

Fall 2016  
Issue #43

# THE PLOWSHARE

History for John Deere Collectors



JOHN DEERE



# Welcome to the November Issue.

Harvest time has always meant so much to me. From the end of summer to seeing the fruits of a year's work and planning come together – It's such a rich season.

But perhaps the most important memory that comes to mind is the gathering of family and friends. Having grown up close to my grandparents, uncles and aunts, it was an unspoken rule that come harvest time, we all worked together.

For the most part, each member of the family more or less did their own thing during spring planting and cultivating. However, when it came to harvesting – it was all hands on deck.

I recall one year we had an exceptionally cool, wet fall and harvest was running late for the central Midwest. With dad contending with the milk cows, my uncle and granddad showed up early to grease the machines and fuel-up for the day's harvest. It was one of those days the wind was blowing and the corn field leaves were whipping through the air. It was time for harvest.

My granddad and uncle led the way to the field, where my dad would join them when he had finished his work with the cows and heifers – or so he thought. It wasn't until my dad was climbing the silo when he noticed a slight trail of smoke coming from the neighbor's field. And then he saw the flames.

The unthinkable had happened. Our neighbors' self-propelled corn picker had lost a bearing, which allowed the rotating shaft and bearing housing to create sparks that caught the corn leaves on fire. And if you've ever seen a corn field on fire, you might compare it to a wild grass fire – the speed of which it can spread is like nothing you have experienced before.

I vividly remember my dad racing through the farm yard, barreling towards one of our tractors that had a 12' disc attached, while hollering to, "Go get Uncle Loren and Grandpa Leroy to head to the field that was on fire!" Of course, I ran as fast as my five-year-old legs would allow, while shouting, "Fire! Fire! Fire!" from my oxygen starved lungs.

That was all they needed to hear to kick into action. I remember seeing our old Dodge hitting the tops of every corn row, with a billowing dirt clod and washout. By the time I got to the flame-engulfed field, the fire had claimed nearly 70 acres of corn. Over the course of a few hours, eight neighbors and two rural fire departments were on site with anything that would put the smoldering fire pockets out and prevent it from spreading even further.

The crop loss was tragic and as you can imagine, the corn picker was a total loss. But no one lost anything that couldn't be replaced and everyone lived to tell about it.

I learned a few lifelong lessons that day. The first, is that a Dodge truck actually can fly. The second, and perhaps most important, is that no matter how busy you are with whatever task – you always look out for others. Life is short and no matter how well you plan, there is the possibility that things may go amiss. And that's why it's so important to remember to look out for the 'warning smoke in the field' so you can be there for the people around you.

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

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## BRIAN HOLST

Historical Equipment Manager  
Deere & Company

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# THANK YOU!

## OVER 1,600 READERS

completed a recent survey for The Plowshare publication. We will incorporate your feedback into future publications to elevate your user experience, such as returning to the PDF digital version of the newsletter. We truly value your feedback!

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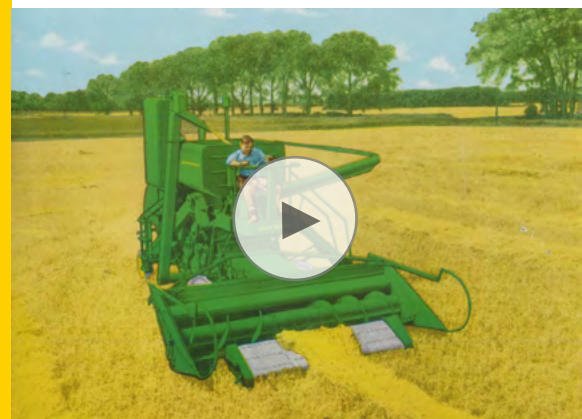
## UPCOMING EVENTS

### *Lighting on the Commons*

Saturday, November 19th  
3:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.

## OUT OF THE VAULT VIDEO LINK:

One of the many great features of the 55H Combine was power steering, allowing operators to handle the tractor like an automobile. Check out our latest Out of the Vault video here!



 [facebook.com/JohnDeere](https://facebook.com/JohnDeere)

 [instagram.com/JohnDeere](https://instagram.com/JohnDeere)

 [youtube.com/JohnDeere](https://youtube.com/JohnDeere)

 [twitter.com/JohnDeere](https://twitter.com/JohnDeere)

Johnston harvests beans with his 55 at an Antique Engine and Tractor Association (AETA) event near Geneseo, Illinois.



## NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERE™

### Employee loyalty runs deep as a collector

Mark Johnston's passion for John Deere runs deeper than his employment. Over the past 15 years, the senior engineer for the Current Product Engineering hydraulic and drive team at Harvester Works has collected over 150 vintage John Deere machines.

From the early age of six, Johnston's interest in restoration and engines was sparked when he and his father would attend the local steam engine rally shows. He cultivated that interest through college where he served as the president of his university's engineering society, which restored old machinery.

A trip to North Dakota set the course for his hobby. "Having started working for John Deere in early 2000, my friend suggested I buy a John Deere 'D' tractor at an auction and that's it. That was my first piece of John Deere equipment," Johnston said. "Initially it was simply a fascination for a tractor or two. But as I learned more, I found a passion for restoration and now have one of the largest collections of two cylinder diesel tractors."

Perhaps the item Johnston is most excited about is his most recent purchase from New York. "I just bought an 820 industrial tractor with certain option and painted yellow," said Johnston. Johnston's

collection of over 150 machines continues to grow as he travels around the U.S. to auctions and to pick up the machines, collect parts and owner's manuals.

Being a collector provides another perspective to Johnston as an employee. "Being a collector gives me another viewpoint on the company and enhances my loyalty to the company – as if I needed anymore," shared Johnston. "It gives me another connection to the customer, because I am the customer, and it helps me to see value in the company."

His favorite machines include a 1960 55 combine and his 1951 model R tractor. Both are in perfect working condition. "It's such a wonderful demonstration of the longevity of our products and I often think about that in my work," shared Johnston.

*"We need to build products that will last, because quality is our reputation. And that's what I get to do every day."*



Mark Johnston, smiling in front of a combine at the Harvester Works in East Moline, Illinois.



In April 2015, Johnston's John Deere "R" tractor was on display at the Tractor & Engine Museum at Waterloo. It was the first John Deere tractor with a steel cab. (Seen top center in the photo).



Johnston bought this 1959 Model 830 tractor at a consignment auction in early 2009. The 830 is just one of his seven big diesel tractors with cabs.



# 2016 PARTS SERVICE EXPO FEATURING HISTORICAL EQUIPMENT

Texas will be getting a little bit bigger this December. The 2016 Service Parts Expo will be hosted in sunny Austin, Texas, December 4-14, 2016.

Seeing as the Expo is the largest sales and training event in John Deere, the parts marketing organization will train and educate approximately 2,500 dealers so they can then better serve their end users – our customers. Dealers will learn skills on how to raise their overall selling competence, learn how to serve all owners of equipment throughout the lifecycle, and facilitate a forum to share dealer best practices.

“The John Deere Parts and Service Expo is a great place for dealership parts and service personnel from across the county to get together and learn what is new and what resources are available,” said Brian Holst, Historic Equipment Manager. “This event allows them to better provide services and parts through the dealer network for our customers.”

The convention will feature a variety of new technologies for diagnostics, new parts attachments, as well as additional supplies for customers. This event will provide a unique opportunity to create additional sales of parts and services.

But perhaps some of the most exciting pieces will not be the latest and greatest technology, but some special equipment making an appearance from the past.

“We will be featuring the 4440, 4960 and 7810 tractors to re-energize dealers to focus on the restoration of older equipment,” shared Phil Lauer, Product Line Marketing Manager. “The 4440 will be the big attention getter this year; it’s the 2 millionth trt tractor and is like brand new. When the dealers stop by the Trt tractors booth and see a brand new 4960 and 7810, I think they’ll really be impressed.”



# HARVESTER CHRONOLOGY

## No. 55 COMBINES

In the years shortly after the outbreak of World War II, the manufacture of agricultural products was closely monitored by the War Production Board. Given special permission by the United States Government, Canadian-based manufacturer Massey-Harris produced 500 of its self-propelled combines. These machines, dubbed by the press as the "Massey-Harris Brigade," custom harvested fields across the United States during the harvest of 1944.

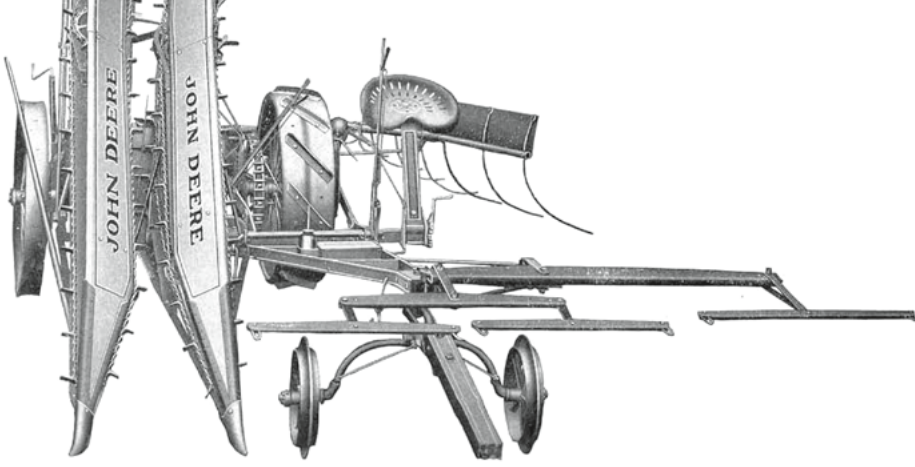
Recognizing the needs of customers and spurred by intense competition, Deere began development of its own self-propelled combine. In 1946, Deere & Company released the No. 55 Self-Propelled Combine. It was the first combine to center the operator on top and center and locate the grain tank and engine behind the operator. Not only did it give better weight balance, but was cleaner and quieter to operate. Another innovation was selective ground speed control that permitted control of speeds of up to 9 ½ mph. This machine would eventually set the industry standard as John Deere would manufacture more than 80,000 No. 55 combines over the following 22 years.

*See John Deere's full harvester chronology timeline on the following page.*

# JOHN DEERE NO. 55 *Self-Propelled* COMBINE



**VESTS MORE ACRES EVERY DAY  
ES MORE GRAIN AT LOWER COST**



**1909** John Deere expands its product line by entering the binder market. Several prototype binders are built in 1910 at Deere's plant in Welland, Ontario, Canada.

**1910** Deere builds its first grain binders in rented buildings on the present site of John Deere Harvester Works in East Moline. The company produces 500 binders for the 1911 harvest season.

**1912** In August, the company breaks ground on the current Harvester Works site. The buildings cover 175,000 sq. ft.

**1914** During World War I more than 33,000 horse-drawn machines manufactured, including grain binders, mowers, rakes and corn binders.

**1927** Deere introduces its first combine, uniting the harvesting and threshing methods into a single operation. They retail for approximately \$2,000.

**1934** Harvester Works has grown to 1.16 million sq. ft. of buildings on 58 acres, including 12,820 square feet of underground tunnels.

**1935** Deere acquires the No. 36 hillside combine from Caterpillar Tractor Co., giving Deere the top combine in the industry.

**1939** Model 11A and 12A combines are introduced. The 12A becomes Deere's most popular PTO-driven model ever, selling more than 116,000 units between 1939 and 1952.



**1947** John Deere introduces the No. 55 Combine, the company's first self-propelled combine.

**1954** The No. 10 corn head is introduced, allowing farmers to cut, shell and clean corn in one operation for the first time, harvesting up to 20 acres daily. In 1999, the corn head receives the American Society of Agricultural Engineers Historic Landmark Award for the advancement of agricultural engineering technology in North America.

1900

2016

**1957** Model 95 combine is introduced, becoming the largest self-propelled combine in the world. More than 39,000 Model 95 combines are manufactured through 1969.

**1970** The New Generation line of combines is introduced. It includes the patented "Quick-Tatch" header-mounting system, which allows for any combination of headers to be readily switched back and forth when harvesting different crops.

**1989** John Deere Maximizer combines are introduced, making Deere the leading combine manufacturer in the United States and Canada.

**1999** John Deere STS combines are introduced. The Single Tine-Separation system represents a step forward in rotor technology, utilizing less power and delivering superior material handling capabilities.

**2007** John Deere 70 Series Combines are introduced, ranging from 265-440 horsepower.

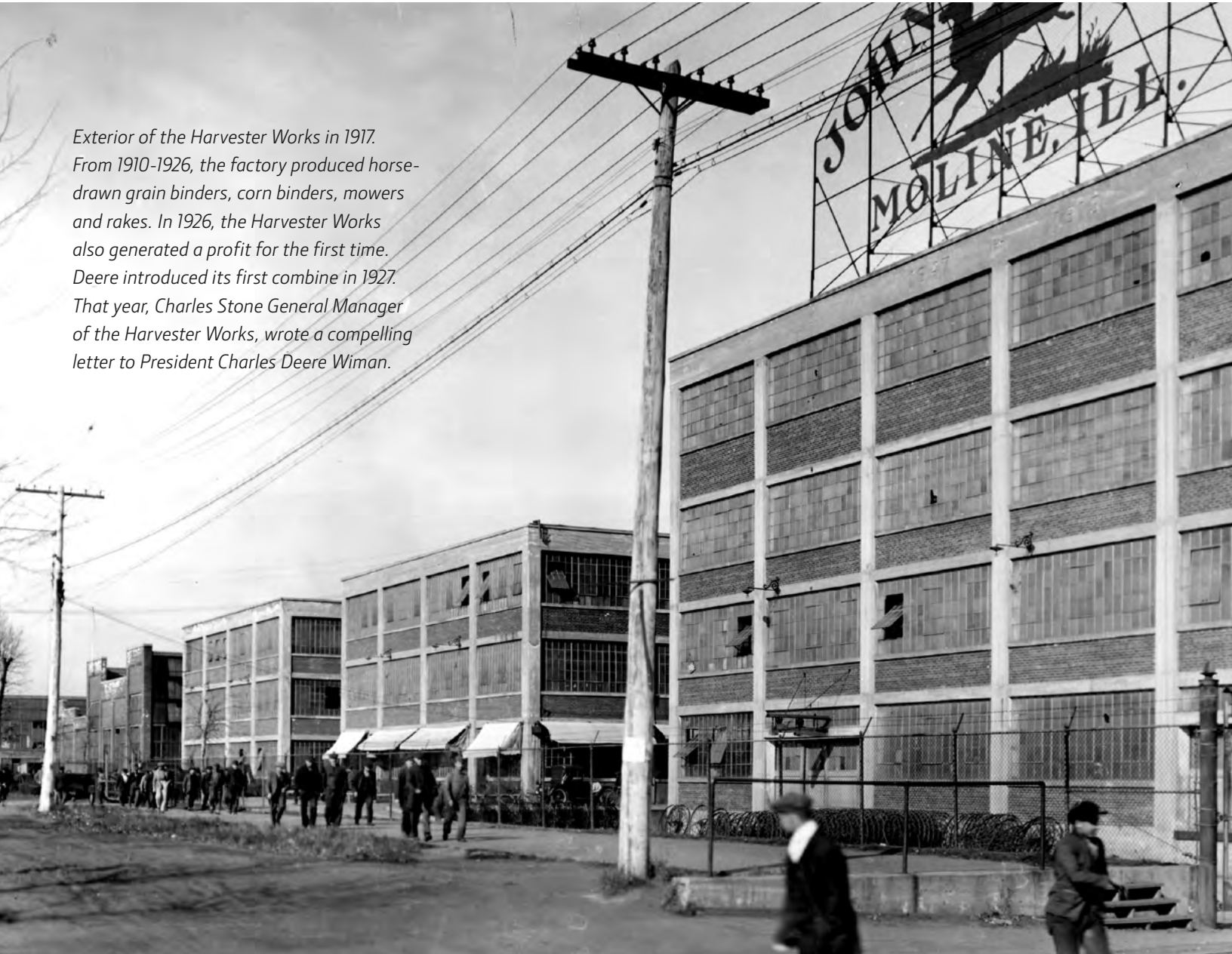
**2010** John Deere Harvester Works manufactures its 500,000 self-propelled combine.

**2012** The East Moline plant marks its 100th anniversary.



# FROM THE ARCHIVES

*Exterior of the Harvester Works in 1917. From 1910-1926, the factory produced horse-drawn grain binders, corn binders, mowers and rakes. In 1926, the Harvester Works also generated a profit for the first time. Deere introduced its first combine in 1927. That year, Charles Stone General Manager of the Harvester Works, wrote a compelling letter to President Charles Deere Wiman.*



“Getting into the combine business is a large undertaking,” he wrote. “Other manufacturers have had difficulties in establishing themselves in this business, and it is not to be expected that we can establish ourselves without difficulties arising which cannot be foreseen at this time.”

Stone urged that Deere commit fully to the new technology, which he thought would transform agriculture. “It appears necessary for Deere & Company to enter the combine field and if we can now feel that we are committed to entering

the combine business, we believe we should not go at it in a way that is too amateurish. It seems likely that real competition in combines will develop shortly and we would be better off not to get into the business at all than to enter it in a half-hearted way.”

That year, John Deere sold 38 No. 2 Combines. More importantly, the company made a commitment to farmers that it would lead the way.