

Donation of the Month

John Deere Green



John Deere Corn Sheller
1975.1.3
Donor: Marjorie Bryant

Though most people recognize the signature colors and logo of John Deere equipment, many may not recognize this particular farm machine. Corn shellers were found on many farms in the early decades of the twentieth century. Some were small and primitive, while others, like this floor model, were large with box frames that stood on legs.

The basic operation of this machine consisted of placing dried ears of corn into a slot where an iron disc with studded teeth would turn against the corn and strip the dried kernels from the cob. The disc, aided by an iron flywheel, was turned by a hand crank and could strip an ear of corn in seconds. The shelled corn came out one opening and the bare cobs fell out of another. This process was faster than shelling the kernels by hand and not as hard on the hands. However, the crank still made tiring work. Eventually, models powered with gasoline engines became available for shelling corn.

The company that made this machine is named for none other than John Deere himself. In 1836, Deere, who was a blacksmith, moved from Vermont to Grand Detour, Illinois. Having seen the struggles local farmers had with the soil, Deere created a "self-polishing" steel plow which moved soil more effectively.

Thanks to the success of that plow, John Deere founded a company that is now known world-wide for its agricultural equipment. One of its early products was this corn sheller.

This sheller dates to the early twentieth century and belonged to John Wallace Bryant, the only son of J.W. and Mary Ann Bryant. The Bryants settled in Rogers, Arkansas in 1888 where J.W. Bryant operated a hardware store for many years. His son, John Wallace, started out helping his father in the hardware business. He then worked for the American National Bank in Rogers as a cashier before serving in World War I with the aerial photography department. Upon his return to Rogers, he gave in to a love of nature and took up agriculture on a farm and orchard northwest of Rogers.

CREDITS

Hothem, Lar. Collecting Farm Antiques, 1982.

“John Deere-Company Website” http://www.deere.com/en_US/deerecom/usa_canada.html

Rogers Historical Museum Research Library and Donor files.