

Excerpt from Interview with Matthew Hughes

AIS-V-L-2008-072

October 22, 2008

Interviewer: Mark DePue

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

Hughes: When I was a kid, I was driving the tractor when I was five years old, and I was probably operating a combine when I was eleven. I was doing a lot of things that probably people today would have come in and probably took me away from my parents. (laughter) But I wasn't at all out of the ordinary, and that's kind of the way farm life was. Today, I've been struggling on figuring out how to... We've finally got Thaddeus starting mowing grass, and I'm thinking still today, I probably could get in trouble for that. If I hired a kid to do that, I can't do that. But we watch him, and we supervise a lot of things.

There's just a lot of things he can't do with the equipment the way it is, and I wouldn't let him do it. The equipment I have today is nothing like what I grew up with. It's bigger, it's more sophisticated, and he just... I wouldn't be suited to operate it at his age. So things are a lot different. It's been a lot more challenging to expose him to the agriculture I grew up with, and even trying to get him to do the chores. You know, we've become more specialized in grain production and don't have that livestock around to make him have that work ethic, but we look for the opportunities. We have pets, and Connie still has horses, so there's some responsibility for him.