

Glimpses of the past

Farming has changed greatly as Powell area developed

I started farming in the late 1920s with dairy cattle being my first interest. I also sold Golden Guernsey milk.

Later, when consumers demanded less butterfat in their milk, we changed from Guernsey cows to Holsteins which produced less butterfat and considerably more

pounds of milk per cow. We were paid per 100 pounds of milk, and when the butterfat was taken out, we lost money.

We took our dairy cows across the Powell Road to pasture and back each day. This would be impossible now. In the '30s and '40s every farm had a flock of chickens. In fact, in those days our chickens gave us more income than the dairy.

It was in the mid-1940s that I changed my 1894 barn from loose housing to a stanchions barn. In the early '40s, I changed from horse power to tractor power.

Horses have always been a part of my life, so it was a sad day when I sold my last team of horses to Jim Brown. Jim was well known and well loved around Powell for many years. After graduating from Powell High School in 1912, he



Craig Askins

drove the horse-drawn school wagon and later the first motorized school bus in the state in 1917.

Farming was a four-year rotation of crops: corn, wheat and two years of hay. Over the years, grain was hauled to Lewis Center and Kile for sale. We quit cutting wheat and oats with the grain binder in the early 1940s and used a combine. After years of farming, as a hobby I enjoyed using an 1888 steam engine to run a stationary thresher to harvest wheat.

In our home we used the wood and cook stove with the warming closet above. The Round Oak heater was used in the living room. This was the "Cadillac" of heaters.

Our community was made up mostly of farmers, so 4-H clubs were important. All of our four children were 4-H members. My wife, Marguerite, and I were advisers.

The church was important in our lives as well. The old building still stands in the center of Old Powell. Congregations then would number 40 to 50 people. We knew everyone.

Today, the Powell Methodist Church serves 400 to 500 people each Sunday morning. In those days, we always

addressed our minister as "Reverend." I am sorry that today (I'm included), it is just Lou.

Our school building stood in old Powell with 40 to 50 students in high school and 120 in the first eight grades. H.O. Gibson was our superintendent. His widow is my neighbor.

One day as I took off in my '38 Chevy for Bill Stack's blacksmith shop, I decided to count the dairy farms between my farm and Powell. In 1½ miles, there were six farms: Joe Brown, Earl Clemons, Jack Tuller, the Zinn farm, Pearl Drumheller and mine. Today, there are just two dairy farms between Powell

and Delaware.

Arriving at the four corners, there was no light, no stop signs and no traffic. My old friend, Bill, the town marshal, was standing there.

So I stopped to say hello. When I started to turn left to continue on my way, Bill said, "Craig, hold out your hand so people will know which way you are going." Then came that characteristic laugh.

This is the way it was for me 50 years ago. I believe farmers have stayed in business because they work 12 to 16 hours a day, plus holidays, when the work needs to be done and the weather requires it.



Craig Askins came as a boy from Oklahoma in 1918. He still lives in the home of his parents. The barn he uses today has framework from a barn built for the 1894 World's Fair in Chicago.

In the 1970s, he bought a team of registered Belgian mares and raised and sold their offspring at the Eastern States Draft Horse Show for many years.

Glimpses of the past is written for the Olentangy Valley News by Powell residents in honor of the village's 50th year of incorporation.

The village is planning a special celebration, Powell's Golden Days, June 13-15.



News photo courtesy of Craig Askins

Craig Askins rides on an old McCormick Grain Binder, drawn by his Belgian horses.