Abstract

Mark Johnson, *Agriculture in Illinois*, Oral History project

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Mark Johnson was born on October 19, 1965 in Columbus, Ohio. He completed a B.S. degree in Animal Science at Oklahoma State University in 1989. He currently judges sheep shows nationwide, and also raises Southdown sheep on a small farm in La Salle County, Illinois. Mark works as an Agricultural Specialist for Kline Creek Farm, an 1890s era living-history farm in DuPage County, Illinois. In this interview, Mark describes the process of planting, harvesting, and threshing oats on “Country Fair” day at Kline Creek Farm. Oats are a cool-season grass that are planted in March or early April at Kline Creek using an Appleton grain drill pulled by Percheron draft horses. They are harvested in July using an International grain binder, which cuts off the stalks and ties them into bundles. Field workers then stand up the bundles in shocks to dry. Then the bundles are placed on a hayrack wagon and fed into a McCormick-Deering thresher that separates the seed from the chaff. The thresher at Kline Creek Farm is powered by a 1922 Minneapolis steam tractor. Oat seeds are fed to cattle, horses, and sheep on the farm, and any surplus seeds are sold for farm income. Oat chaff, or straw, is baled and stored in the barn to be used as animal bedding in the winter.

**Subject Headings/Keywords:** Kline Creek Farm; Country Fair; oats; cool-season grass; spring planting; Appleton grain drill; Percheron draft horses; oat growth (best <80°F); oat harvest; International grain binder; oat bundle; oat shock; hayrack wagon; oat threshing; McCormick-Deering thresher; straw walkers; oat seed; box wagon; livestock feed (cattle, horses, sheep); human food (oatmeal, Cheerios, oatmeal cookies); oat straw (chaff); hay vs. straw; stationary baler; grain bin; surplus; cash crop; Minneapolis steam tractor; steam power; coal fuel; wood fuel.

**Note to the Reader:** Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

**COPYRIGHT**

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. “Fair use” criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955