with very little amendment--practically none. And so the progressive citizens and organizations in Illinois knew that there should be some changes made and were seeking a way to make it better--either a constitutional convention or improvement of the amendment process so that changes could be made more easily. The Illinois Agricultural Association supported this effort and I was named as co-chairman of the statewide campaign to secure adoption of the so-called Blue Ballot. The Blue Ballot was an amendment to the Constitution to make it possible to submit three propositions at the same time and also to provide that they could be adopted if passed by a majority of those voting on the amendment. And we succeeded, strange as it might seem. It looked impossible but we succeeded in getting this amendment adopted, and that silver biscuit box was presented as kind of a token or a remembrance of that activity.

Q: Well, it is lovely. Again, I say thank you for your time in being interviewed. It is a lovely day here, the flag is flying beautifully in the breeze and to one side of the walk I notice a huge pile of bright pumpkins and squashes on the green lawn. It has been a pleasure talking to you.

END OF TAPE