

# THE PLOWSHARE

News for John Deere Collectors



## World's Fair Put Chicago, and John Deere, on the Map

The World's Columbian Exposition, or the World's Fair, held in Chicago, Illinois, in 1893, celebrated the 400th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World. Held in Deere's home state, the company was deeply involved in the planning and organization of this global event, which influenced the social and cultural makeup of the U.S., and had a profound effect on architecture, the arts, and business.

Deere & Company leadership enjoyed close associations with the fair organizers. The secretary of the exposition was Benjamin Butterworth, the father of Deere's future president, William Butterworth. Charles Deere, then president of Deere & Company, was one of two fair commissioners from the State of Illinois.

The fair hosted over 27 million people, about 38% of the entire U.S. population at the time, during its six-month run from May to October

1893. Some of the notable "firsts" on display for visitors were the world's introduction to the Ferris wheel, the hamburger, Juicy Fruit® gum, and Aunt Jemima syrup. Thomas Edison introduced moving pictures with his kinescope.

The fair also served to show the world that Chicago had risen from the ashes of the Great Chicago Fire, which had destroyed much of the city in 1871. Chicago commemorated the fair with one of the stars on its municipal flag. Deere & Company installed five total displays in the Agricultural Building, the Transportation Building, and the Government Building. In addition, Deere & Mansur Company (John Deere Seeding today) had its own display in the Agricultural Building. This building alone held displays from 250 manufacturers and covered more than 16 acres. It included a Deere hay loader, hay rake, steel frame corn planter, disk



**Top:** Postcard featuring the Agricultural Building.  
**Middle:** Photo of Deere & Company display at the fair.  
**Bottom:** Map of Deere & Company's exhibits at the World's Columbian Exposition.



**Gold Plow:** Deere & Company created a 12-inch gold-plated plow for the World's Fair. This plow would eventually win prizes from at least 12 international expositions, the last being the World's Fair in New York in 1939. Today, it is on display at Deere & Company World Headquarters in Moline.



harrow, and a No. 5 cotton and corn planter, which, according to *Farm Implement News*, was a “very handsome implement.”

Deere exhibited 12 products in their display, managed by John Legler, one of Deere’s foreign sales representatives, and future CEO William Butterworth, on one of his first assignments after joining the company. The Deere & Company products honored at the fair were the Gilpin Sulky Plow, Kid Sulky Plow, New Deal Wheel Plow Gang, Deere Gang Wheel Plow, New Deal Wheel Single Plow, Pony Gang, GPD Wood Beam Plow, and Disc Lister.

In the Transportation Building, Deere displayed grading plows used in railroad work, and was mentioned in the history of plow building in the Illinois State Building. In the Government Building, Deere loaned the Patent Office a collection of foreign plows and cultivators and two new John Deere plows.

### Columbian Peace Plow

John Deere also had a hand in creating a one-of-a-kind plow displayed at the Columbian Exposition. The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) had the idea for the plow after their public call for patriotic artifacts to create a replica of the American Liberty Bell was met with a flood of coins, swords, and other artifacts — far more than what was needed for the replica bell.

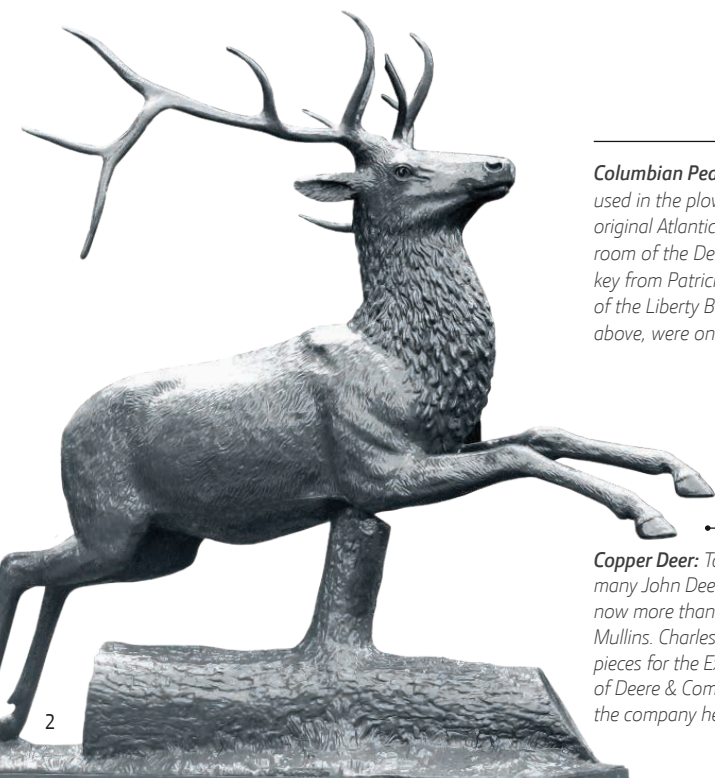
The group based the concept for the plow, which was to be made out of the collection of donated historic swords, on a Bible verse, “...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

In April 1893, only a month before the Columbian Exposition in Chicago opened, the DAR contacted Deere & Company about the

plow. Deere commissioned a local carpenter named Charles Borg (whom Deere later hired to work at Deere & Mansur Company as a patternmaker) to build the plow from over 22,000 metal relics and over 200 pieces of historical wood, some no bigger than the size of a dime.

Borg created an intricate design with 24 inlay patterns in the wood, including eagles, American flags, two leaping deers, and other decorative patterns. In addition, Borg fashioned two arrowheads from a piece of the window sill of Abraham Lincoln’s Springfield, Illinois, home, and two arrowheads from an apple tree brought to the United States by the settlers aboard the *Mayflower*.

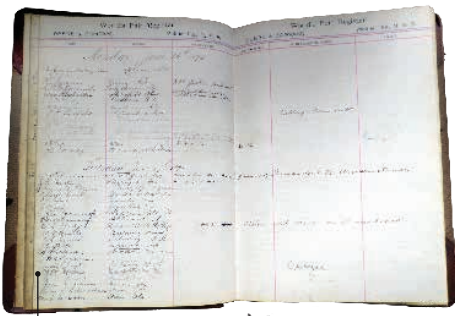
Today, the Columbian Peace Plow is in the collection of the Grand Rapids Public Museum in Michigan. It was last on display at Deere & Company in 1986.



**Columbian Peace Plow:** Metal relics used in the plow contain a piece of the original Atlantic Cable, a nail from the drafting room of the Declaration of Independence, a key from Patrick Henry’s desk, and a fragment of the Liberty Bell. This plow, and the gold plow above, were on display at the Chicago World’s Fair.

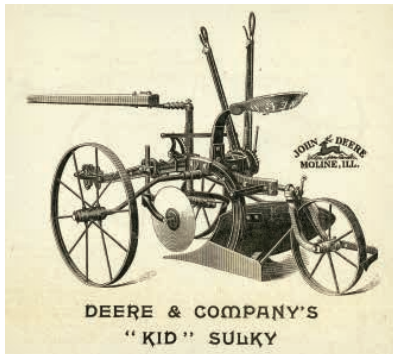
**Copper Deer:** Today, copper deer statues stand in front of many John Deere locations around the world. These deer, now more than 100 years old, were the work of artist Henry Mullins. Charles Deere contracted Mullins to design several pieces for the Exposition, but also placed an order on behalf of Deere & Company for a deer statue to erect on the roof of the company headquarters in Moline, Illinois.





*M. F. Hershey*

Visitors to the Deere & Company display signed this guest register. Amongst the notable visitors was Milton Hershey, who purchased equipment at the Fair for making chocolate coatings and soon after started the Hershey Candy Company.



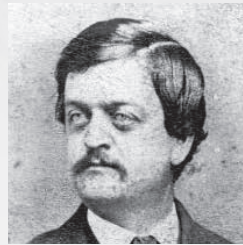
Top: Kid Sulky Plow  
Bottom: 4-Bottom New Deal Wheel Plow Gang

The Bible verse Isaiah 9:4, the inspiration for the plow, is inscribed on its side.



## Who's on First? John Deere, for Over a Century

Seeing John Deere green on a field is a familiar sight, whether it's a tractor in corn or a mower on the baseball diamond. You don't have to look hard to find John Deere turf mowers, field rakes, and Gators™ caring for the world's greatest ballparks, but you might be surprised to know that John Deere's connection to the game of baseball doesn't end with equipment.



Charles Deere, one-time pitcher and president of Deere & Company, circa 1870.

It started with Charles Deere, John Deere's son and second president of Deere & Company. Charles joined his father's company in 1854 at the age of 16 as a new graduate of Bell's Commercial College in Chicago. He started as a bookkeeper, and put in long hours. One of Deere's preoccupations outside of school and work was baseball. Henry Ainsworth, a longtime business associate, remembered his first meeting with Deere was on the baseball field in the late 1850s when Deere's team from Moline, Illinois, travelled to nearby Geneseo, Illinois, to play a game.



Members of the Deere & Company Archives model vintage company baseball team uniforms. **Left:** Harvester Works uniform, circa 1970. **Right:** Plow & Planter Works Engineering Department uniform is from the early 1980s.





In the early 20th century, factory baseball leagues began to spring up across the country, and brought employees from different companies together socially and competitively. In the Tri-Cities (now the Quad Cities on the Iowa-Illinois border) the Factory Baseball League of 1914 included 12 teams, six of them representing Deere. The following year, Deere & Company took the league championship. In 1919, Melvin Linden, who worked in the corporate offices, was the “prize hitter of the Deere & Company players” with a batting average of .417.

In 1920, members of the Factory Baseball League included six teams, four of them representing John Deere. They included Harvester Works, Deere & Company, Marseilles Works, and John Deere Wagon Works. Two other teams rounded out the league: the Velie Motor Company and the Moline-Universal Tractor Plant. The season opened

May 1, and consisted of 15 games. In that year, John Deere’s grandson and director of Deere & Company, Willard Velie, Jr., presided as commissioner of the Factory Baseball League. The John Deere Athletic Association represented the Deere teams. Players paid \$1 in association fees for the year to participate in activities including bowling leagues and tennis.

Other John Deere factories had teams that participated in their own factory leagues. The Waterloo Gasoline Engine Company, which Deere acquired in 1918, played in a local league, and their competitive spirit sometimes resulted in trips to the Tri-Cities. This was the case when the Waterloo squad travelled to East Moline to take on Marseilles Works.

If you were attending a company picnic, chances are that between the sack races, tug-of-war, shot put, and one-hundred-yard dash, you found time to either watch or play in a pick-up baseball game. The Factory Baseball

League eventually folded, but the sport is still going strong among employees at John Deere, with countless employees playing in leagues throughout the summer.



The Deere & Company team wins the Factory Baseball League championship in 1915.

## EVOLUTION OF AMERICA'S BAT



John Yilek, independent contractor  
The logger / Uses a John Deere 650G



Larimer & Norton  
The timber yard / Uses a John Deere TC54H



Hillerich & Bradsby Co.  
Headquarters Building / Makers of the Louisville Slugger®



The Louisville Slugger  
Widely considered the best wood bat in the game of baseball





## Summer Is My Favorite Time of the Year



Every year I look forward to the warmer temperatures, the county fairs, and wonderful tractor shows that come with them. This summer there's another exciting activity on the calendar. For the first time in years I get to watch a family member play ball.

This is one of my favorite summer activities. I guess it reminds me of when I was an aspiring Little League player. I love the night air, the cheering parents in the stands, and of course, the crack of the bat. Thinking back to when my daughters were young and

looked forward to summer softball season, I recall the excitement of the game and the thrill of watching them as a part of a well-oiled team.

Four of my girls played softball, and it seemed I was at a ball game most summer nights. When the time came for all four to be in different leagues we discovered there weren't enough drivers in the immediate household. Grandparents, friends, and fellow softball parents helped transport our athletes to the games as needed. Looking back, it was a hectic pace, but well worth it.

This summer, the next generation has started playing T-ball, and I am thrilled to be going to the ballpark again to watch my grandson play. Watching those young players at T-ball games has been a blast. Some always forget to run to first base after hitting the ball, and others just plain forget where first base is located! Then there are others who step up to the plate, adjust their ball caps, raise their hand to signal "time," dig their foot into the batter's box, and tap their bat on their shoes just like the pros do to clean their spikes — of course they forget they're in tennis shoes and it really doesn't help much. You can't help but laugh and cheer them on even harder, like I did for my girls and my parents did for me.

I hope your summer is full of the pastimes you enjoy the most. I'm looking forward to all the fairs, ball games, and of course, tractor shows that I can squeeze in.

Keep your hand on the throttle and your plow in the ground...

**Brian Holst**  
Manager, John Deere  
Heritage Marketing



Abby



Danica



Sarah



Courtney

## TAKE A RIDE BACK IN TIME

### The QCA Heritage Tractor Parade and Show

Sept. 12, 2015 | 10am-5pm

Tractor owners and enthusiasts, here's a chance to show off your 1970 or older tractor in the Heritage Tractor Parade, or just come and share in the camaraderie as a spectator at the parade and show. Celebrate the heritage of farming and share your stories with other collectors and enthusiasts. Participation in the parade and show is free! For more information and to register your tractor contact:

Kristen Veto at 309-765-1005 or  
VetoKristenA@JohnDeere.com  
[JohnDeereAttractions.com](http://JohnDeereAttractions.com)

**John Deere Pavilion**  
1400 River Drive, Moline, IL

# THE PLOWSHARE

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## Every Field Has a Story

At PetCo Park, home of the San Diego Padres Major League Baseball team, the grass has to be green and edges have to be perfect, even after an event like a concert on the field. See how a John Deere dealer helps the grounds crew at PetCo Park come through in the clutch.

► [Watch the video](#)

To many kids in the Chicago Park District, baseball means everything. The kids don't just learn about the game, they learn about teamwork. Watch how John Deere equipment keeps the fields in shape so the kids can play.

► [Watch the video](#)

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**Read more about it in our next issue.**