

The PALIMPSEST

THE PLOW



-- is the symbol of Agriculture. It is the earliest and best known of all farm implements.

All mankind owes a great debt to the humble plow.

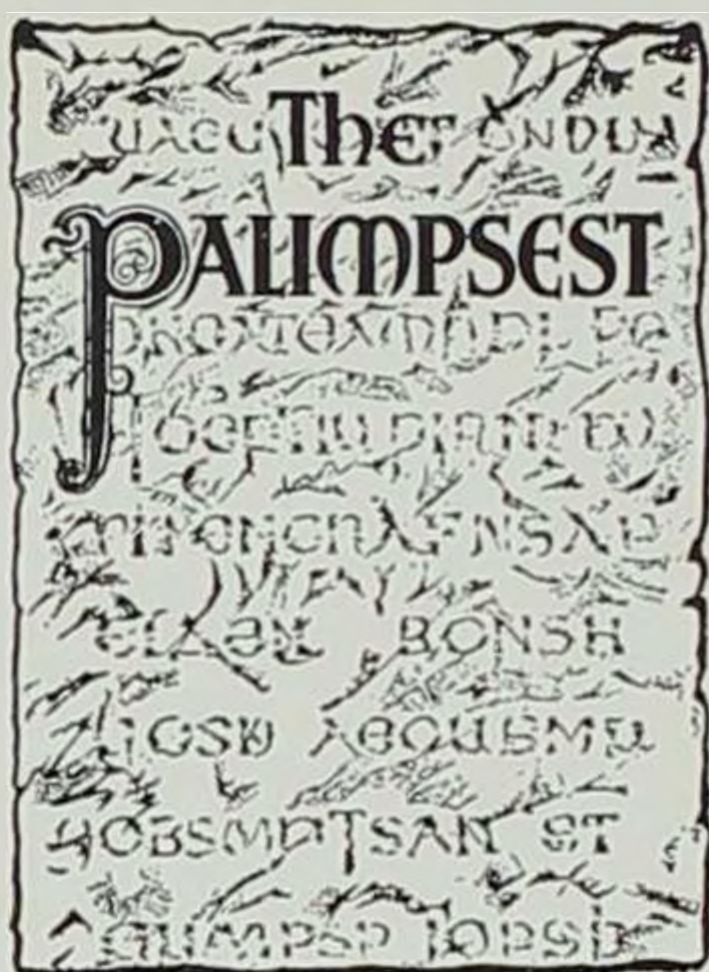
This issue of *The Palimpsest* recalls the romance of the plow, and is dedicated to plowmen, and to plowing matches. This oldest and widest recognized of all farm competitions is to be climaxed in the United States this year by the staging of the National Field Days in Jasper County, Iowa, September 20-21-22

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The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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Cover

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THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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Of Plows and Plowing

Of the many implements used by mankind through the ages, none is more prominently and consistently mentioned than the humble plow. Crude plows were used in Egypt when the pyramids were still young, Greek and Roman writers frequently refer to plows and plowing, and numerous references are made to the plow in the Old Testament.

Although the oldest of civilization's many tools, early plows did little more than scratch the surface. Actually, the first plows were nothing more than forked sticks drawn by slaves. For centuries there was little change in their design, and some backward nations till their soil in this manner today.

The first real improvement in plows was noted in the early 1600's when Dutch farmers and other Europeans devised moldboard type wooden plows drawn by a yoke of oxen. The Pilgrim Fathers used similar huge clumsy plows requiring as many as eight oxen to pull them through the

stony stump-cleared soil of New England. Unfortunately, wooden plows could not stand up under hard or lengthy use.

In 1720, Joseph Foljamke of Britain put iron strips on his plow landside. Another Englishman, Robert Ransome, introduced a cast-iron share in 1785. This was a great improvement over the wooden type, but it remained for a pioneer American farmer, Charles Newbold of New Jersey, to develop and patent a cast-iron moldboard. It was a costly improvement, one that eventually revolutionized soil tillage, but it was not readily accepted because farmers claimed the metal moldboard would poison their soil.

In time early prejudices against iron plows were overcome, and other improvements gradually were made both in design and construction. Among those contributing to the evolution of our modern plow was the illustrious Thomas Jefferson. The great American statesman firmly believed that agricultural progress was a means to independence for the average man, as well as to the nation. Jefferson accordingly devoted considerable time as a Virginia farmer and scientist to the problem of designing a more efficient plow. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Daniel Webster, and other noted early Americans also gave this matter much attention. The conquest of the tough prairie sod of the Mississippi Valley was made possible by these improvements.

Soon after 1800 names now famous in modern farm equipment also became associated with plowing progress. John Lane is credited with making the first steel covered moldboard. John Deere vastly improved plows in his plant at Grand Detour, Illinois. James Oliver, also widely known in the implement world, added his inventive genius to the task.

So advanced were Deere and Oliver in their thinking that steel plows patterned closely after their early design are still in common use today. Meanwhile, the size and type of plows, and the power required to pull them, has changed greatly. Old sod-buster single share walking plows drawn by plodding oxen a century ago had to give way to two-bottom gang plows pulled by horses. By the late 1800's riding plows and six and eight horse hitches were common. Steam power entered the picture too, with as many as ten bottoms used to break the western prairie.

In the early twenties huge gasoline and kerosene powered tractors appeared, to be soon replaced by smaller, more efficient, rubber tired tractors. More recently, diesel engined wheel and crawler type tractors have been helping turn four or five furrows at a time as plows continued to be a mainstay in mechanized American and world agriculture.

The role of the plow in man's march to a more abundant, fuller life is perhaps best summarized

by a Canadian, J. MacGregor Smith, Agricultural Engineer at the University of Alberta. Professor Smith declares:

Dazzled by the mechanical achievements of the past century, we are prone to overlook the debt we owe to the humble plow. Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to say that without the plow there could be no civilization as we know it today. If it is true that agriculture is the foundation for all social and industrial life, and it is true, then the plow must be given the credit for making agriculture possible. It is the one basic tool that made possible the transition from the wildest savagery to the beginnings of barbarism, one of the most momentous eras of human history; it changed the tent of the Indian into the hut of the settled dweller upon the soil. It broke the sod on the prairies where for untold centuries the buffalo had held limitless sway, and brought the whistle of the locomotive into solitudes whose silences were broken only by the whoop of the savage; it built cities and populated commonwealths, in short, all our modern complex life has followed in the furrow of the plow.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN
HERB PLAMBECK

Plowing Matches and Farm Progress

For more than two centuries plowing matches have helped dramatize agricultural achievement. The first contests date back to the 1700's when "Plowing competitions," as they were called, started on the British Isles. Bearded and booted English farmers, using crude and cumbersome wooden walking plows drawn by oxen, participated in those early contests. It was of such sturdy souls that Thomas Gray wrote in 1751:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

In the ensuing 200 years plowing contests have spread to many other parts of the world. Western Europe, the Scandinavian countries, Australia, Canada, the United States, and even Communist Russia have conducted matches. In addition to emphasis on plowing skill and mechanical progress, better land use has also been encouraged through the medium of plowing events. Soil conservation practices (contour plowing and terrace building) have been stressed in recent years.

Scotland followed Britain's lead in plowing

matches. The following excerpts were taken from a copy of *The History Of The Highland Agricultural Society Of Scotland* printed more than 150 years ago.

We find that at the General Meeting of the Society held the 13th of January, 1801, it was resolved to offer premiums to plowmen. . . . The first plowing match took place upon the 7th day of November, 1801. . . . The committee chose three practical farmers of character and skill to be judges, who immediately withdrew into a house at some distance. . . . The judges were then brought on the ground, and decided the lots entitled to the prizes. . . . The society's medal was presented to the winner on the spot. . . . Afterwards, the success of the Society was drunk with great sincerity.

In 1802 the Society reported another match:

Two of the plows were drawn by cattle, to wit,: one by two Galloway heifers, and the other by a Galloway bull and ox, yoked in the same manner as horses. The other nineteen plows were drawn by two horses each. The heifers finished the quantity allotted to them in three minutes less than the time of any of the horses.

Scotland's plowing events increased in popularity, and in 1818 the society decided to award medals to successful plowmen. The medals are still offered after nearly 140 years of continuous matches.

The Royal Agricultural Society of England also gave plowing matches much emphasis, pointing out that virtually every shire (county) in Britain had a plowing society. Ireland and Wales like-

wise have conducted matches for well over a century.

Canadian farmers, many of whom came to the New World from England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales, were quick to adopt plowing competitions. Canada has had contests for over 100 years, and in many respects has developed greater competitive interest than any other country. Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and other Canadian provinces all staged contests for many years. Ontario plowmen annually hold what is known as the International Plowing Match, with as many as 700 entrants in the various tractor and horse-drawn divisions.

Plowing contests have been held in the United States for some 75 years. Plowmen in the Wheatland and Big Rock areas of northeastern Illinois were the first to hold contests in America. Matches have continued in Illinois ever since.

Iowa was the second state to hold plowing events. Warren County's Wick Field Meet has held contests since the turn of the century. Matches were started in the Cherokee area a few years later. The Cherokee event, commonly known as the Pilot Rock Match, has produced a number of the nation's top plowmen.

Millions of people have attended plowing contests since their inception some two centuries ago. During the past decade plowing contests in the United States have become one of the nation's

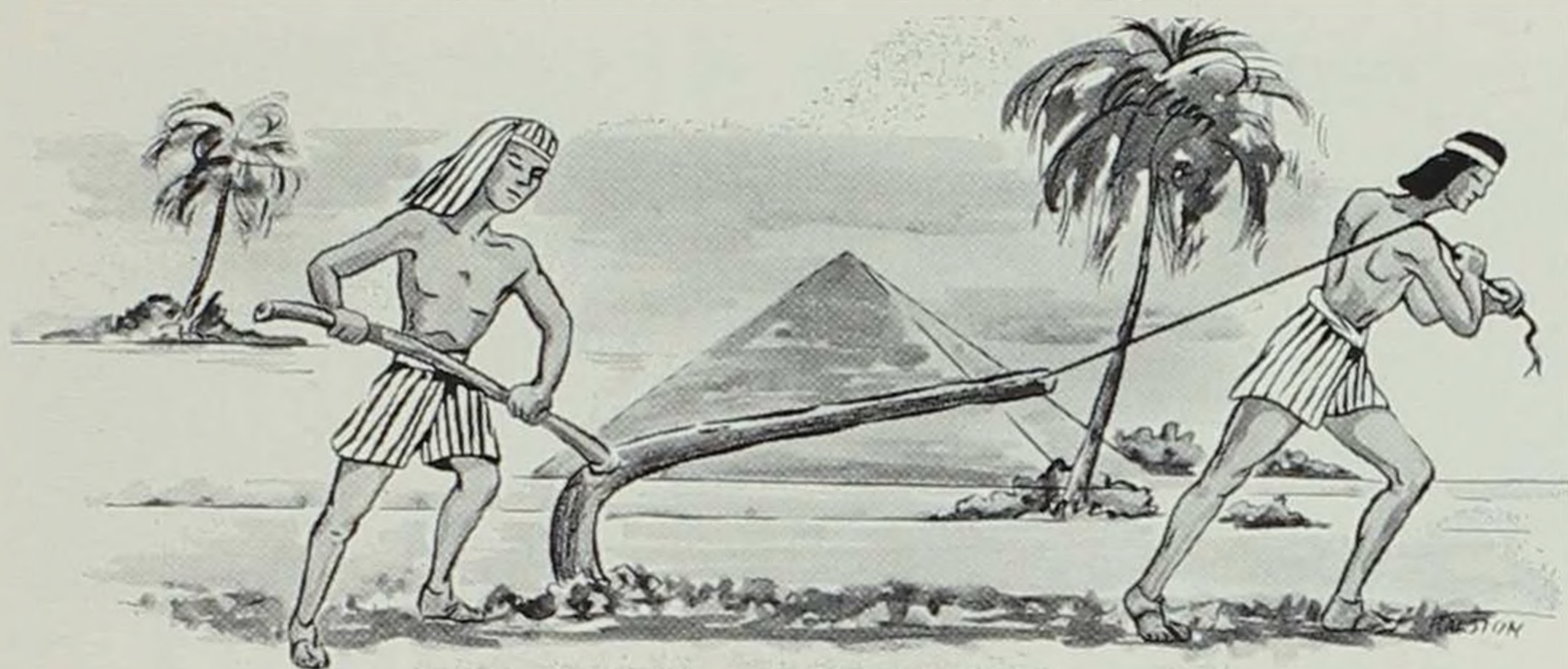
most popular agricultural and sporting events. Crowds up to one hundred thousand persons attended the 1948 National Plowing Matches in Iowa, and the 1952 event in Minnesota.

Speakers at these National Field Days have included such personalities as President Dwight D. Eisenhower, former President Harry Truman, Vice President Richard Nixon, former Governor Adlai Stevenson, Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, and others. Thus top national leaders along with progressive farmers and their urban neighbors have found plowing events living demonstrations of the advances in agriculture.

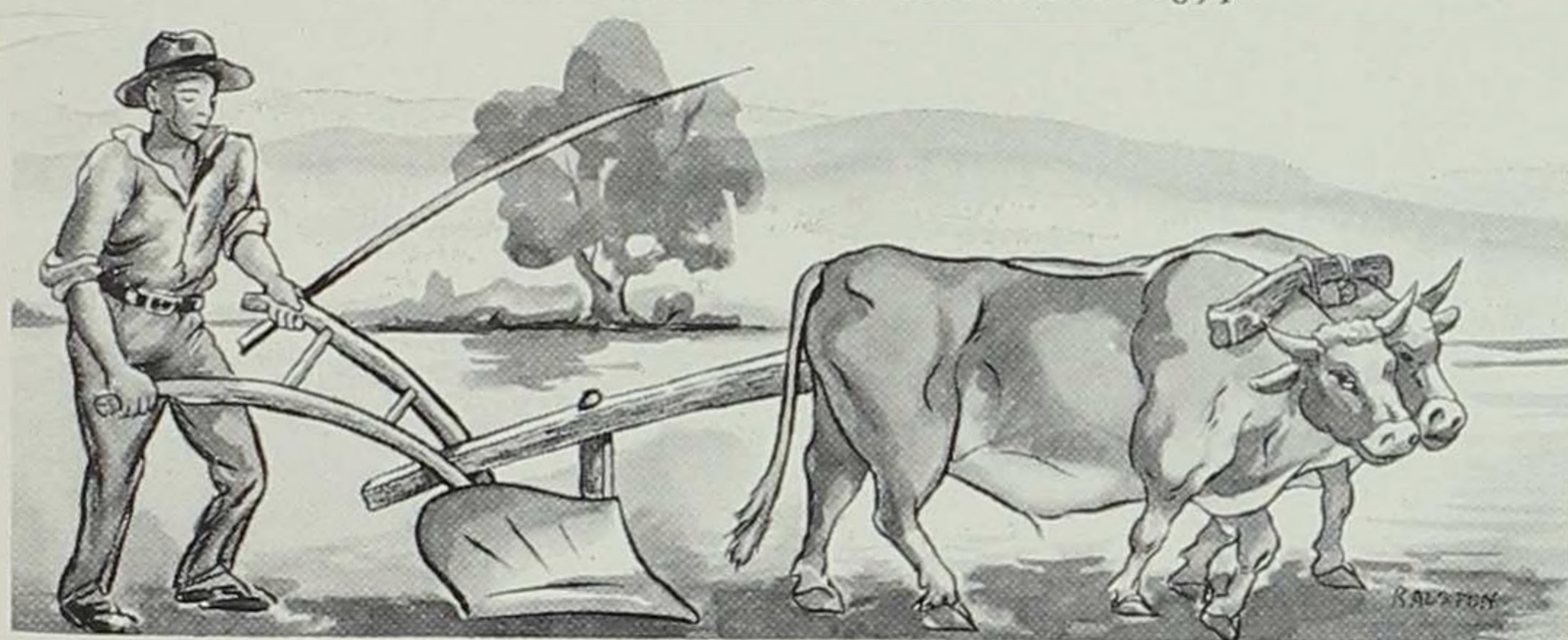
In 1956 Iowa will again be host to the nation's best plowmen when the National Field Days are held in Jasper County, September 20, 21, and 22.

HERB PLAMBECK

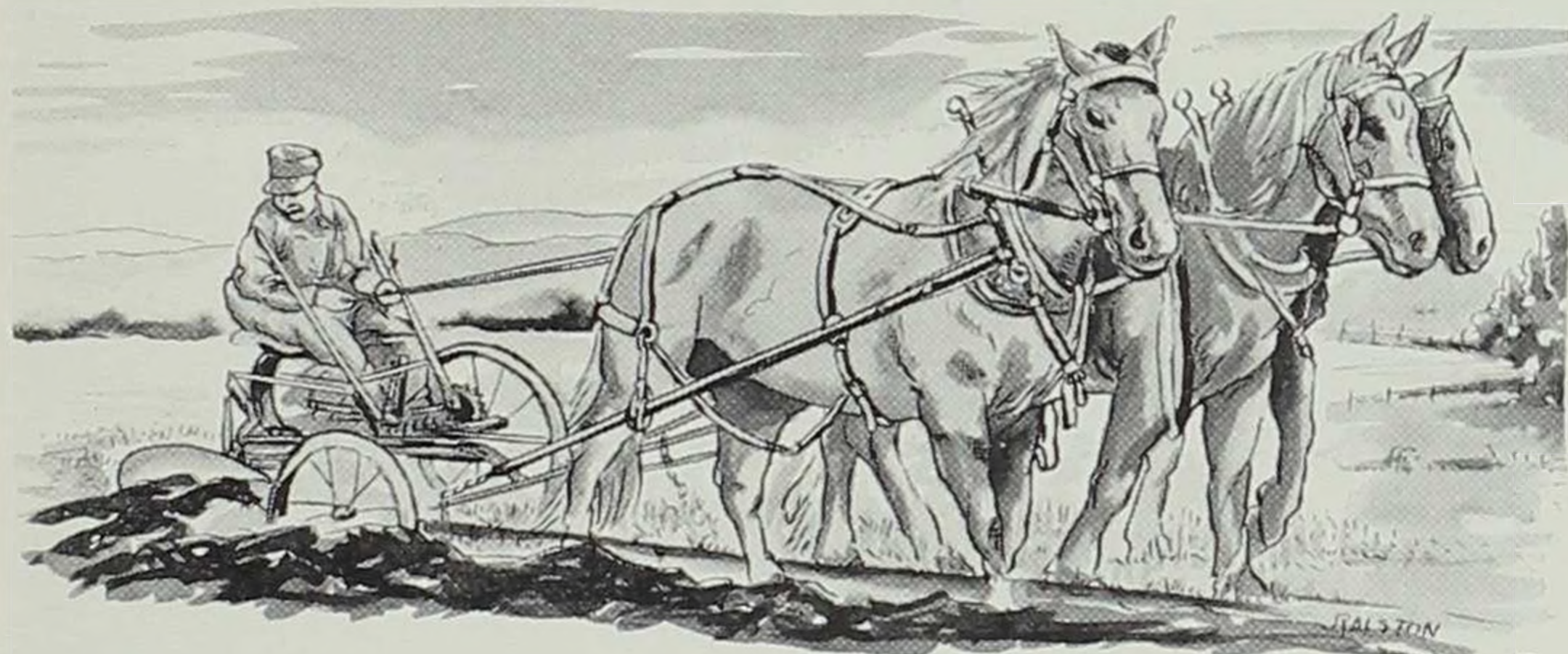
EVOLUTION OF THE PLOW



Slaves with Forked Sticks in Ancient Egypt



Ox Team with First Cast-Iron Plow



Horses Pulling Sulky Riding Plow in 1890's

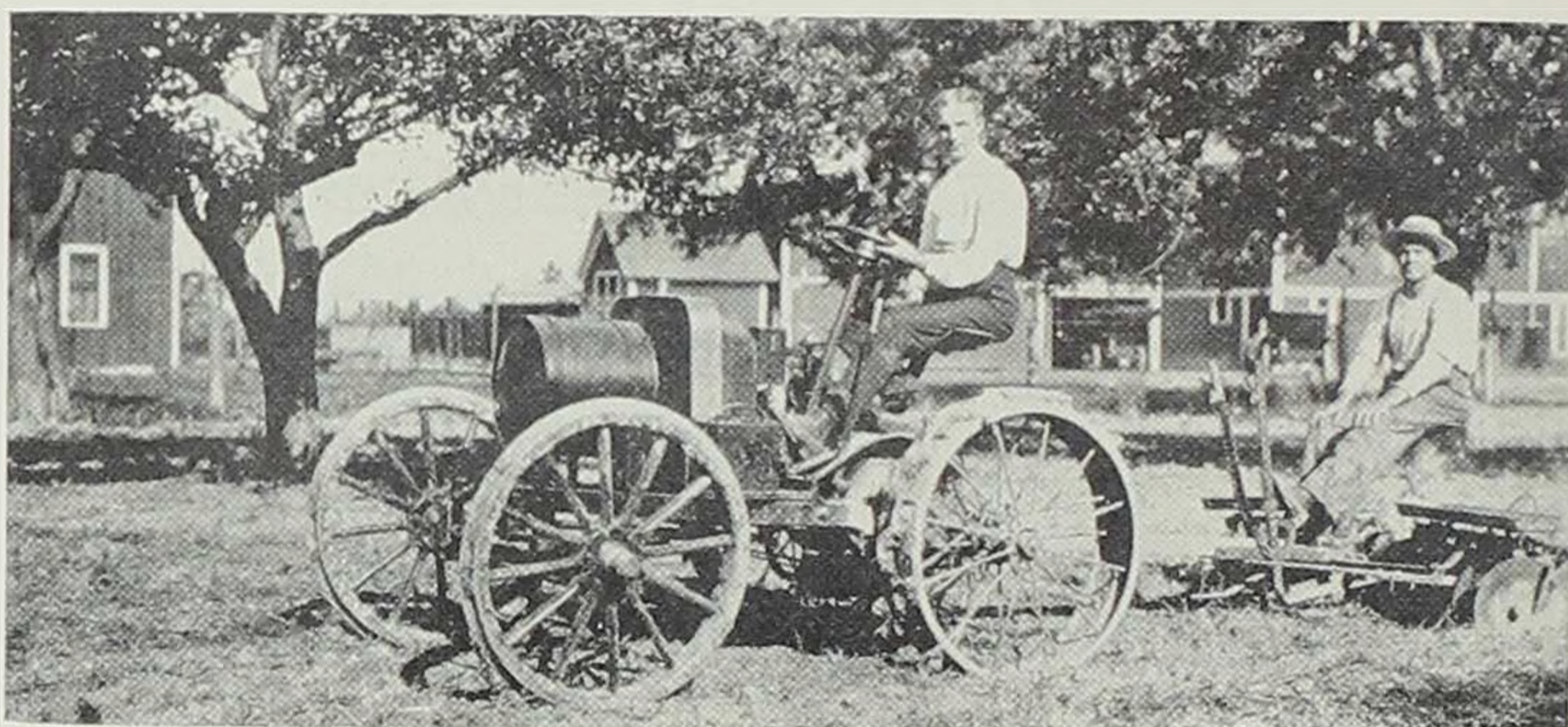


Drawings by Ralston James
Modern Diesel Tractor with Four-Bottom Plow

PLOWMEN IN ACTION



Long, Long Ago *Register and Tribune Photo*



When Henry Ford Started *Ford Motor Company*



In the Thirties *WHO Photo*



Today *Standard Oil Photo*

WICK FIELD ASSOCIATION

WICK FIELD ASSOCIATION

WILL HOLD ITS FOURTH ANNUAL

PLOWING MATCH

ON THE FARM OF J. H. YAGGY, ONE-FOURTH MILE EAST OF WICK

THURSDAY, AUG. 23, '06

Handbill of Half a Century Ago Courtesy Emory Day



Three Bays on a 1906 Sulky

WHO Photo



Champions — 1902 and 1952

WHO Photo



Governor Beardsley's 50th Anniversary Speech

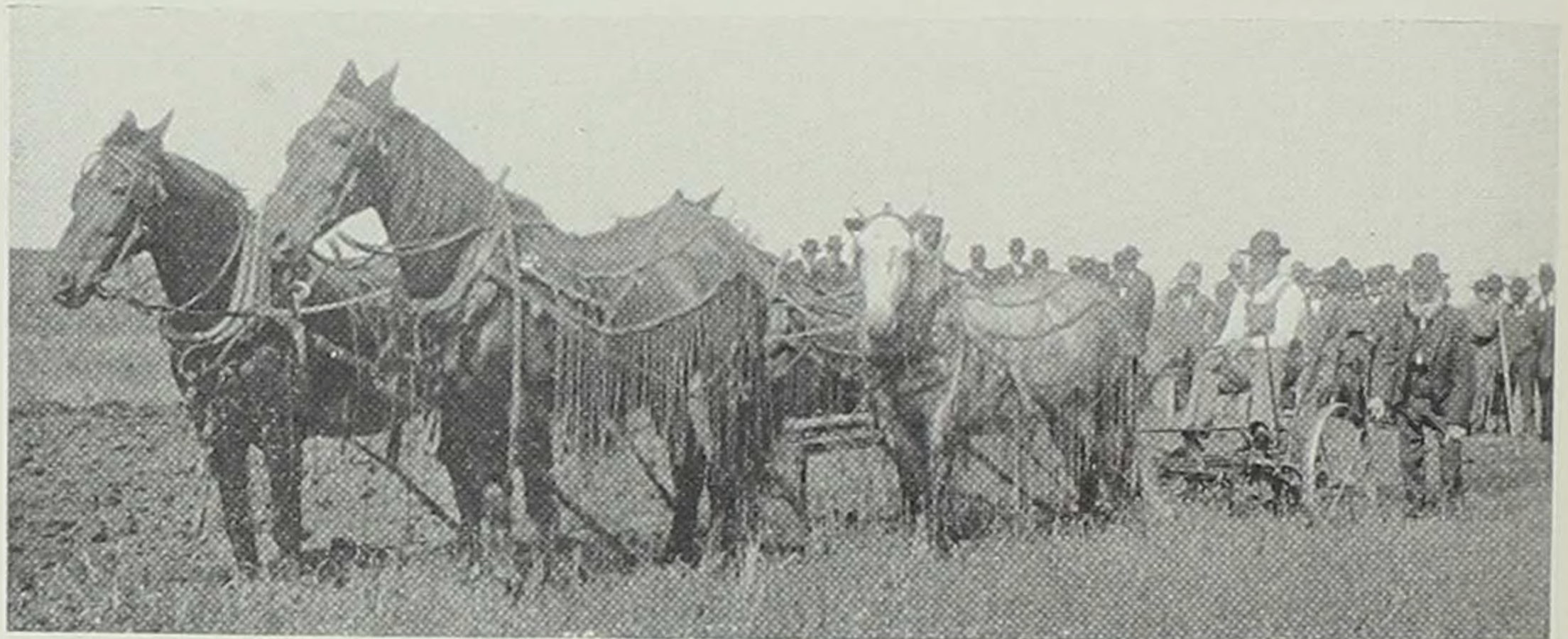
WHO Photo

PILOT ROCK MATCH



Thomson's Photo

Precision Plowing with Four on a Gang



Courtesy Lyle Poulson

J. H. Clow with 1912 Winning Outfit



Courtesy Milo Clough

J. H. Clow with 1916 IHC Tractor



Cherokee Daily Times

1955 Champion — Kenneth Clark

The First Iowa Plowing Match

Oldest of Iowa's plowing matches is the Wick Field Association Meet which started in Warren County as a basket lunch picnic in 1902, and was enlarged to include a plowman's contest the following year. The Wick meet has been held regularly in most years since 1903, and is recognized as the pioneer Iowa plowing exhibition.

Emory Day, now of Des Moines, whose father was a charter member of the association, recalls the early objectives of the Wick project. In a history written for the association's 50th anniversary meeting Day records: "The first thought in the minds of the charter members of the Wick Field Association was a contest for the supremacy in all lines of farming . . . stock raising, fruit growing, cooking, good roads, and plowing."

Sam Yaggy, who had come from Illinois and was familiar with similar activities in his home community, was named the Wick Field Association's first president. Host to the Wick picnic and plow matches the first few years were J. H. Yaggy and George Day. No automobiles were seen, and top buggies with "huroy" wheels and special gears were being offered at the bargain rate of \$40.00.

Competition in the plowing matches in the early 1900's was limited to horse-drawn and mule-drawn walking and riding plows. First winners of the Wick matches were Court Parish and Emory Day. Both men were on hand fifty years later, proudly displaying and comparing their trophies with the 1952 state winners, when the Iowa match formed a part of Wick's 50th anniversary.

Soon after its inception in 1902, the Wick picnic outgrew the Yaggy farm and was moved to the nearby Rock Island crossing. Special railroad rates induced many visitors to come by rail, rather than travel by surrey, wagon, on horseback, or on foot.

That first Iowa plowing match was destined to become very popular, measured by the large turnout for the 1904 contest. Two years later, on August 31, 1906, *Wallaces' Farmer* declared: "This year the plowing match attracted fully one thousand vehicles [all horse drawn] and some 3500 people." The full page article told how the crowd enjoyed the outing, watching competition in classes for walking plows, sulkies and gangs. Each entrant was required to pay a small entry fee and to plow twenty furrows, and was judged on straightness and evenness of furrow, smoothness of crown, weed coverage, soil pulverization, etc. The *Wallaces' Farmer* feature, which included a picture of four good mules on a gang plow, concluded with the following suggestion:

There are hundreds of neighborhoods where such an annual plowing match could be held just as successfully and beneficially as at Wick. . . . It is a striking example of what a few earnest men can do to better farming conditions, and promote farm interest.

Along with fostering Iowa's pioneer plowing contests and displaying farm products, the Wick Field Association also conducted a good roads contest. Only equipment permitted for the feature were plows, harrows, rollers, and split-log drags.

Deserving prominent recognition in this effort were the 17 entrants and a Dr. Porterfield, the first man to drive an automobile to the Wick picnic, whose vehicle was promptly commandeered to help judges determine the good roads competition winners.

Emory Day records in his history that by 1905 moving pictures were a major evening attraction, and that in 1911 Miss Gertrude McCahill was thrown from a buggy when her team bolted after being frightened by the sight of an automobile. Other items in Day's history include moving the event to the newly organized town of Martensdale in 1913, inaugurating a baby contest in 1915, and "not much excitement" in 1921, when there were no fights, accidents, or arrests, and the treasury just managed to break even.

Walter Beam of the Iowa Comptroller's Office, who has attended every Wick Field picnic, reports that many noted speakers have appeared on

the Wick Field platform. Among them have been: Professor P. G. Holden of Iowa State College, "Uncle Henry Wallace," Senators Smith W. Brookhart and George A. Wilson, Attorney General John Mitchell, Judge Hubert Utterback, Governor Warren Garst, and others.

Beam points out, however, that it remained for the fiftieth anniversary event in 1952 to bring a "native son" Governor to the speaker's stand. Governor William Beardsley, whose home was in Warren County, not only was featured as the Golden Anniversary speaker, but also was official starter for the State Level Land Plowing Match held on the Joe Seymour farm.

Representing the home folks in the state contest was Robert Morrison, the 1952 Wick Match winner, and Virgil Bender, also of Warren County, the previous year's state runner-up. The Iowa contest was won, however, by Polk County's Bob Bane, grandson of the man who had won the "old-timers" contest at the first state match.

Memories of the 1952 event, witnessed by 7,000 people, also included a pageant marking a half century of farming progress, a lengthy parade, a Plowmen's Banquet, a ferris wheel, and a heavy evening rain. The Wick Field Association continues to have its annual picnic and, in keeping with its pioneering efforts in agricultural progress, continues to sponsor an annual plowing contest.

HERB PLAMBECK

The Pilot Rock Plowing Match

Best known of Iowa's many plowing events during the past half century is the Pilot Rock match held annually near Cherokee since 1908. Known as the "Mecca of Plow Matches," the Cherokee event has developed a number of state champion plowmen, some of whom have placed high in national competition.

Origin of the matches dates back to 1906 when several Cherokee County families from Will County, Illinois, suggested holding plowing contests similar to those in the Wheatland, Big Rock, and other Illinois areas. These families, living in Pilot and Rock townships in Cherokee County, got together late in 1907 to plan what they later called the "Pilot-Rock" match.

The first contests were held on the Tom Fee farm, with a number of entrants participating, and with John Bridie, using three horses on a 16-inch sulky plow, named the first of Pilot Rock's many plowing champions.

At the 1912 contest, held at the Steve Welch farm, official minutes were recorded. Included in those records is the fact that of the eight entrants, Dave Patterson was the plowing victor, and that a horse and colt show, as well as a horse driving

contest, were added attractions. Of special significance in the 1912 minutes was the fact that of the 4,000 persons present, fully half had come by automobile. An advertisement read: "The ladies of the Pilot Rock Plowing Match will serve a 35-cent dinner August 27 consisting of chicken, hot potatoes and gravy, baked beans, rolls, pickles, jelly, cookies, pie and coffee."

Multiple horse hitches and riding plows had become so common by 1913 that Pilot Rock officials decided to discontinue the walking class. In 1915 a five-horse gang plow section was added to the premium list. By 1918 tractors had entered the Northwest Iowa picture to the extent that the Cherokee County plowing leaders added some tractor plow classes. As time went on tractor classes evoked ever-increasing interest from spectators. In addition to the two-bottom tractor division, classes for three-bottom units were also added. Horse-drawn plows gradually lost favor, as horses gave way to mechanical power.

In addition to furrow turning activities there have been many other significant additions to the Pilot Rock meet. As early as 1921 the Cherokee County leaders appropriated \$100 for boys' and girls' pig and calf clubs. In the ensuing years 4-H activities have been a focal attraction.

Other additions through the years included — classes for grains, fruits, and other farm produce in 1923; inclusion of a horse-pulling contest in

1925 (continued through 1940); and the addition of a fuel economy contest, creating great interest on the part of mechanically-minded farmers.

Nor have the additions been limited to mechanical or exhibition features. Land use has also come in for prominent consideration at the Pilot Rock contests. A Cherokee *Daily Times* plowing match edition pointed out in 1955 that "the whole idea of the matches from the beginning was to encourage good farming." This was dramatically emphasized in the accomplishments of the Northwest Iowa event by the inclusion of contour and terracing matches, so that both plowmen and visitors could better acquaint themselves with latest soil and water conservation practices.

For more than forty years the Pilot Rock plowing matches were roving affairs, going from farm to farm, necessitating the use of many tents and other temporary buildings to house the exhibits and livestock. This ended in 1952 when the Plowing Match Association bought land from Karl Gesland at the south edge of Cherokee. Several permanent buildings have been erected to provide modern and comfortable facilities for 4-H, women's, and livestock exhibits. Plowing contests are held on nearby farms.

In 1955 the Pilot Rock officials were hosts to the biggest event in the organization's history. The State Soil Conservation District's Field Day and the Iowa Plowing Matches were brought to

Cherokee to enhance the Pilot Rock event. Lyle Poulsen was named chairman. Some seven thousand people turned out to see the 4-H and other exhibits and to watch the largest entry list ever seen in an Iowa plowing match. Seventy skilled Cherokee County furrow turners vied for the right to represent the Pilot Rock match in the state matches. Then, when the Cherokee winners, Lyle Mason and Kenneth Clark, were pitted against some 24 other champion plowmen from all over Iowa, they made good for the home folks. Mason won the state level land section, and Clark was Iowa's best contour plowman for the year, going on to Indiana to tie for first place in the 1955 National.

The 1955 state meet at Cherokee saw the most modern and dramatic innovation in the history of Iowa matches. Several Iowa National Guard jet planes were called upon to swoop over the fields at the designated time, signaling the plowmen to start on their way. This was in sharp contrast to the starting methods of the early Pilot Rock matches when officials merely gave an oral signal to the plowmen, so the horses would not be frightened and bolt away.

HERB PLAMBECK

State and Interstate Matches

State and interstate plowing matches, forerunners of the present National Plowing Matches, were started in Iowa in 1939. Herb Plambeck, Farm Director for Radio Station WHO and WHO-TV for the past twenty years, has been generally credited with originating both statewide and nationwide matches. A former Scott County 4-H Club leader and assistant county agent, Plambeck had been closely associated with state and national husking contests for a number of years and had helped develop Ralph Keppy and several other top husking champions. As farm editor for the Davenport *Democrat*, Plambeck helped conduct the 1935 Iowa husking meet on the Grover Hahn farm near Davenport. Later he accompanied the Iowa winner, Elmer Carlson of Audubon, to Indiana, where the Iowan won the national title. In 1937 Herb Plambeck, then WHO Farm Director, was one of three broadcasters chosen to report the ear-by-ear account of the national husking match in Missouri.

From the start Herb Plambeck was impressed with state and national husking bees as a great competitive outdoor sport. By 1938, however, while broadcasting the national meet from a trac-

tor in Missouri, he became convinced that agriculture would soon be completely mechanized and that hand husking would become a lost art. According to Plambeck:

I had the fear that this would mean the end of all the color, drama, suspense and fun the National Husking Matches meant to contestants and participants alike. I hated to see this happen so I started thinking about other events that would enable farmers to continue having something of their own, where they would be "King For a Day," and where agriculture would be in the national spotlight.

The more Herb Plambeck thought about it the more the WHO Farm Director felt that whatever activity succeeded the husking bees, it ought to have practical value to agriculture. He finally hit on a plowing match as the answer because it would focus attention on better land use. Joe Maland, manager of WHO, was willing to lend a sympathetic ear, and Plambeck promptly proposed that the winners of the Wick, Pilot Rock, and other local or county matches vie for the state title. Maland was quick to see the possibilities of such an event, and he gave it his hearty approval, along with the radio station's blessing and support. A meeting was called of officials representing the state Department of Agriculture, Iowa State College, the Grange, the Farm Bureau, and similar organizations. All attending expressed enthusiasm for a state plowing match.

Plambeck's proposal for a state plowing match was first mentioned publicly in the spring of 1939. Commercial clubs and other civic and farm groups in eight Iowa communities immediately responded with invitations. A committee inspected proposed sites and met with each of the interested groups. After all factors were considered, the Mitchellville community, where 400 farmers signed an invitation, was named as the location for the first state match.

A farm owned by Mrs. Ida Patterson and operated by F. A. Fraker was chosen for the site. The date for the event was set for September 23. Committees were named to handle parking, traffic, concessions, programs, housing, displays, and a dozen other activities. C. C. Glenn, now manager of the Iowa Agricultural Conservation and Stabilization office, was named general chairman. It was decided to call the event the Corn Belt Plowing Match.

Plans were made to have four classes of competition: an open class for men using two or three bottom plows used with tractors; a similar class where plows would be drawn by horses; a boys class; and an "old-timers" division. Station WHO offered \$500 in prize money. Top Iowa agricultural officials, headed by Secretary of Agriculture Mark Thornburg, were designated judges and officials. Information on the conduct of plowing matches went to all interested communities.

Widespread interest quickly developed throughout Iowa. Newspapers and radio stations carried announcements, as did *Wallaces' Farmer* and *Successful Farming*. In addition to the Department of Agriculture and Iowa State College, many other organizations cooperated, including the Iowa Horse and Mule Breeders, the Iowa Implement Dealers Association, the Farm Bureau, Grange, Rural Youth, 4-H and others. A "Master Plowman's Banquet" was arranged, and pretty Virginia Cross was named plowmen's queen. Five other lovely young ladies served as Virginia's court of honor.

Lack of rain had left the plowlands dry and dusty. Contest day dawned dark and threatening, but despite unfavorable weather conditions autos started arriving early from all parts of the state. All told, some 8,000 people came. A number of displays and stage programs held the visitors' attention until time for the first match featuring horses. Harry Linn, of the Horse and Mule Breeders' Association, was official starter, using a shotgun to get the contests under way.

Tremendous interest was seen in the horse division. Snow fences were placed all around the plowlands, and at times spectators were crowded four and five deep behind the barrier. Special attraction was the Pioneer Hi-Bred Corn Company's twelve-horse-hitch driven by Lyle Hinckly. The twelve beautifully matched Belgians per-

formed nicely, and furrows were turned over quickly. Eight entries in the horse classes gave the crowd a good look at what was soon to disappear from the Iowa landscape.

Tractor drivers, like horsemen, encountered rough going in hard soil, but they did a good job in demonstrating plowmanship. Judged on the basis of uniformity and straightness of furrows, trash coverage, and neat land ends, the 8,000 visitors saw new emphasis on the ancient art of plowing and witnessed genuine pride in the performance of a commonplace farm task. Eleven entries in the men's division, and four in the boys' class, kept the huge crowd on its toes.

Of special interest to many was the walking plow class, limited to men 70 or over. Winner was 79-year-old Jess Bane, a pioneer Bondurant farmer and Polk County farm leader. Second honors went to 83-year-old W. W. Pearson, using a team furnished by a grandson.

Radio broadcasts and other features, talks by Governor George Wilson and Lieutenant Governor Bourke Hickenlooper, coronation of the "Queen of the Furrow," a hitched-team contest, and a machinery demonstration highlighted the afternoon's program, which was climaxed with the announcing of the plowing contest winners.

When final scores were computed the first Corn Belt Plowing Match winner was Ray Witt, 43-year-old Mahaska County farmer. Orville

Johnson of Polk County stood second. In the state horsemen's section F. F. Martin, who had used five horses, was first, with Hinckley's twelve-horse-hitch second. The first state boys' tractor match champion was 17-year-old Lyle Mason, the Pilot Rock entrant from Meriden in Cherokee County. Twelve-year-old Lee Klett of Sigourney took second place.

About 14,000 attended the second state and interstate plowing matches held near Boone on the Harold Blansham farm in 1940. The Boone Chamber of Commerce, Boone Service and Civic Clubs, and Boone County farm groups were local sponsors and Station WHO again provided \$500 in prize money. Young Lyle Mason, the Pilot Rock entrant, won the state tractor match, defeating other entrants. F. F. Martin again won the horsemen's division. Duane Sherrill of Washta was the boys class winner, and 72-year-old C. H. Crispin of Boone won the walking plow class. A three-oxen hitch was a special attraction.

The Iowa plowing events first received nationwide attention in 1941 when *Life* magazine sent a photographer and reporter to cover the matches held on the Turner farm near Albia. Hard rains on the previous day had left plowlands slippery and muddy, but officials decided against postponement. It was well that they did. More than 20,000 persons came from several Midwestern states to watch the interstate competition in

which a Missourian, Leo Drake, nosed out Iowa's champion furrow turners. Meanwhile, Garret Rosenboom of Wright County became the new Iowa champion, with Kenneth Hill of Baxter, the junior winner, and Frank Poortinga, of Monroe, victor of the horse-drawn plow classes. A woman entrant, Mrs. William Holmstrom of Illinois, though placing low in the contest, was a major attraction — and so was her six-months-old baby, being carried by her husband while she plowed. Prize money was increased to \$750. *Life* carried a three-page spread.

Hosts and sponsors of the first three statewide plowing matches felt gratified with their original efforts back in 1939, 1940, and 1941. That they must have set a good pattern is evidenced by the fact that matches have continued in Iowa ever since, except for the war years, and a dozen other states have sponsored similar events. Moreover, the early work of Herb Plambeck and other pioneers in this field has developed into far-reaching significance, as seen in the undertaking of National Plowing Matches, first held in Iowa, and since then in seven other states. Crowds of up to 100,000 have seen the national meets, which were patterned after the first state plowing event held in Iowa in 1939, and which are now regarded as the major national farm contest of the year.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

STATE & INTERSTATE PLOWING MATCH WINNERS

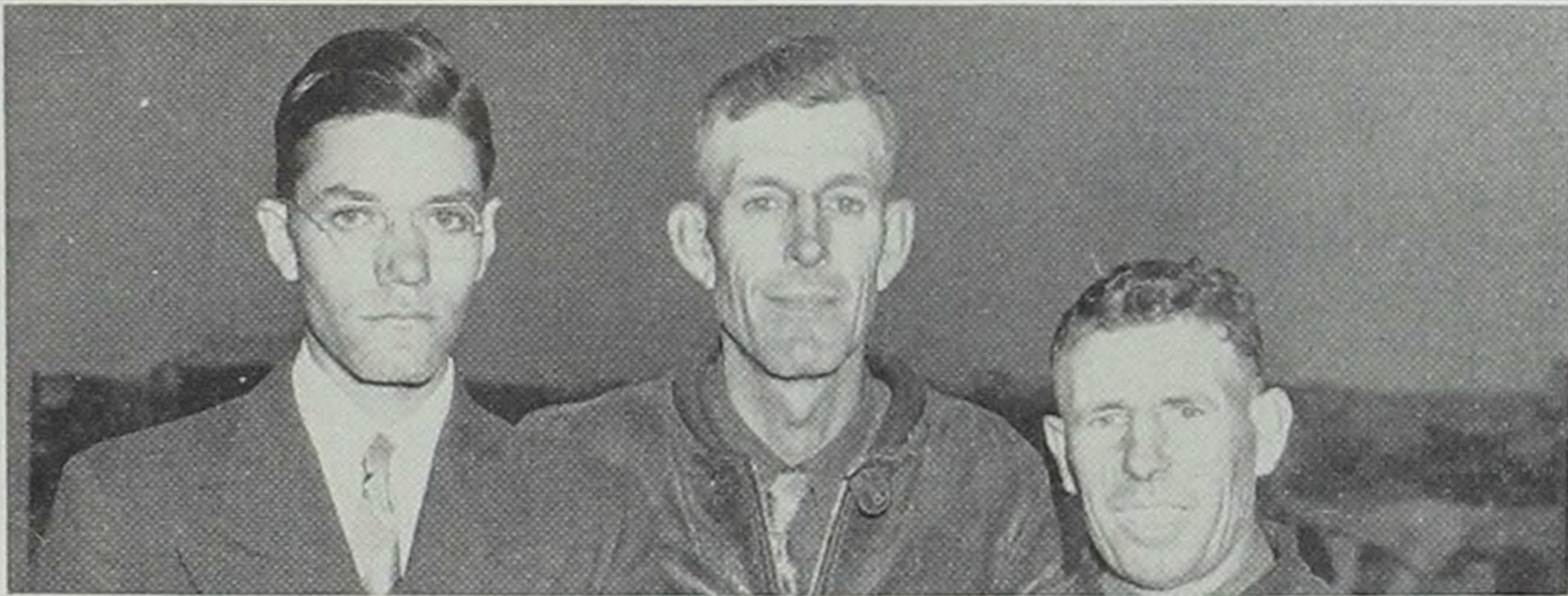
<i>Year</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Attn.</i>	<i>* Winner & Town</i>	<i>Score</i>
1939	Mitchellville	8,000	Ray Witt, Cedar	91.6
			Lyle Mason, Meriden	91.0
			F. Martin, Bridgewater	88.5
1940	Boone	14,000	Lyle Mason, Meriden	88.2
			Duane Sherrill, Washta	92.6
			F. F. Martin, Bridgewater	83.3
1941	Albia	21,000	Leo Drake, Memphis, Mo.	94.2
			G. Rosenboom, Wright	91.4
			Frank Poortinga, Monroe	93.0
			Kenneth Hill, Baxter	95.0
1945	Grimes	2,000	Clarence Robuck, Attica	90.0
1946	Pleasantville	50,000	Fred Jones, Colo	94.3
			C. Long, Gilman City, Mo.	89.0
1947	Ellsworth	50,000	E. Danielson, Ellsworth	89.9
			Gene Ferguson, Oskaloosa	82.5
1948	Dexter	100,000	Herbert Jones, Colo	92.0
			Harrison Link, Tingley	87.9
1949	Runnells	65,000	Jim Warrender, Quimby	74.1
			Francis Hadsall, Colfax	83.5
1950	Pleasantville	15,000	Tom Dougherty, Albia	89.1
			Robert Barrow, Keosauqua	85.7
1951	Humboldt	10,000	Lloyd Goode, Albia	87.5
	Guthrie Center	8,000	Kenneth Clark, Larrabee	78.0
1952	Martensdale	5,000	Bob Bane, Bondurant	88.4
	Polk City	7,000	Ernest Johnson, Decorah	86.0
1953	Boone	9,000	Lyle Mason, Meriden	89.5
			Dick Rozenberg, Reasnor	90.8
1954	Bedford	8,000	Dick Pederson, Cherokee	94.7
			O. Jorgensen, Guthrie Center	93.0
1955	Cherokee	5,000	Lyle Mason, Meriden	84.0
			Kenneth Clark, Larrabee	83.0
1956	Colfax	—	—	—

*In Major Plowing Classes

IOWA'S FIRST STATE MATCHES



1939 "Old Timer's" Class Winner, Jess Bane



Other 1939 Winners — Lyle Mason, Ray Witt, F. F. Martin



Pioneer Hybrid Corn Company's 12-Horse Hitch, 1940



All Photos by Stanley Studios
1941 Illinois Entry: Mrs. Holmstrom, Husband and Baby

FIRST NATIONAL IN IOWA — 1946



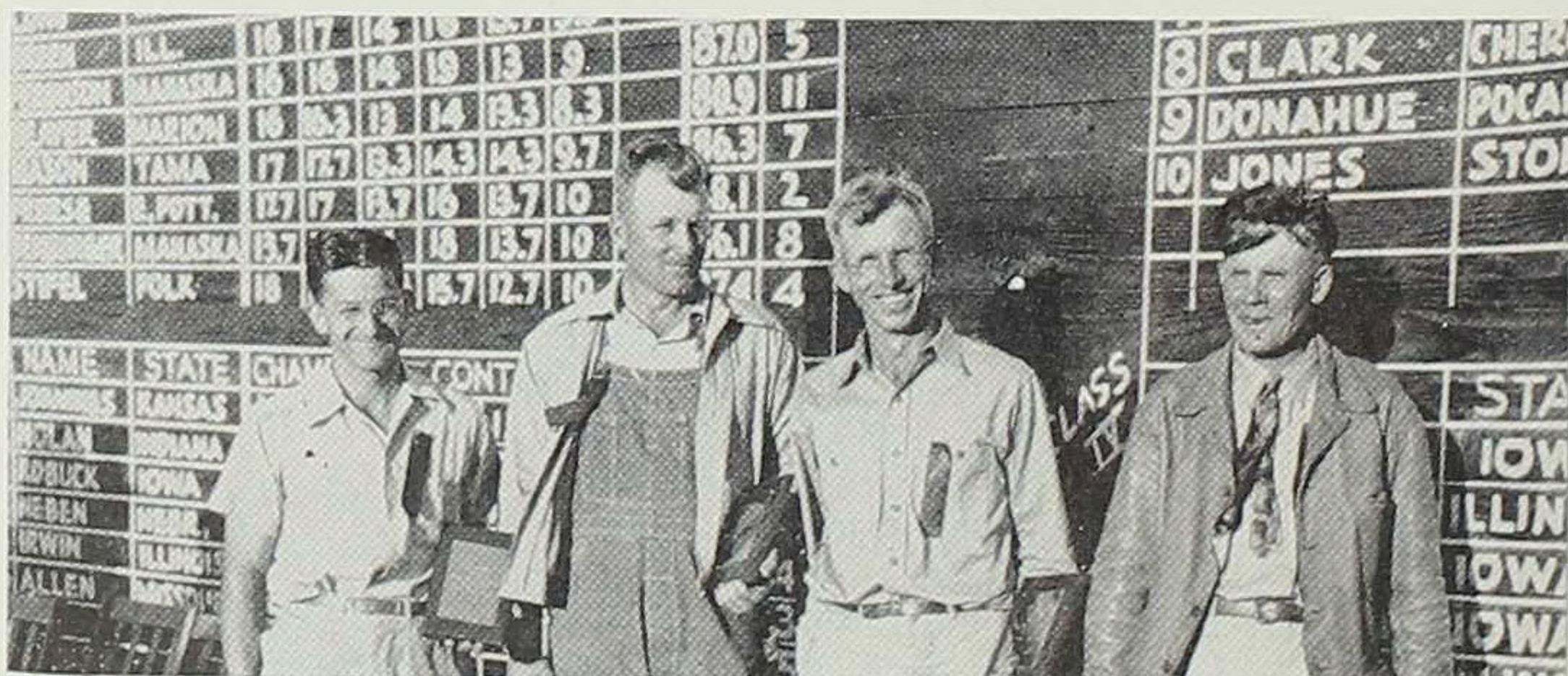
Parking Lots Filled Early



50,000 Watched Parade, Plowmen, and Conservation Work



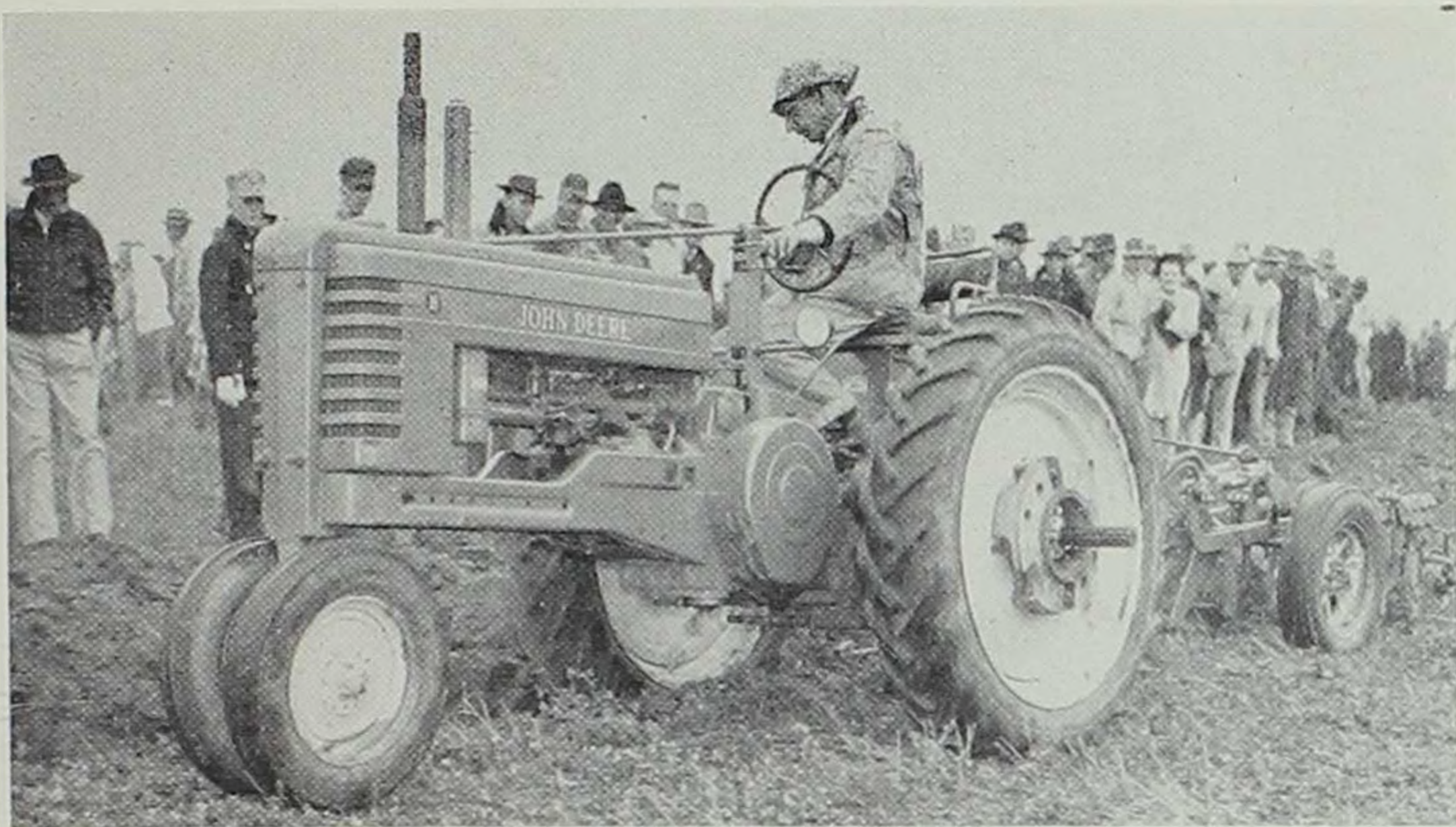
Farm "Face-Lifting" Was a Major Attraction



All WHO Photos

The Winners — Stiefbolt, Long, Robuck, and Jones

AT THE 1947 NATIONAL



Johnson Photo

A Rainsoaked Plowman in Action



Royal Photo

WHO's Gene Meyer and the Queens



WHO Photo

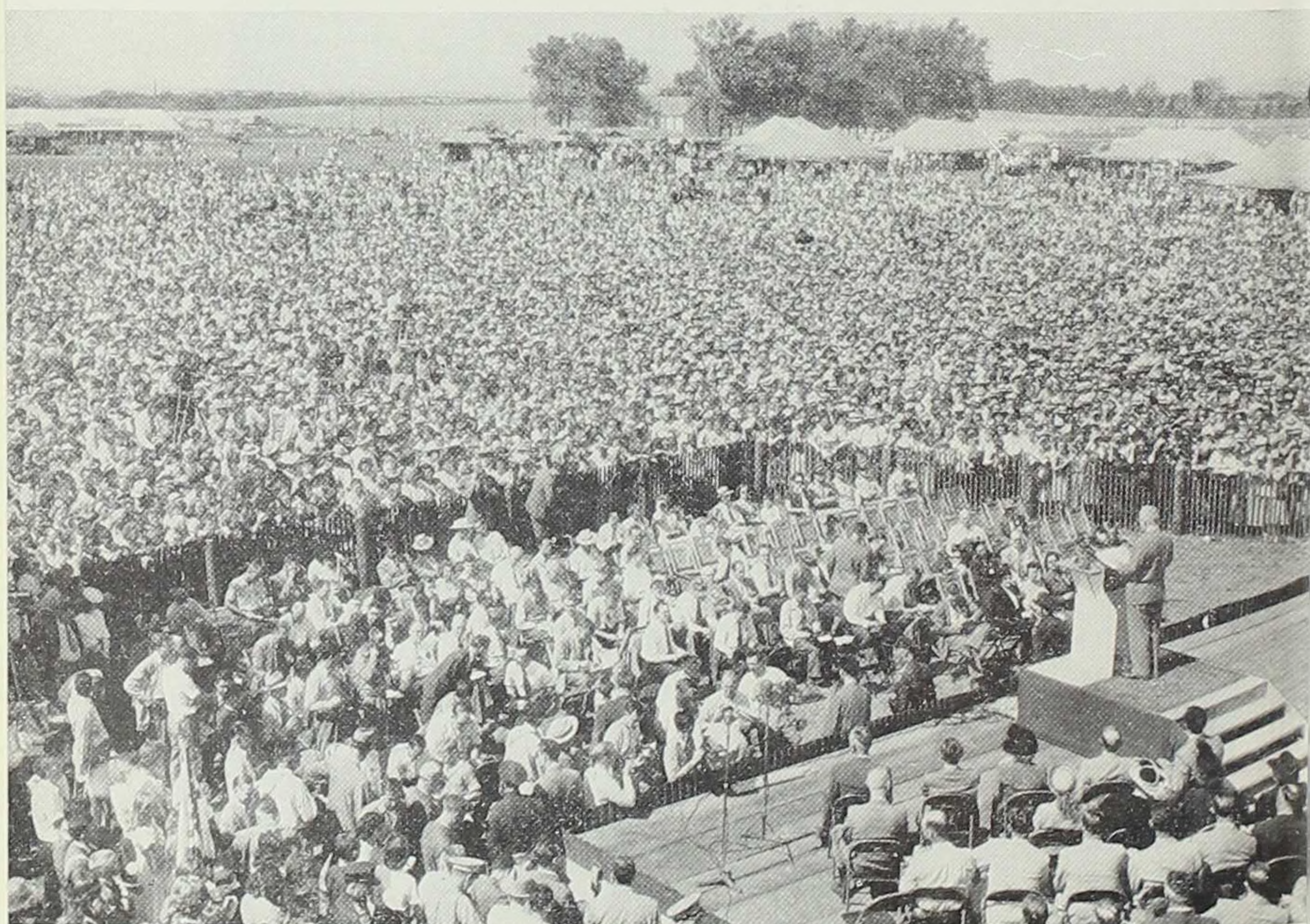
Helicopter Hovering Overhead

IN 1948 A PRESIDENT CAME TO DEXTER, IOWA



President Truman Being Presented by Herb Plambeck

Marion Pease Photo



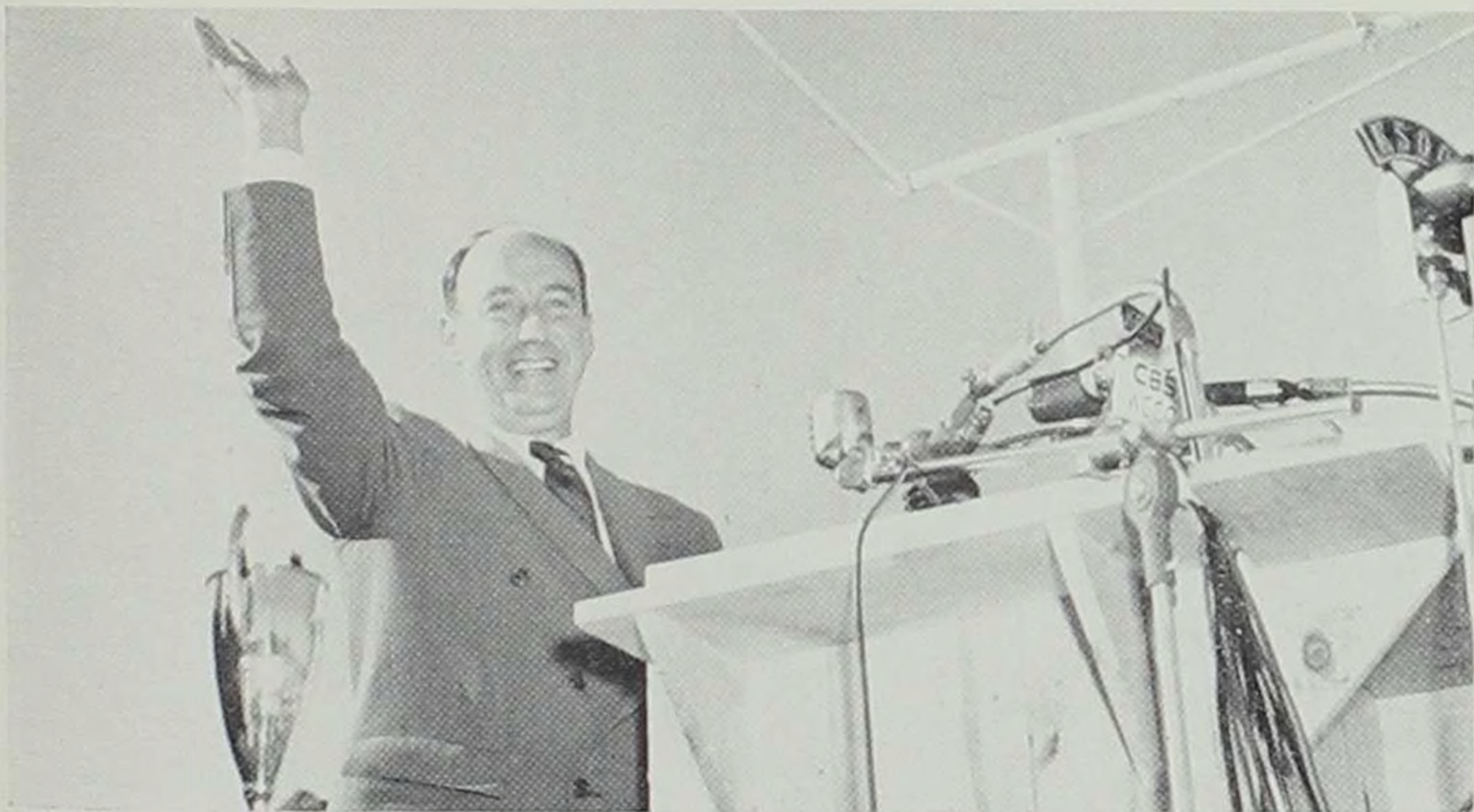
Part of 100,000 Present at Dexter

Des Moines Register Photo

1952 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN MINNESOTA



Kasson Crowd Totaled 100,000



To Hear Democrat Adlai Stevenson



And Republican Dwight Eisenhower after Plambeck Presented Him
to Plowmen

THE 1949 NATIONAL IN IOWA



Vriezelaar Photo

Jasper County's Francis Hadsall Was National Runner-Up



Des Moines Register Photo

J. S. Russell Presents Awards to Seven Top Conservationists



Des Moines Register Photo

Handiwork of Contour Plowing

NATIONALS: OHIO, MISSOURI, MINNESOTA



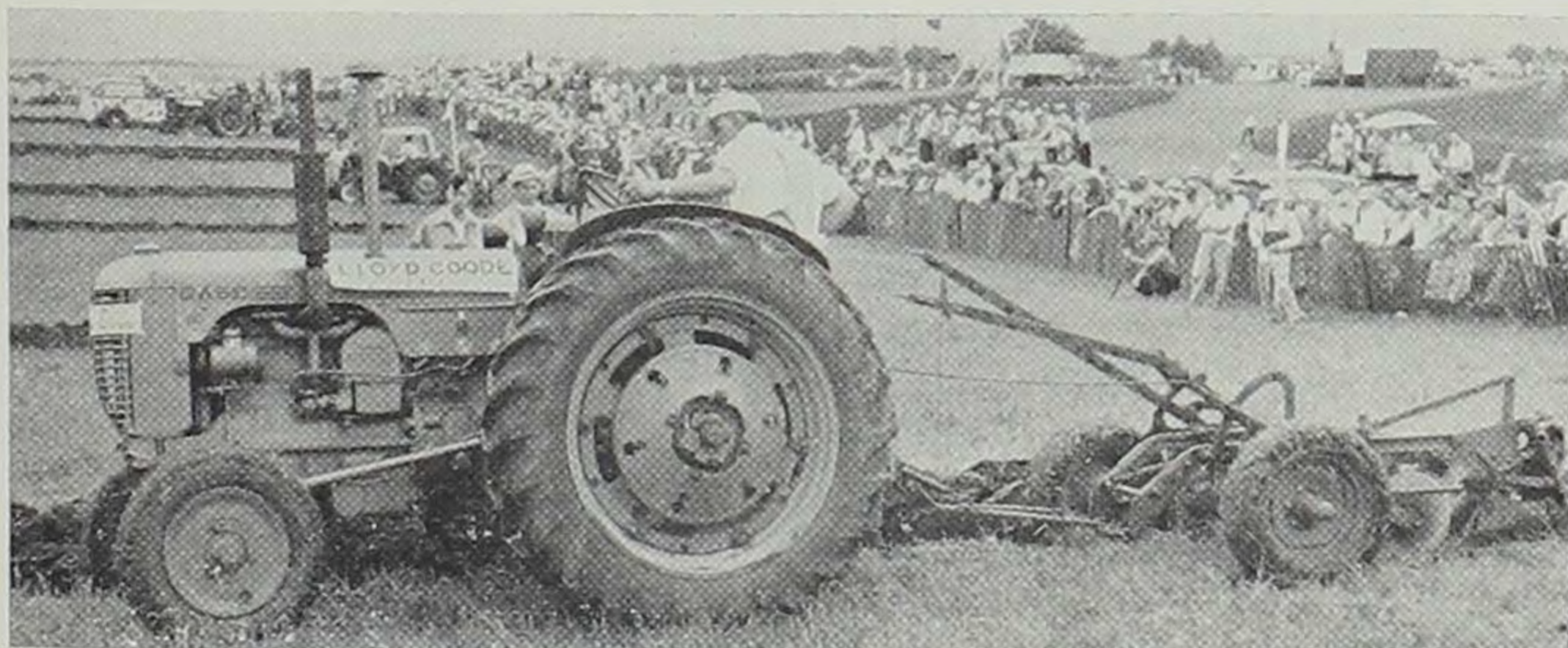
Columbus Dispatch in 1950

Drake and Shafer Won in Ohio



Missouri Farm Bureau Photo

Humphreys Wins 1949 Trophy in Missouri



Iowa Farm Bureau Photo

Iowa's Goode Wins Way into Minnesota's National

NATIONALS: WISCONSIN, ILLINOIS, INDIANA



Iowa's Lyle Mason

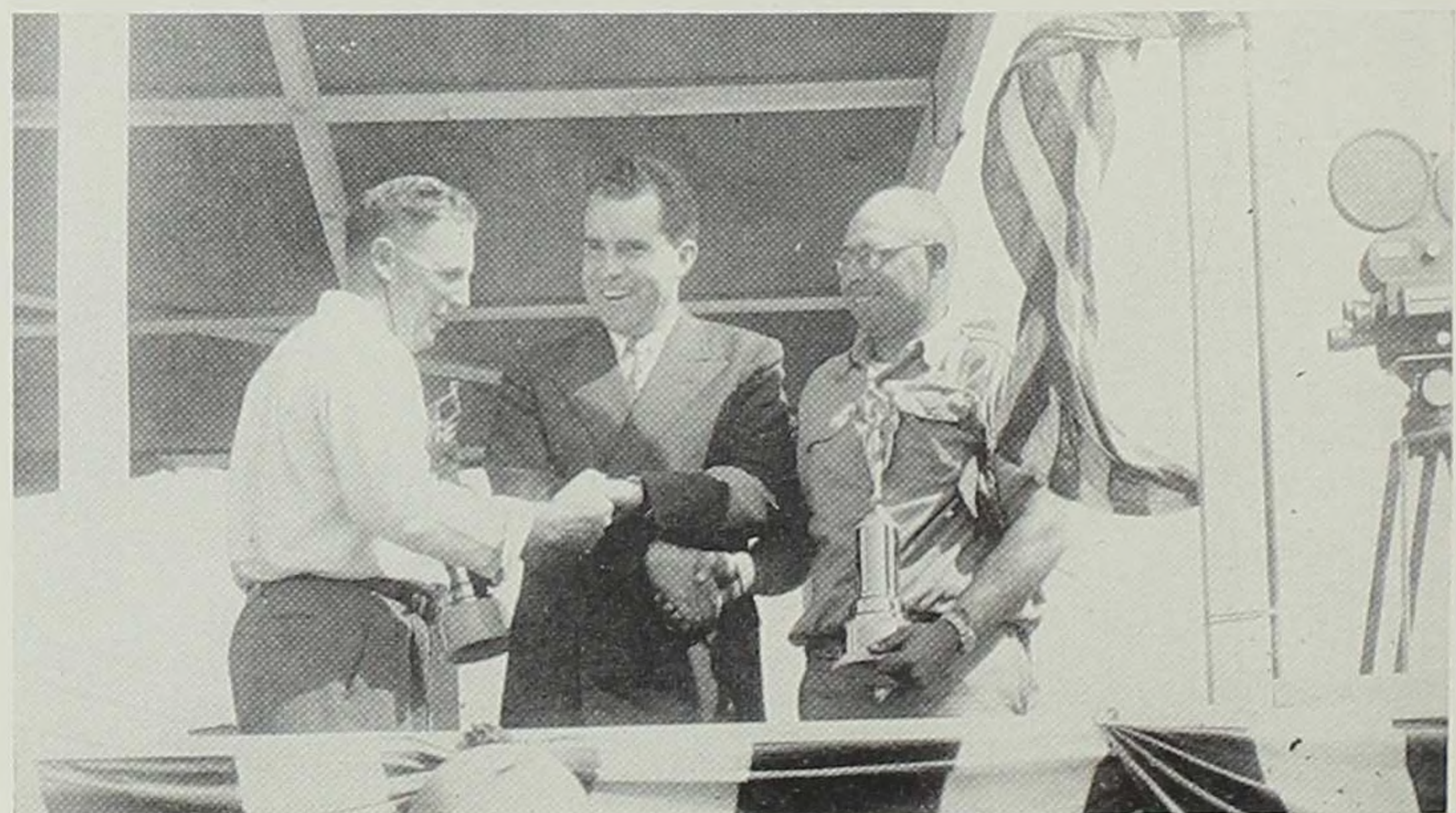


1953 Contour Scene



Olney Photo

Top Five 1954 National Contour Winners



Durnbaugh Photo

Vice President Nixon with 1955 Plowing Champs

National Matches in Iowa

National plowing matches, like the state and interstate events, originated in Iowa. The national contest was a natural outgrowth of the Corn Belt Matches started at Mitchellville in 1939, and continued so successfully near Boone in 1940, and near Albia in 1941, but cancelled during the period of World War II.

Preparations for the first "National" were started in the fall of 1945, immediately after the close of World War II. Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard's slogan "Food Will Help Write The Peace" was popular, but heavy cropping during the war years had depleted much land. Aware of the need for more soil conservation practices, the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Agricultural Committee, headed by J. S. Russell of the Des Moines *Register*, undertook Iowa's first contour plowing match soon after V-J Day. Hosts were Master Farmer Lewis Morris and his son Lew Morris, Jr., of Grimes. A surprisingly large crowd turned out, indicating great interest in conserving and rebuilding worn land. Clarence Robuck, of Attica, a co-operator in one of Iowa's pioneer soil conservation districts, was named Iowa's first Contour winner.

Realizing the need for widespread emphasis on contouring and other soil conserving practices, Clay Barnett, Marion County district conservationist, and Herb Plambeck, WHO Farm Director, war correspondent, and member of the agricultural committee, met soon after the 1945 regional contest to discuss the matter. They agreed a meeting of Iowa farm and conservation leaders should be held to discuss the possibilities of a nationwide demonstration or contest.

The meeting was called in Des Moines early in 1946, with the Central Broadcasting Company as host. A veritable WHO's WHO of Iowa agriculture attended, including Dean H. H. Kildee and R. K. Bliss of Iowa State College, Secretary of Agriculture Harry Linn, Safety Director Bert Woodcock, Vocational Agriculture Director H. T. Hall, Iowa Farm Equipment Secretary Charles Chase, Grange Master James Carradus, Horse and Mule Association Secretary Cecil Rooks, Chief Harold Jespersen of the Iowa Highway Patrol, and others. Virtually all major farm machinery firms were represented, as was the United States Soil Conservation Service, *Wallaces' Farmer*, the *Des Moines Register*, and the Farm Bureau. Several farmers were also present.

Highlight of the meeting was Clay Barnett's proposal that a farm "face lifting" be held in connection with the proposed National Plowing Match. Great enthusiasm was expressed for this

idea, and a decision was made to hold a National Soil Conservation Day in connection with the plowing contest. It was also agreed that no parking or admission charges would be permitted.

Marion County, widely known for its soil conservation leadership, was awarded the first "National." Host farms were those of Clyde Milner and Cyril Rees. Elaborate plans were made for both the plowing matches and the conservation events. Chairman Walter Brown of Knoxville named twenty-two committees. Conservation events were planned under the supervision of soil district commissioners Paul Harp, Ralph Grundman, and Glen Newton, and were directed by Clay Barnett. Champion plowmen were invited from various Midwestern states.

September 21 dawned bright and clear. Visitors started coming early. By noon an estimated 50,000 persons were present, watching conservation demonstrations and plowing matches, looking over exhibits, and enjoying the program. United States Soil Conservation Chief Hugh Bennett, Farm Bureau President Allan Kline, Governor Robert D. Blue, and Legion Editor Frank Miles were speakers. Marilyn Steele, the pretty plowmen's queen, with her lovely attendants, led the pageantry. Flying Farmers flew their planes overhead. A 1914 model tractor and plow helped portray farm progress.

Plowmen from seven states competed for prizes

totaling \$1,000. Illinois and Iowa men became the first national champions. Paul Stiefbolt of Naperville, Illinois, won the level land class with Clarence Robuck of Attica, Iowa, winning contour laurels. Sixty-year-old Fred Jones of Colo won the level land section, and Charles Long of Gilman City, Missouri, nosed out Fred Freese of Shelby, Iowa, in the open contour section. Indiana, Nebraska, and Illinois plowmen won the safety prizes.

At the Milner farm "face lifting" some twenty-eight different water and soil conserving practices were demonstrated including contouring, terracing, watering, seeding, gully control, pond building, fence building, tiling, drop inlet construction, etc. More than 230 men with tractors and other machines were on the job. When the day ended the run-down farm had been made over. Dr. Bennett, in a coast-to-coast NBC Farm and Home Hour broadcast, declared: "This plowing contest and conservation demonstration was . . . the biggest, most significant one-day demonstration ever given on farmlands of this or any other country." The United States Soil Chief added that land mismanagement cost the nation four billion dollars a year, but farms under conservation plans returned an average of \$528 a year over other farms.

Dr. Bennett's statement, and the enthusiastic reception given the 1946 program by farmers, solidly established the National Plowing Match and Soil Conservation Day as the nation's foremost

farm event. Later, WHO's farm department won the 1946 Du Pont Radio Award, and conservation groups in many other states undertook projects patterned after the Iowa event.

Second of the National Plowing Matches in Iowa was held in Hamilton County on the Ralph Olsen farm in the Jewell-Ellsworth area on September 27, 1947. Albert Kooloff served as central committee chairman. Rain poured down for an hour early in the forenoon, threatening to ruin the day, but stopped in time for the program to go ahead. Conservation demonstrations were similar to those conducted at the 1946 event, with emphasis on drainage. Farmstead improvement and landscaping was done on the Thompson sisters' farm. Major speaker was Assistant Chief J. C. Dykes, Soil Conservation Service, Washington, D. C. Helicopter flights and aerial crop dusting were shown.

Thirty-five entrants from eight states participated in the 1947 plowing matches. National winners were Leo Drake, of Memphis, Missouri, in the level-land section, and Ronald Orr, Beatrice, Nebraska, in the contour division. State match winners were Elston Danielson, Ellsworth, and Gene Ferguson, Oskaloosa. Some 50,000 persons attended despite cold, wet weather.

The 1948 National Plowing Match was held on six farms embracing 2,000 acres near Dexter, Iowa. National politics shared the spotlight with

this great agricultural spectacle. President Harry S. Truman, a candidate for re-election, was special guest, and, in addition to watching conservationists in action, made the first of his now famous "give-'em-hell" speeches. Hosts were Mrs. Lois Agg, Roland Weesner, George Piper, Cliff Standly, E. W. Drake, and Howard Hill. Howard Walker was chairman.

On contest day, bumper to bumper traffic was the story on all highways leading to Dexter. More than 100 flying farmers came by plane. Highway patrolmen and United States secret service men estimated 100,000 persons attended. Dozens of conservation demonstrations were carried out, with President Truman among the spectators.

Each one of the forty plowmen from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri personally met the President and vied for \$1,000 prizes and trophies. National championships went to Dean Wilson of Ohio in the contour section, and to Paul Stiefbold of Illinois in the level land division. Iowa winners were Harrison Link of Tingley in the contour class, and Herbert Jones of Colo, son of the 1946 state winner, in the level-land section.

President Truman spoke twice, first at noon over national radio networks, and again at 2 p.m. In his second appearance he spoke informally and recalled his own farming days plowing with mule

teams and turning what his mother claimed to be the straightest furrow for miles around. Between the speeches the President enjoyed a fried chicken dinner served by the neighborhood farm women. Contest officials, land owners, and Colonel B. J. Palmer, head of the Central Broadcasting Company, dined with the President.

In 1949 the National was held near Runnells and highlighted work done in the newly undertaken Marybelle Watershed. Soil Commissioner Wilbur Goodhue was in charge. Hosts were the Waechter family, Fred Beck, John Ryerkirk, Paul Keeney, and Ben Lourens. Dr. Bennett, the "father of soil conservation," and Kent Leavett, past president of the nation's soil commissioners, were speakers. Serving as the co-sponsors were the Central Broadcasting Company and the Des Moines *Register*. Receiving national conservation awards were: Bennett, Leavett, Julius Lensch, Iowa; Everett Barr, Nebraska; Don Pharis, Missouri; Kenneth Ralston, Illinois; and William Ben-nit, Minnesota.

Farmstead improvement and silo building, as well as land "face-lifting" demonstrations, were featured in 1949. Eight states entered 37 plowmen to compete for \$1,500 in prizes. Dean Wilson of Ohio retained his national contour crown, and Paul Stiefbolt of Illinois, the 1946 and 1948 national level-land winner, retained that title. Iowa winners were Francis Hadsall of Colfax in the

contour class and James Warrender of Quimby in the level-land class. Some 65,000 persons attended the 1949 event.

Other plowing events of national significance were also held in Iowa in the 1940's.

In 1940 the *Wallaces' Farmer and Iowa Homestead* sponsored a United States International Match on the Charles Dengler farm near Davenport. It served as a prelude to the National Husking Contest and had entries from five states and from Ontario, Canada. Fred Timbers of Canada was winner. Iowa's Duane Sherril of Washta placed eighth. Art Thompson, associate editor for *Wallaces' Farmer*, and Julius Paustian, Scott County farmer, were in charge.

In the years 1943, '44, '45, and '46 Mills County was the site of some national plow terrace contests, with Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas entries. Ray Jones, of SCS, was in charge. Sponsors were Omaha *World Herald* and Missouri Valley Association. Attendance of up to 20,000 was reported at the Malvern event.

WMT's Clean Plowing Matches were held in the spring of '46 and '47. Objective of the east-central Iowa matches was to help combat corn borers by plowing under all stalks and other residue in cornfields. Interest was high, with many contestants and thousands of spectators. Chuck Worcester, WMT Farm Director, was in charge. Prizes totaling over \$1,200 were offered.

The 1946 match was held on the Hanneman-Hensing farm near Newhall with Robert Bowery, young GI farmer of Milo, Iowa, winning out over 50 other contestants and receiving a \$500 first prize. Speakers included Governor Robert Blue, General George Olmstead, and Dr. Wm. Bradley, national corn borer research official. In 1947, when the contest was on the Earl Elijah farm near Clarence, 64 entrants participated, and Bowery repeated his victory. A crowd estimated up to 40,000, some of whom came by air, watched the clean plowing demonstrations, saw a farm gadget show, and heard Senator Bourke Hickenlooper and American Farm Bureau President Allan Kline.

The National Plow Terrace contest, held on the Mrs. Wm. J. Lewis farm near Harlan in 1948, was designed to demonstrate the building of terraces with the ordinary farm plow. A dozen entrants from Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Kansas, and Iowa participated. John Stoburg of Taylor County, Iowa, was national winner; Louis Buessing, of Kansas, 1947 winner, was runner-up. Julius Lensch, Shelby County soil commissioner, was chairman. A unique feature was an arrangement to park all autos on the contour. Attendance for the event was estimated at 10,000 persons. Major General Lewis Pick of the United States Army Engineers was the featured speaker.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

Nationals in Other States

Because of the confusion resulting from the several Iowa and other contests using the name "National," sponsors of the original National Soil Conservation Field Days and Plowing Matches sought clarification of the issue. At a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, early in 1948, several Iowans met with officials of the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts. It was agreed the NASCD would assume responsibility of recognizing the National Conservation Field Days as *the* official national event, with the understanding that the National Plowing Match be a part of that event. NASCD also agreed to designate the demonstration and contest site in the various interested states each year.

The first National to be held outside Iowa met in 1950 near Urbana, Ohio. Sponsored by NASCD and other farm groups, and with fourteen Buck Creek Valley farmers as hosts, the 1950 event was a huge success, even though rain necessitated expanding it to a three-day event. Some 75,000 persons attended. The Ohioans inaugurated the "wagon trains," thus saving visitors thousands of miles of walking. Hundreds of fertilizer and crop experiments were undertaken,

along with conservation work. An hour-long parade was an added feature.

Harrison County, Missouri, where the nation's first contour matches were held in the early 1940's, entertained the 1951 National Soil Conservation Field Days. George Montgomery and six of his neighbors were hosts. Waters Davis of Texas, NASCD president, and Dr. Hugh Bennett were speakers. Visitors saw a vast array of farm and home equipment on display as well as the results of the previous year's conservation work on the Salmon and Crabtree farms. They also studied conservation practices featured on contest day. Fifty-three champion plowmen from seven states and from Ontario, Canada, performed before an estimated 50,000 spectators. A plowmen's barbecue was a highlight of 1951.

Minnesota was host in 1952. The name "Plowville" was given to the 12-farm area near Kasson, where political as well as agricultural history was again written when both major party presidential candidates spoke to 100,000 from the same platform on the same farm the same day. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Republican nominee, and Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic standard bearer, each presented his respective farm views at the historic event. Most of the fifty-two plowmen from nine states met both "Ike" and Adlai. Both candidates toured the conservation area and had a chicken dinner at the Henry Snow farm.

The 1953 National was near Augusta, Wisconsin, and was called "Operation Watershed," with demonstrations and displays on eight farms in the Thompson Valley Watershed. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson was the featured speaker. Farm Safety was included in the plowmen's scoring points this year, resulting in some very close final scores. Some 70,000 watched plowmen from nine states compete. Television entered into the national match promotion in 1953.

The "Onion Hill" community near Olney, Illinois, within a few miles of the nation's population center, was the site for the 1954 National. A devastating drouth in the area had drastically cut crop yields, necessitating the abandonment of some of the outstanding field tests arranged by the committee. A Youth Day and the International Sheep Dog trials were added features in 1954. An estimated 60,000 attended. About fifty champion plowmen competed and Secretary Benson was the principal speaker.

The 1955 National was held "On the Banks of the Wabash" near Wabash, Indiana, and was expanded to four days. A Flying Farmers day was added to the schedule, with hundreds of farmers flying their own planes to view the conservation demonstrations and plowing matches. Vice-President Richard Nixon and Louis Bromfield were major speakers. The Purdue Glee Club furnished banquet entertainment. Fifty plowmen came from

twelve states to establish a new high in national plowing participation. Attendance was estimated at around 75,000 for the four days.

It is obvious that plowing matches have definitely succeeded National Corn Husking meets in providing interest and excitement. Contestants and visitors alike are in suspense from the opening aerial bomb to the closing signal. Great interest centers around the types of plows and power units. Young farmers and old-timers can vie on fairly equal ground. Cheering is heard at the land ends when the plowmen have just finished turning a particularly good closing furrow.

Each individual plowman has his own "tricks of the trade" that serve to delight the throng. Spectators often crowd six or eight deep behind plowland fences. Planes overhead give this ancient sport a modern motif. In display areas, colorful banners fly and the latest equipment and home appliances are to be seen. Loud-speakers blare announcements. Pretty "Queens of the Furrow" are presented with all the pageantry of royalty. Children with their hot dogs and other treats have a barrel of fun, and everyone else can count on a good time at the National Plowing Match.

HERB PLAMBECK

NATIONAL PLOWING MATCH DATA I

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>	<i>Attnd.</i>
1939 Sept. 23	* Mitchellville	Central Broadcasting Company	8,000
1940 Sept. 21	* Boone	Central Broadcasting Company	14,000
1941 Sept. 20	* Albia	Central Broadcasting Company	21,000
1946 Sept. 21	* Pleasantville	Marion County Soil District	50,000
1947 Sept. 27	* Ellsworth	Hamilton County Soil District	50,000
1948 Sept. 18	* Dexter	Dallas County Soil District	100,000
1949 Sept. 15	* Runnells	Register & Tribune & Station WHO	65,000
1950 Sept. 15	Urbana, Ohio	Ohio Soil Dist. Association	70,000
1951 Aug. 17	Bethany, Mo.	Missouri Soil Districts	50,000
1952 Sept. 6	Kasson, Minn.	Minnesota Soil Dist. & Station KROC	100,000
1953 Sept. 19	Augusta, Wisc.	Wisconsin Soil Dist. & Station WEAU	75,000
1954 Sept. 19	Olney, Ill.	Illinois Soil Districts	60,000
1955 Sept. 17	Wabash, Ind.	Indiana Soil Dist. & Station WOWO	65,000
1956 Sept. 22	* Colfax	Iowa Soil Conserva- tion Groups	100,000 (Est.)

*Denotes Iowa towns

NATIONAL PLOWING MATCH DATA II

<i>Winner</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Class</i>
Ray Witt Cedar, Ia.	91.6	Tractor	F. F. Martin *Bridgewater	88.5	Horse
Lyle Mason Meriden, Ia.	88.2	Tractor	F. F. Martin *Bridgewater	83.3	Horse
Leo Drake Memphis, Mo.	94.2	Tractor	F. Poortinga *Monroe	93.0	Horse
Clarence Robuck Hamilton, Ia.	90.0	Contour	P. Stiefbolt Naperville, Ill.	91.4	Level
Ronald Orr Beatrice, Nebr.	92.2	Contour	Leo Drake Memphis, Mo.	82.4	Level
Dean Wilson Urbana, Ohio	89.1	Contour	P. Stiefbolt Naperville, Ill.	91.3	Level
Dean Wilson Urbana, Ohio	84.5	Contour	P. Stiefbolt Naperville, Ill.	83.8	Level
Lloyd Shafer Chatsworth, Ill.	89.6	Contour	Leo Drake Memphis, Mo.	83.6	Level
Wm. Humphreys Albany, Mo.	78.7	Contour	Leo Drake Memphis, Mo.	89.5	Level
Martin Cummins Lewiston, Ohio	83.3	Contour	G. Stewart Plainfield, Ill.	87.8	Level
R. C. Cummins Lewiston, Ohio	76.0	Contour	G. Stewart Plainfield, Ill.	74.0	Level
John Daniels Mulberry Gr., Ill.	83.0	Contour	R. Erickson Minooka, Ill.	82.5	Level
Eugene Holmes Waldorf, Minn.	73.0	Contour	D. Barbee Conover, Ohio	86.5	Level

*Denotes Iowa towns

PLOWING MATCH REGULATIONS

Over the years there have been changes both in the tempo and the rules of plowing matches. In the days of ox teams, and to some extent when horses were used, no time limits were imposed. Mechanization brought speed and time limitations were set. Present rules allow one hour per half acre.

Scoring points have remained somewhat similar. Level land plowing always puts much emphasis on straightness, furrow conformation, trash coverage, and land ends, while the contour emphasizes contour adherence and grassed waterways, so vital in preventing erosion. An important aspect to competition was added when the closing furrow was included as a scoring factor.

SUMMARY OF CONTOUR SCORING POINTS

Opening furrow	15
Furrow conformation and uniformity	15
Quality of tilled surface	15
Trash coverage	15
Grassed waterways	10
Land ends	10
Contour adherence and closing furrow	20
	<hr/> 100

SUMMARY OF LEVEL LAND SCORING POINTS

Opening furrow	15
Furrow straightness	10
Furrow conformation and uniformity	20
Quality of tillage surface	15
Trash coverage	15
Land ends	10
Closing furrow	15
	<hr/> 100

OTHER NATIONAL EVENTS IN IOWA



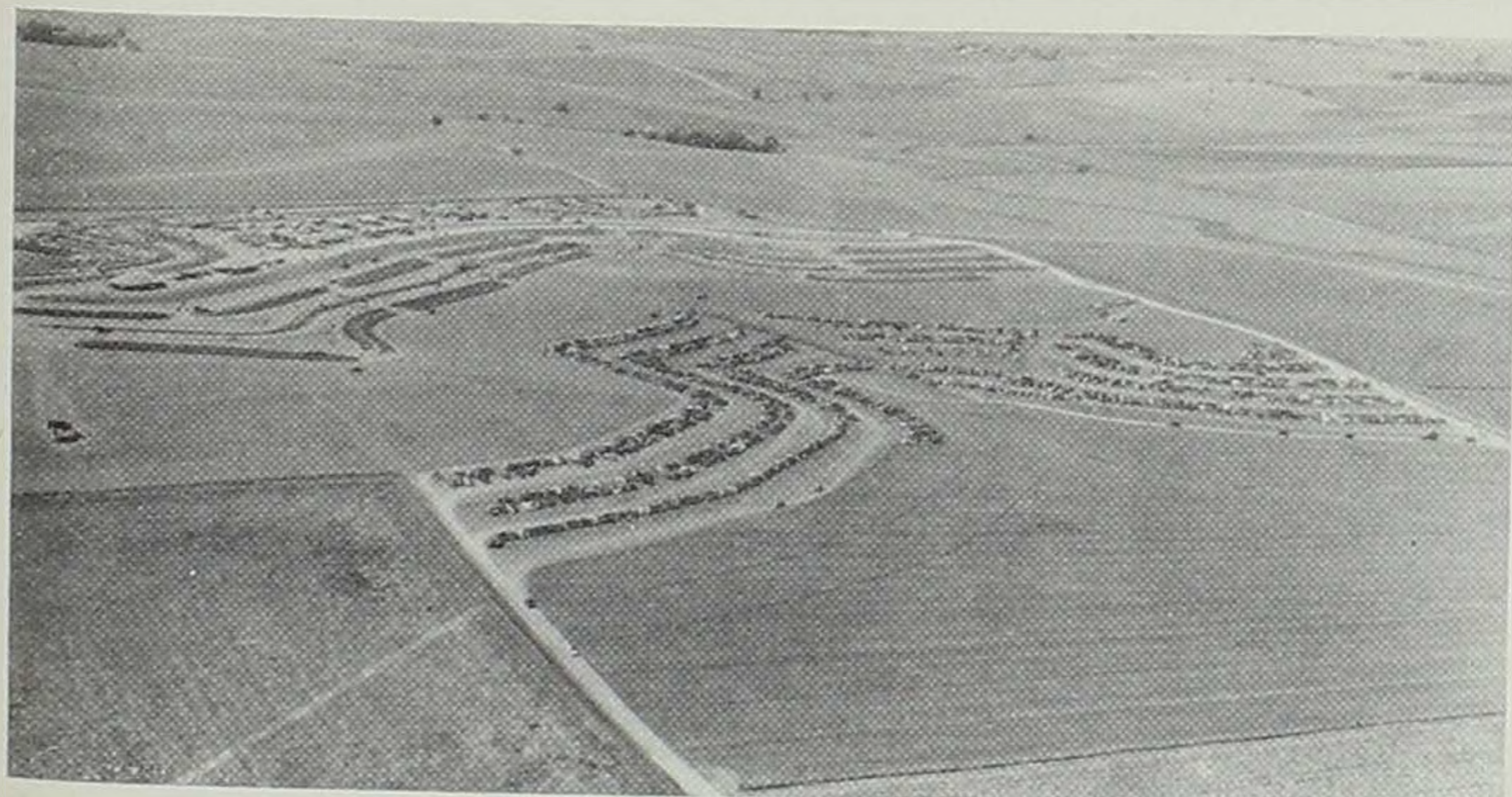
Wallaces' Farmer Photo

At 1940 Contest Near Davenport



WMT Photo

GI Bob Bowery — WMT's National Clean Plowing Champion



Ray Jones Photo

Contour Plowing at 1948 National Plow Terrace Match

PLOWING MATCH PORTRAITS



George Gergley's Homemade Tractor in 1941 Match



WMT Photo

Flying Farmers at WMT's 1947 Event



Iowa Farm Bureau Photo

Saddle Club Riders Head 1952 Parade



Iowa Farm Bureau Photo

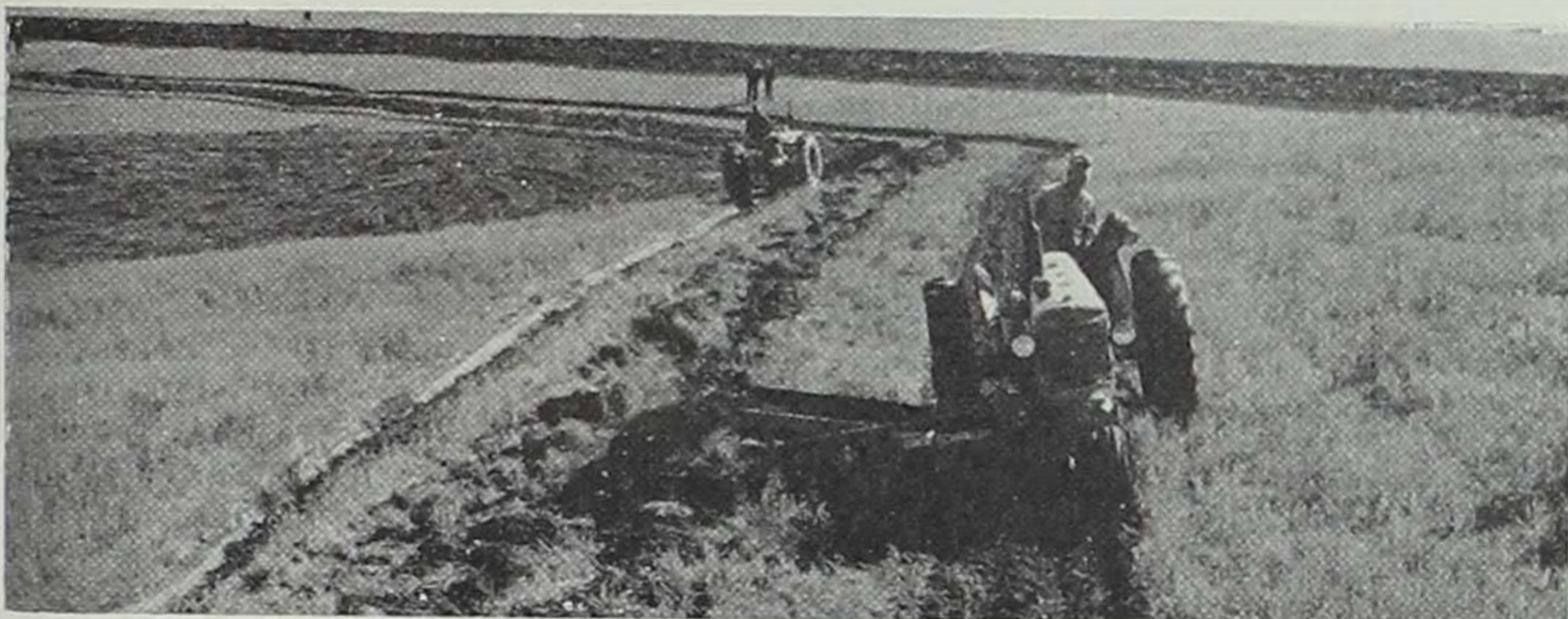
Fire Fighting Demonstration at WHO Match

PLOWING MATCH PORTRAITS



Newton Daily News Photo

Wagon Trains Rest Tired Feet of Spectators



Des Moines Register Photo

Terracing Demonstrations Are Important Conservation Practice



Master Plowmen's Banquets Are Delightful Occasions



Courtesy J. A. Carroll

Germany's Entrant in 1953 World Match in Canada

1956 NATIONAL FIELD DAYS



Newton Daily News Photo

Conservationist Wilson with Farmers Steenhoek and Paul



Conservation Patterns Reveal Field Days Objective

The 1956 National Matches

At a meeting held in New Orleans, Louisiana, early in 1954, Iowa was designated by the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts as host to the 1956 National Field Days and Plowing Matches. Soon after the decision, Jasper County was named as site for the 1956 event. Outstanding achievements in soil conservation, a continuous fourteen-year record of plowing matches, two state champion plowmen, an interested group of district soil commissioners, an exceedingly capable work unit conservationist, excellent rural-urban relations, a strong county bankers association, and dozens of signed pledges of cooperation were important factors in the selection of Jasper County.

A tailor-made site for the 1956 National was offered in the Washington Center community. Henry Steenhoek, a strong conservation enthusiast, had bought a run-down, hilly farm much in need of rebuilding. In the same section, the Daft sisters and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Cross had a farm where conservation has been practiced for several years. Across the road were the farms of Walter Telfer and Roland Krebs. Other co-operators with the event in that area, almost all of whom

were also co-operators with the Jasper District, were: Esther Cross, Josie Daft, Ed Slings, Lyle Schmitt, Charles and Francis Hadsall, Ed Craig, Kenneth Berkey, Lester and Wm. VanPeursem, Melvin Guy, Maggie Hayes, Vinton Ward, Howard, John, Dave, and S. DenHartog, Earl McReynolds, Luke and Maggie VanderLinden, Adrian VandeKraan, Gerritt Lourens, Ferd Brunk, Earl Baird, and Martin VanZee.

The site committee, mindful that show places were not required, lost no time in designating the Washington Center Watershed for the 1956 event.

Some of the most elaborate planning ever to go into any project was done for the 1956 National. The name "Operation Conservation" was chosen. Soil Commissioners Merrill Anderson, Harold DePenning, and Joe Cross then authorized John Wilson, veteran work unit conservationist, to proceed. An executive committee was carefully selected and was headed by Anderson, a young Newton farmer, and a leader in Farm Bureau and Grange circles. Others named were Joe Mc-Klveen, Prairie City lumber dealer and Lions Club president; Tim Campbell, Jr., Newton attorney and Rotarian; Howard Bell, Colfax banker and Community Club official; Al Disrud, Monroe editor and Kiwanis club president; Lawrence Hammerly, pioneer Jasper County conservationist; and Francis Hadsall, young farmer and 1949 National Plowing Match runner-up.

The Jasper County Bankers Association underwrote a \$5,000 loan to the Field Days group. A \$20,000 budget, to be financed by displays, was planned. A great deal of care was taken in the selecting of committee chairmen and members. Ten of the group went to the 1954 National at Olney, Illinois. Then, in 1955, an air-conditioned bus was engaged to transport 22 Jasper County leaders to Wabash, Indiana.

The dates, September 20, 21, and 22, were selected for the 1956 event. Hundreds of volunteers were enlisted, and sales of display space were started a year ahead of time.

Work on the Steenhoek and other farms actually started early in 1954. Among the things done prior to the event were tiling, putting in a tube and riser structure to control erosion and possible flood waters, establishing waterways, completing diversion terraces and pasture improvement, demonstrating tillage, testing crop varieties, remodeling and home improvement, building a livestock watering pond, and erecting a culvert drop-box. Unfortunately, severe drought in 1955-56 hampered plans and severely reduced crop yields.

By doing some work ahead of the Field Days, and much more while the event was underway, the committee made "Conservation City," as the area was called, a city complete with water, light and telephone facilities, an official newspaper and post office, radio and TV broadcasts, etc.

Hundreds of other preparations were made by the committees, numbering a thousand persons by contest time. The committees and chairmen were:

Concessions & Exhibit — Chess Bell
Emergency Radio — Bob Denniston
Facilities — Leslie French
Farm Family Activities — Belva Covey
Finance — Roger Wheeland
Flying Farmers — Frank Krohn
General Traffic — Jack Wormley
Grounds Traffic — Royal Cross
Hospitality — Neal Hammer
Livestock Exhibit — Henry Kling
Materials & Equipment — Jet Adams
Planning — Harold DePenning
Plowing Contests — James L. Paul
Program & Special Events — Henry Little
Publicity — E. K. Shaw
Wagon Train — Earl Brubaker
Water — Wiley Roberts
Youth Activities — Jasper Risdal
Sheep Dog Trials — L. C. McLean
Utilities — J. W. Ferguson

As for the 1956 Plowing Matches, James Paul and the Executive Committee named Herb Plambeck of WHO-TV as Director, with Frank Mendall, Iowa Soil Conservationist Service Director, in charge of the contour section, and Dale Hull, Iowa State College Extension agricultural engineer, to head the level land division. Plowmen from more than a dozen states, most of them 1956 state contest winners, were invited to make up the

strongest entry list ever to compete on American soil. Prizes exceeded \$1,500. Top national and Iowa farm leaders were named to officiate. Feature of the Plowmen's Banquet was presentation of sixteen All-American plowmen awards and the introduction of the "Queen of the Furrow." Newton JC's arranged the elaborate parade.

Top Iowa farm and conservation leaders were named to an advisory committee including: Frank Schaller, Iowa State College; James Foster and Othie McMurry of the State Soil Conservation Committee; Harlan Backhaus, S.C.S.; Wayne Pritchard, Soil Conservation Society of America; Clyde Spry, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture; Ed Baur, NASCD; Grover Hahn, Iowa County Extension President; and William Mitchell, of the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation Districts.

Mindful that 1956 was another presidential election year, and that attendance might again reach the 100,000 mark, officials extended early invitations to the National Republican and Democratic party chairmen to have their candidates deliver their farm speeches at the National in Iowa. Radio and TV networks made early plans to cover the plowing and related events. Other program highlights planned for the 1956 event included the University of Iowa Scottish Highlanders and the International Sheep Dog trials.

E. K. SHAW and KEITH KIRKPATRICK

World Plowmen

A UNITED NATIONS OF AGRICULTURE

Positive evidence of the worth and widespread interest in plowing matches is seen in the inauguration of the "World Plowing Meet" in 1953 as part of the International Matches in Canada. Plowmen were entered from Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Finland, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Canada, and the United States.

Herb Plambeck of Iowa, originator of National Plowing Matches, was given the honor of firing the opening gun for the first world event. Winners of the 1953 National were the United States entries, Graeme Stewart and "Buzz" Cummins.

Many Americans saw the Canadian champion, James Eccles, win the coveted golden plow symbolic of the world title, with Odd Braut of Norway, second. All entrants used the long, narrow Scotch-type plow bottoms. The German contestants brought their own air-cooled diesel tractors. One of the British entrants had won more than 100 matches in his native country. All the world contest entrants became well acquainted and soon were close friends, exchanging views on agricultural topics and international questions — forming, in effect, a United Nations of Agriculture.

Along with the World Match competitors, the Canadian International had some 400 additional entrants, many of whom were in the horse-drawn sections, where walking plows are still used. A massive farm machinery exposition was another attraction for the 60,000 at Coburg, Ontario.

Second of the World Plowing meets was held in Ireland in 1954, and Sweden entertained the World Championship in 1955. The 1956 meet was set for England, and in 1957 the United States will be host to the world's best plowmen at the World Conservation Exposition to be held near Peebles, Ohio.

With plowmen from Europe, the United States, Canada, and possibly from Russia and Australia meeting on common soil, many observers believe the humble plow, after centuries of serving mankind, may yet be a means of accomplishing better understanding between nations.

Grace Noll Crowell's beautiful poem entitled "Plows and Plowmen" pays a fitting tribute to the sturdy men who have tilled the soil from antiquity to the twentieth century.

*So many furrows in so many lands,
So many plows beneath men's guiding hands,
And lo! the earth's surface has been tilled.
To meet the world's need, granaries are filled
With corn and wheat and rye from countless fields.
Because men plow, there are these golden yields;
Because their silver shares have pierced the sod
And they have worked together with their God.*

HERB PLAMBECK

1956 NATIONAL FIELD DAYS PROGRAM

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP, JASPER COUNTY, IOWA

Thursday, September 20 — Youth Day

Conservation Demonstrations

Displays and Exhibits

Youth Assembly

Invocation and Flag Raising

Wagon Tours

International Sheep Dog Trial Preliminaries

Radio and TV Programs

Ladies' Activities

Fire Fighting Demonstrations

Friday, September 21 — State Day

Conservation Demonstrations

Wagon Tours

Special Plow Demonstrations

Iowa Level Land Plowing Match

Iowa Contour Plowing Match

Radio and TV Programs

University of Iowa Highlanders

Safety Demonstrations

Friday Evening, September 21 — Plowmen's Night

Plowmen's Parade

Master Plowmen's Banquet

Awards to All-American Plowmen

Saturday, September 22 — National Day

International Sheep Dog Finals

Home and Farmstead Improvement

National Level Land Plowing Match

National Contour Plowing Match

Radio and TV Programs

National Republican Presidential Speaker

Awards to National Plowmen

Safety Awards to National Plowmen

National Democratic Presidential Speaker

Fire Fighting Demonstration

PLOWING MATCH PERSONALITIES



Hugh Bennett



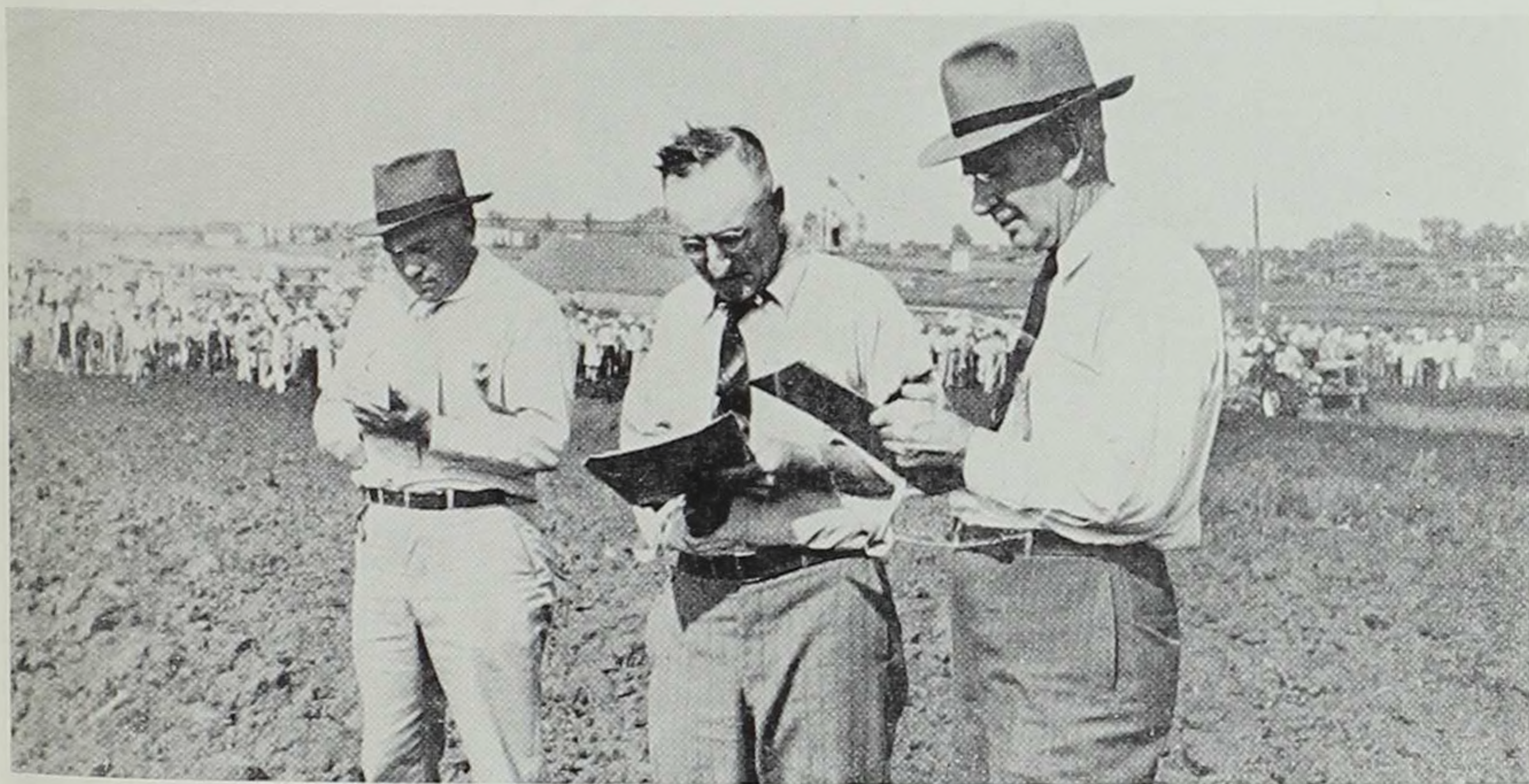
Paul Harp



Clay Barnett



Merrill Anderson



Judges at Work in Contest Field



Plowing Match Founder Presents Trophies to 1954 Winners



Courtesy J. A. Carro

U. S. Plowman in 1953 World Contest



Register and Tribune Photo

Patterns of Plowing Perfection