

Inventory of the

Leonard J. Jacobs

Collection

In the

Regional History Center

RC 193

INTRODUCTION

Leonard J. Jacobs of Phoenix, Arizona donated the Leonard J. Jacobs Collection to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on April 10, 1989. Mr. Jacobs added additional records on February 4, 1999.

Property rights in the collection belong to the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 1.5
Number of containers: 2
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 193

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Leonard J. Jacobs Collection consists of research material used by Leonard Jacobs in the writing of his book, Corn Huskers' Battle of the Bangboards. The first twenty folders of the collection contains correspondence between Jacobs and the men who competed in the corn husking competitions and other general correspondence from people interested in corn husking. An article entitled, "King of the Hill: Illini Huskers, 1924-1941," written by Leonard J. Jacobs for the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society and a pamphlet of corn husking tools manufactured by Kewanee Specialty and Husker Co., Inc. are contained in folders 21 and 22 respectively. Included in the remainder of the collection is a miscellaneous folder containing corn husking statistics, rules, and other articles pertaining to this subject; four photographs of corn huskers; a cassette with the taped conversation and transcript of Lawrence Pitzer and Layton Robert; and a copy of Jacobs' book Corn Huskers' Battle of the Bangboard.

The addendum includes farm magazine articles concerning the corn husking contests held in various states from 1924 through 1941. The articles are for the contests at the state and national level only. The tabs attached to the articles by Mr. Jacobs are deciphered as the page number of the article, whether a state or national contest, and the year of the contest.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Corn husking competitions began in the early 1920s as a form of recreation, a break from the detested chore of picking and husking corn by hand. The object of these competitions was to husk as much corn from your assigned rows within an allotted time period, usually 80-90 minutes, and tossing the corn into a wagon drawn by horses. The competitor with the most bushels after poundage deductions was the winner. Deductions consisted of ears left in their rows (gleaning) and husks left on the corn (dirty corn). The pace of the huskers was so fast they reached speeds of 50-60 ears of corn per minute.

In 1922, Henry A. Wallace of Iowa, editor of Wallace's Farmer, arranged the first organized contest with cash prizes awarded to the winners. Soon the contests grew into a national competition which included the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

The last corn husking competition was held on November 3, 1941 in LaSalle County, Illinois after which the huskers suspended their games due to the U.S. involvement in World War II. With the mechanization of the corn harvest, the competitions did not resume.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

Agriculture
Corn husking
Jacobs, Leonard J.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1	1-19	Correspondence by competitors, 1971-1981
	20	General correspondence, 1971-1977
	21	Article-"King of the Hill: Illini Huskers, 1924-1941"
	22	Kewanee Specialty & Husker Co., Inc., n.d.
	23	Miscellaneous Material
	24	Photographs, 1929, 1933, n.d.
	25	Cassette tape and transcript
	26	<u>Corn Huskers' Battle of the Bandboards, 1975</u>
2	1-3	Articles, State, 1922, 1924-1941
	4	Articles, National, 1924-1941
	5	Articles, Miscellaneous, (1928-1941)
	6	Illinois State Corn Husking Contest, October 4, 1992