

Oral History Log of Interview with Jeffrey R. Halcom of Bethalto, IL

Tuesday, July 11, 2017, at approximately 6:45pm

Jeff was born on June 12, 1960 in Edwardsville, Illinois and has lived in Madison County for most of life.

Minutes	Brief Statement of What Was Discussed
:00	Introductory Statement
:15	Name and Background
1:30	Life in a farming family
3:55	Summer chores, working with his father on construction sites, extended family working together to support the farm
6:22	Farming in Madison County and the changes since the 1960's and 1970's
8:55	Attending Edwardsville Schools in the 1960's and 1970's, attending youth group as a teenager
13:00	Last years of high school, choosing to be a machinist, being laid off from his first job, and leaving Illinois for Pennsylvania
15:08	Returning to Madison County and taking a job at Granite City Steel, comparing the GCS to the facilities he experienced in Pennsylvania, describing a basic day working in the shop at steel mill
20:48	Detailing his push for updated equipment in the shop, resistance among older coworkers to use new equipment,
23:40	Discussing right to keep larger jobs in-house instead of being contracted to outside companies, provides an example of a contest between the GCS and a contracted company, Lenhardt Tool & Die
25:33	Explaining "emergency" jobs and the role of the shop to keep the mill running, leaving Granite City Steel for Dow Jones & Company
27:49	Describing new job at Dow Jones working on the printing presses that print <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> and <i>Barron's</i>
29:43	Issues and difficulties facing the newspaper industry and the changes that have taken place in seventeen years with the company
32:20	The steel industry and the issues that it has faced and still faces
34:54	Discussion of family life, difficulties raising kids while doing shift work
36:51	Describing experience with short-term disability after two injuries (eye, foot) that forced him to be off work for extended periods of time
39:10	Raising kids in Madison County, changes in education since his childhood and his kids' childhood, importance of shop classes and blue-collar work
43:16	Madison County as a place to raise a family
44:10	The Bethalto Homecoming celebration and making and selling ice cream with his church for nearly thirty years, the science and mechanical skill that goes into making homemade ice cream
48:57	Reflecting on the people and land of Madison County
51:23	Reflections on family, particularly his grandfathers (his mother's father, a farmer, and his father's father, a millwright)
54:02	Discussion of financial structure of farming in the 1960's and 1970's, renting family farm for \$250 a year (for the house) and a third of the crop harvested
56:12	Comparing farm life to current day life with a traditional job, reflecting on the relative simplicity of farm life and changes in farming science (GMO crops) and technology (tractors, combines, etc.)
1:00:00	Looking back over 50 years at changes in technology, relates how he and his wife wrote letters for six to eight months before they met in person
1:04:28	Reflections on the twentieth century with a story about his grandfather's progressive adoption of technology, and final reflections on Madison County, taxes, and the state of Illinois
1:06:47	Goodbyes