Chapter XIX

THE FIFTY PRE-CENTENNIAL YEARS OF AGRICULTURAL HISTORY OF POLK COUNTY

The most profound changes in Agricultural History have taken place during the five decades beginning back in 1910. Throughout the history of mankind, wars have precipitated changes in weapons and strategy of warfare, modes of living and the economic welfare of all nations concerned. World War I was no exception to this rule in hastening changes in agricultural production in Polk County.

Farmers, on the broad acres of the prairie section of the county were seeking ways to ease the load on horses in land plowing. The theory of power farming was sound, however the use of the heavy steam engines on the land was not practicable, they bogged down easily in the low places of fields and their slow speed did not make for good shearing action on the plows.

Mechanization of farming practices began in 1912 in Polk County. (The first A. O. Espe tractor) Courtesy Espe family.

Farmers of our country, during World War I, were called on to increase food production to feed our allies and the rest of the world at a time when the young men of the nation were called into military service. Farm families did respond to the call for more production of food stocks by everyone working and by increasing the mechanization of the farming practices. Mechanically minded farmers, mechanics and farm implement manufacturers