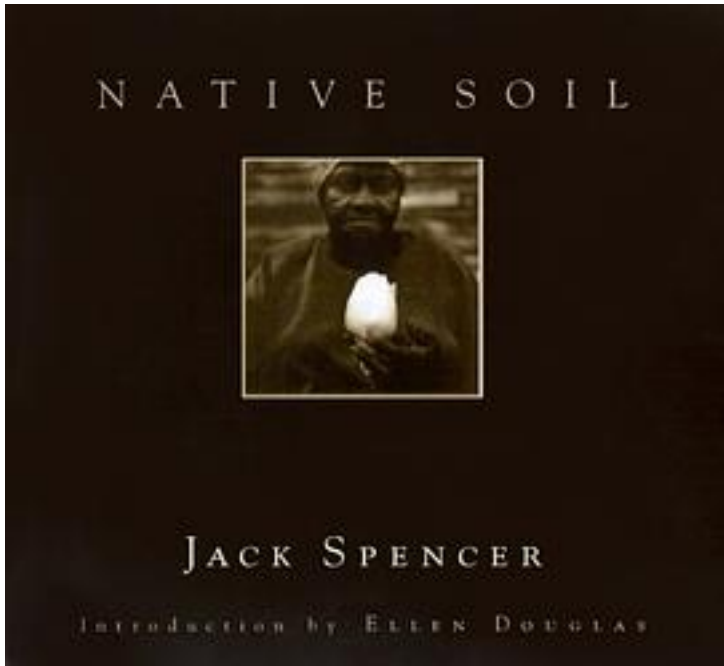


Native Soil



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Located in a region geologically blessed with nutrient-rich, lush, black soil, DeKalb County, Illinois, is known for its agricultural prosperity. Here, in 1912, an enterprising group of successful farmers, businessmen, and bankers joined together to form an innovative organization dedicated to improving crop production, the DeKalb County Soil Improvement Association. Aided by its capable farm advisor, William G. Eckhardt, this coalition evolved into the DeKalb County Farm Bureau - a new type of organization that soon proliferated throughout the United States, offering educational and farming services to rural communities. The DeKalb County Farm Bureau is not only one of the oldest agricultural organizations in the United States, but is also one of the most innovative and influential. Originating as a private soil improvement association, it

grew to offer a number of services for farmers, rural families, and the community. By the 1960s, the DeKalb County Farm Bureau had become such a strong organization that it's leadership effectively lobbied in the US Congress for legislation supporting agricultural interests. In the 1970s, it entered into the international agricultural commodity marketing business, shipping local grain to Europe and Asia. The history of this influential organization reflects the plight of American agriculture in the twentieth century, from the early years of promise through two world wars and several economic crises. In "Native Soil", historian Eric Mogren explains how one group of progressive farmers attempted to cope with the problems they faced as agriculture turned to mechanization and productive farming required scientific and technological advances. It will interest all who are concerned with America's agricultural past.

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