



## GROWING ROCKS

By L.E. Buchholz, who farms near Lehr, North Dakota

**D**isking. To begin with, this machine was only used on newly broken-up sod, and for preparing a seedbed for flax seeding. Next it was used for stubble-mulching crop aftermath, and then on fields with corn stub rows.

A popular make was the John Deere eight-foot model. Its foreparts rested on a two-wheel cart. The little machine had a pole, neck-yoke, and a four-horse set of eveners, a seat for the driver, a pair of set-handles, and four grease cups.

We had a 10-foot double IHC disk. It was pulled by eight horses or mules, tandem hitched. The driver stood on a platform and drove with four lines. Now that was a fine machine! It could be used for seedbed work, for destroying summer fallow weeds, and for most any cropland tillage.



**Digging.** With a field cultivator (that is), this machine was used in seedbed preparation-work, instead of a plow. A number of shovels could be used on its shanks.

The digger had a pole, neck-yoke, and a six-horse set of eveners. The driver was seated high, and only had one set-handle. The six horses were hitched abreast, and driven with two lines. It usually pulled quite heavy.

Most farmers preferred to work each field both ways, meaning like east and west, and then north and south.

The shovels, like the lays on a plow, were supposed to be crystal clear and scour easily.

It seemed that about an equal amount of work could be done in an eight-to-10-hour-day with the digger, a grain drill, and disks, while two times as much ground could be covered with a drag.

But plowing was much slower. We then worked two to three teams



My favorite horse-unit was always a set of six mares. They made a grand display of themselves in our team stalls and pastures, and did good team and field hitch-work. If mated with a stallion like Lone Star Chief 251700, they replaced themselves with remarkable offspring.

per day during the entire spring run. By a team, I mean four, five, or six horses—or 12, 15, or 18 harnessed and hard-worked horses each day.

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**Picking rocks.** In late spring, the rocks which became apparent in the seeded fields had to be hauled away. Those rocks were mostly divided into three groups, as follows: the smaller ones would be loaded into a half-wagon box (that was on a low iron-wheeled wagon), hauled to a rockpile site, and then unloaded by hand.

The bigger and heavier rocks were loaded on a skid. That and the wagon mentioned above were pulled by a team of horses. The huge boulders had to be pulled on the skid with a team of horses, and likewise pulled off at the rockpile site, with the aid of a log chain looped around them.

To pull a lodged boulder out of solid ground, a man would spade a trench around it, loop a chain around the boulder, and lay it over the rock's center. Then four horses would be hitched. If the rock could at all be wiggled, or showed any sign of give, it was tried from all sides.

Some of those monsters (boulders) that claimed their ground could be pulled out with herculean pushing and pulling. But others proved impossible, and are still there.

Some exasperated farmers even tried to shatter the stubborn, immovable boulders with rock hammers.

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**How many?** How many neck-yokes, poles, single trees, and eveners did we have? How many halters, collars, sets, and styles of harnesses did we use? What about other necessities like whips, leads, line extensions, horseshoes, blankets, fly nets, nose baskets, curry combs, and a few brushes? I have no idea how many of those items we had in stock. But the total amount was vast.

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I think the 4-H Club's creed for leaders is inspiring. Here's the first paragraph (other paragraphs will follow in future columns):

*I believe in the good earth, in the beauty and strength of its hills and valleys, its fields and forests, its orchards and gardens, its cattle on a thousand hills.*



**Two women by lilacs: my sister and my wife. Both are named Hilda. The picture was not taken five or six years ago (like they told me!). I myself think it was taken-closer to 35 years ago. The Hilda at the left is my wife.**

Sounds like the majestic Dakotas, doesn't it! □