

# THE RED EDGE

Presidents letter: December 17, 2025

The calendar says it is almost Christmas but it has been unseasonably warm all fall and dry. There seems to be a great many of our friends that have been experiencing snow and slick roads and I remind you to slow down and stay home if you can. My winter project is building a scale replica of the 16 sided barn that George Washington built in 1794. Washington and Thomas Jefferson were both progressive farmers in their day and with the theme of the 2025 RPRU being the Semiquintennial, celebrating 250 years since the Declaration of Independence, South Dakota Chapter 21 wants to display that history in a very special exhibit in the new 150,000 sq ft DEX Center. I will include with this newsletter some ideas that I put together and maybe get you to thinking about what you can add to the event. The Red Power Roundup is slated for Huron South Dakota June 25-27 and if you have the freedom to travel I hope to see you there. As an IHC Collector Club member you will be voting on the selection for the site of the 2029 Roundup. I'm pleased to announce that Chapter 31, Mississippi Chapter 44, Alabama Chapter 23, Florida Chapter 27, and Georgia Chapter 29 have agreed to host the Deep South Red Power Round Up in 2029 at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in Perry, Georgia. I have been told that Southern Illinois Chapter 32 is also submitting a bid for the Du Quoin Fairgrounds location.

The Chapter 12 Annual meeting will be held in Norfolk NE 1:00 pm at the Elkhorn Valley Museum January 17. In case of inclement weather, watch your text messages or Facebook for postponement announcements. The museum is open from 10:00 to 5:00 so you can plan to visit the museum either before or after the meeting. Admission for our group will be \$4.00 each. We were unable to find a suitable venue for a meal so plan to get lunch on your own. We will be electing board members at this meeting. The terms of Howard Raymond, Doug Hrbek, and Steven Fisher expire this year. All three are willing to continue in their capacity but also would step aside if there are other willing applicants. Nominations will be called from the floor.



## The Square Turn Tractor, a Nebraska innovation

“Power farming” with tractors furnishing the motion which for ages had been supplied to machines by the ox, the horse, or by other animals, began to make its presence felt in Nebraska in the early years of this century. One such machine was the Square Turn tractor, built in the machine shops of A. T. Kenny and A. J. Colwell at Norfolk in 1914. The two inventors experimented in the shop and in the field until they had produced a one-man tractor that would turn short and square and would get close up to fence corners. It carried the plows below, in full view of the operator, and handled “as easily as a team.” An attachment that made many innovations possible was known as the Giant Grip Drive, a “new type of transmission never before used in any piece of machinery,” the inventors claimed. When Mr. Colwell conceived the idea of this new type of transmission, he was credited with having advanced the day when the horse would become obsolete as a draft animal. It overcame many objections which farmers had raised to other types of tractors. By installation of this powerful but simple transmission, they made it possible to do away with the clutch and differential gears. The tractor had far fewer parts than before thought possible, and every part was readily accessible to a mechanic. The machine operated at the same speed and power in either direction, making a real “two-way tractor” which turned completely around in its own length and was said to handle as easily as horses or mules. There were no gears for the operator to shift and no clutch to bother with. Its manufacturers claimed also that it would work “around stumps, in orchards, and would clean up at the finish of a job even better than could be done with a team.” Other selling points were that it worked on hillsides too steep for a binder, on grades, and in low, wet places where most tractors could not be operated, and lifted its plows by power to clear trash or to turn corners.

By 1920 a factory had been installed in Norfolk to build the Square Turn Tractor. Main offices were in Chicago. The Square Turn was a three-wheel type having two traction or power wheels and one castor or free wheel. It would do the work of from 3 to 5 teams in general draw-bar work and would deliver 35 horsepower on the belt. A four-cylinder kerosene-gasoline Climax Tractor Motor with 510 cubic inches of displacement was used. The driver's seat was swiveled and locked on the steering post. Ninety percent of the 7,800-pound tractor's weight was carried by the two large 50-inch diameter traction wheels. The spread of the traction wheels was 8 feet overall. One of four surviving Square Turn tractors is on display at the Elkhorn Valley Museum. Don't miss it!



## Thomas Jefferson and George Washington

The Albemarle Agricultural Society was founded around May 1817 in Virginia by prominent figures including John Hartwell Cocke, Peter Minor, and Thomas Jefferson, with James Madison later becoming its first president, serving to promote modern, sustainable farming to combat Virginia's agricultural decline by sharing knowledge and new techniques among planters. I have read that Robert McCormick, (father of Cyrus) was also a member of the Society but can not confirm it from Society records. I have every reason to believe that both Cyrus and Robert would have been familiar with the prominent men who were members and would have

visited about matters discussed there. The McCormicks as prosperous farmers would have also subscribed to journals of the time and would have been well informed of any advancements in agriculture.

In the 1790s, Thomas Jefferson and other Virginia tobacco growers began to diversify by planting wheat. Their timing coincided with the development of the threshing machine, designed to remove a plant's grain from its stalks and husks, thus "separating the wheat from the chaff." The first threshing machines were invented in Great Britain in the 1780s and American-made machines soon followed.

Jefferson's fellow planter, George Washington, was making the same transition to wheat, and both men were interested in learning about the new technology. In August 1791, President Washington and Secretary of State Jefferson jointly visited a farm, southwest of Philadelphia, to see a threshing machine in operation. The locally-made machine, developed by Alexander Anderson, was a drum-and-beater style at the farm of Samuel Powell, president of the Philadelphia Society of Agriculture.

After the visit to Powell's farm, Jefferson learned more about threshing machines through a 1791 issue of Arthur Young's semi-annual *Annals of Agriculture*. Young was an English writer well known for supporting agricultural improvements. Upon reading Young's article, concerning a machine based on Scottish designs, Jefferson took action. He wrote to Thomas Pinckney, recently appointed as minister to Great Britain, asking him to secure a model of the Scottish machine. Pinckney tracked down a machine near London and employed a mechanic to fulfill Jefferson's request. By December 1793, Jefferson's model had arrived in New York and was on its way to Richmond and then Monticello. Jefferson wrote in his memorandum book on December 12, "Gave order on bank US. for 62.8 to John Vaughan for his bill for £13—13 sterling. on Byrd, Savage & Byrd payable to T. Pinckney, and inclosed it to T. Pinckney to pay for threshing model."

Though Jefferson sent his first harvest of wheat to market in 1793, it was not until the summer of 1796 that his first threshing machine was built. He hired John Buck to do the work, based on the British treble-gear model, but later made modifications by substituting whirrs and bands for the gears. When the harvest season was completed, Jefferson was able to report that the new machine operated "with perfect success." By 1813, Jefferson owned three threshing machines. Two were portable, driven by horses, and one was stationary,

driven by water.

Thomas Jefferson had an abiding interest in improving the technology of farming. One of his more important contributions to agriculture was the "mouldboard of least resistance" for a plow.



**A modern recreation of Jefferson's "mouldboard plow of least resistance."**

While serving as minister to France, Jefferson had the opportunity to observe European plow designs. Their deficiencies inspired him to set down in a 1788 memorandum his plans for an improved moldboard, the wooden part of the plow that lifts up and turns over the sod cut by the iron share and coulter. He wished to make that lifting and turning action as efficient as possible, so that the plow could be pulled through the soil with the least expenditure of force. He brought his love of mathematics to his design, which he declared was "mathematically demonstrated to be perfect."

George Washington also owned examples of these early threshing machines but apparently he thought them too undependable or too slow for the work he had for them so in 1794 he had built on his Dogue Run farm a two story 16 sided treading barn where horses or other draft animals could be used to "tread" the grain out of the stalks. A replica of this barn was reconstructed in 1996 and can be seen today at Mt Vernon. It is my intention to visit the site while I am in the east for the Winter Convention.

## Semiquincentennial Celebration at Huron SD RPRU

I would like to do a 1776 farmstead in the foyer area. I thought about several things for a centerpiece. The Statue of Liberty didn't seem to fit, then I thought about Paul Revere on his midnight ride but ruled that out too. What I thought might work is an old time curbed well, roofed with a windlass and oaken bucket. Probably twice life size. Text for the well, "From this well springs new hope, new dreams, new prosperity, for the man and woman, not only in this new country, but for the World" 1776-2026

Then as folks enter the Grand Exposition Hall, for attention I would place a Revolutionary War era cannon on either side, followed by a re-creation of Monticello on one side and Mt. Vernon on the other. Both Washington and Jefferson were very active in forging new methods in farming. The exhibits would continue on the concrete to the south through 1926. I picture a mirrored exhibit, slightly different on each side but following the same chronological lines. (ie, we could show sheep and wool production on one side, and cotton fabric and thread on the other) We would show how farming progressed from the entirely manual operations up to the tractor age. I have plans to reproduce a scale replica of the 16 sided Threshing Barn of Geo Washington, built in 1794 and display a model of Thomas Jefferson's plow. Other ideas include a primitive "threshing machine" and a corn sheller of that era. But walking forward straight on, bypassing for now those exhibits to the right, you would pass under a large arched bower with the heading,

### **"American Ingenuity in Agriculture 250 Years "**

I would like to place immediately inside the bower, a Flagship Axial Flow, a Patriot Sprayer, and a Quad-Trac. Probably a Farmall Utility needs to be there as well. The rest of the main hall can fill out with whatever we desire. I would like to intersperse 20 or more significant US historical events, inventions, and advancements, each in its time frame. These along with lots of flags could make a very stunning display.

Finally, I would like to encourage all entry through the west side so they would get the full effect of passing through the 1776 farmstead and then being accosted by the reality of the 21st century.

We plan an area for 1976 Bicentennial items for exhibit, not limited to IH produced items but anything commemorating the "Spirit of 76"

Other ideas for displays

- Farmstead display featuring all IH machines on a single farm
- Experimental, all IH innovations and trials
- Electrall
- Hydros
- Gold Demos
- Steiger and other historic 4x4 tractors (No JD)

## Timeline

1763 Geo Washington begins to grow wheat at Mt Vernon in Virginia

1776 Declaration of Independence

1788 T Jefferson improves plow <https://gratefulamericanfoundation.org/cast-iron-plow/>

1794 Eli Whitney invents cotton gin <https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/cotton-gin-and-eli-whitney>

1797 Charles Newbold patents a cast iron plow

<https://wagnerkc.weebly.com/blog/1797-the-cast-iron-plow-the-first-step-in-the-evolution-of-the-plow>

1814 1819 Jethro Wood invents cast iron plow with replaceable parts

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jethro\\_Wood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jethro_Wood)

1823 Grain Cradle first patented by Issac Babcock

<https://madcohistory.org/online-exhibits/farming-in-madison-county-before-1900-introduction/the-cradle-scythe-or-grain-cradle>

1826 America is 50 years old

On July 4th two of the surviving 3 signers of the Declaration of Independence, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, both pass away the same day.



1826 first friction match developed  
1831 Cyrus McCormick invents "Machine for reaping grain"  
1837 Groundhog Thresher patented Charles and Hiram Pitts [https://www.si.edu/object/nmah\\_857076](https://www.si.edu/object/nmah_857076)  
1851 America is 75 years old, Millard Fillmore is President  
1851 improvements to McCormick's reaper include replaceable individual sections  
1853 Kerosene lamp patented <https://antiquelampsupply.com/pages/history-of-kerosene-oil-lamps>  
1858 Mason jar first patented  
1859 Edwin Drake drills first successful oil well at Titusville PA  
1876 America's Centennial year  
1876 Charles Marsh sells 5000 Marsh Harvesters  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsh,\\_Steward\\_%26\\_Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsh,_Steward_%26_Company)  
1876 Alexander Bell is awarded the first patent for a telephone  
<https://www.elon.edu/u/imagining/time-capsule/150-years/back-1870-1940/>  
1876 Wyatt Erp begins his work in Dodge City [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyatt\\_Earp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyatt_Earp)  
1901 America turns 125  
1901 President William McKinley assassinated  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/william-mckinley/>  
1901 US Steel formed <https://www.ussteel.com/about-us/history>  
1902 International Harvester Company is formed as a combination of McCormick Harvesting Co, Deering Harvester, Plano Mfg, Milwaukee Harvester, and Champion  
1923 Farmall All-Purpose tractor Patented  
1926 150th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence  
1926 US Highways began to receive numbers. Route 66 begins  
1951 US is 175 years old. UNIVAC1 first commercial computer  
1976 America's Bicentennial  
1979 American Agriculture Movement Tractorcade

## Upcoming Events

Winter Convention March 19-21 Clemmons, NC <https://ihcollectorsnc42.com/ihc-winter-convention-2026/>  
37th Annual RPRU June 25-27 Huron SD  
38th RPRU July 17-19, 2027 Centerville MI  
39th RPRU 2028 Thief River Falls MN  
Fall 2028 Chapter 12 Nebraska hosts National Auction



2025 Chapter 12 Dues are Payable Dec 1st and the National portion of your dues needs to be sent in to headquarters so that you continue to receive the *Harvester Highlights* magazine. Some of you have may have renewed at Minden in October and I thank you for your continued involvement, Howard

#### Minutes from the October meeting

Howard Raymond called the meeting to order at 11:06 AM on October 4, 2025, at the dining room of the Windmill Studio in Minden, Nebraska. Howard then led us in a prayer and thanked Windmill Studios for allowing us to meet there.

Ron Janssen then went over the treasures report. The balance of the last meeting on June 21, 2025, was \$24,773.51. We had a total income of \$470 and a total expense of \$873.77. Leaving us with an ending balance of \$24,369.74 as of October 4, 2025. We have an added expense of \$94.16 to Zimmerman Printing for more tractor magnets.

Ron Janssen then informed us about what our CD was looking like from our Red Power Roundup Show in Grand Island, NE. We put in a certificate of \$100,000 and as of now it is \$109,733.48. Barry Denning motioned to approve the treasures report and was seconded by Donna Wilton, motion carried.

Sam Hoops went over the minutes from the meeting at Nebraska City, NE. Darrel Fisher motioned to approve the secretary report and Fred Petch Seconded, motion carried.

Howard Raymond mentioned how the scrap books are currently in Grand Island, Nebraska. However, he did not get them picked up during Husker Harvest Days. We still need an individual to take over the scrap books and keep them up to date. Get a hold of one of the board members if you are interested in taking it over.

Doug Hrbek then discussed the national side of things. The winter auction being in Maryland on Oct 24-25. We don't have anyone for 2026 auction, but 2027 will be in SD and then our chapter in 2028. Winter convention will be out in Clemmons, NC in 2026. Roundup will be in Huron SD this coming summer. They are set to have a large amount of space and should have a great lineup of displays. While 2027 Roundup will be in Michigan and 2028 Roundup will be up in Thief River Falls. Tracto is in

the trust now, however they are still looking to get a trailer purchased for moving it around with. The speaking system was a widely accepted deal on Tracto during the Roundup this summer. However, they are still fundraising for it, for the upkeep of Tracto.

Harvester Highlights went out last week and should start coming to your doors. In it is a ballot for the upcoming term for the National board. Make sure to get those ballots into the mail before the deadline of November 15, 2025.

Barry Denning has been updating the website as needed to keep information current, for us to see and read about.

Glen Mlnarik talked about the current plan for the auction. He has been in contact with Ron Stock but has not got a solid answer back from him. A lot of the prior auctions have been almost all of the way run by the auction company, while being under our name. Wahoo is still open for us to have it there, however we also discussed that Albion, NE and Central City, NE have very nice grounds that we could have the auction at as well, if we would like to change it up. Glen Minarik plans to talk to Mark Stock and see what he would prefer to do for location and possible dates.

Steven Fisher brought the tractor magnets that had been made. He also had more magnet order forms if you still wanted to order some. He also brought up the idea of doing a new shirt for our chapter for next year's 250th.

Returning the favor of \$1000 to South Dakota Chapter 21 for helping us out with our roundup. Doug Hrbek motioned to approve, and Barry Denning seconded the motion.

Howard Raymond reminded us to reach out to the youth and inform them about our chapter and the options to apply for our scholarships.

Howard Raymond then discussed the annual meeting and where we should have it held. We discussed having it in the Norfolk/Columbus area this time.

Howard Raymond ended it with talking about the Jr. Red Power Magazine and what all Geneva has been doing with it. He was also reminded that in 2027 IH will be 125 years old. Looking forward to 2031 it will be the 200th anniversary of the McCormick Reaper. Steven Fisher then led us with a prayer before the meal. Barry Denning motioned to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Doug Hrbek. Meeting adjourned at 12:09 PM

**Membership renewals are due December 1 each year.**

**\$40.00 per year which comprises \$20.00 a year for the national IH Collectors Club and \$20.00 a year for local NE Chapter #12**

**Make checks payable to: IHC NE Chapter 12**

**Mail to: Ron Janssen 15600 Little Salt Road, Greenwood, NE 68366**

Your Directors

Doug Hrbek--2025

Howard Raymond--2025

Steven Fisher--2025

Tim Schmitt--2026

Scotty Andreasen--2026

Sam Hoops-- 2027

Ron Janssen--2027



**INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER COLLECTORS CLUB  
CHAPTER #42 PRESENTS**



**March 19, 20 & 21, 2026**

**VILLAGE INN HOTEL AND EVENT CENTER  
CLEMMONS, NC**

**THURSDAY & FRIDAY**

Workshops at Hotel  
Showroom with Parts &  
Apparel Vendors

**LIVE AUCTION**

Friday Night  
IH Consignments Welcome

**TOURS**

- Billy Graham Library
- The Andy Griffith Museum and
- Childress Vineyards & RCR Racing Tours
- Tour of Windmill Acres & Friendship Farms



For more information  
Visit our website  
[ihcollectorsnc42.com](http://ihcollectorsnc42.com)

**BANQUET**

Saturday Night  
Max Armstrong Keynote Speaker