

Midwest Has Million Dollar Migraine—

(Continued From Page 1)

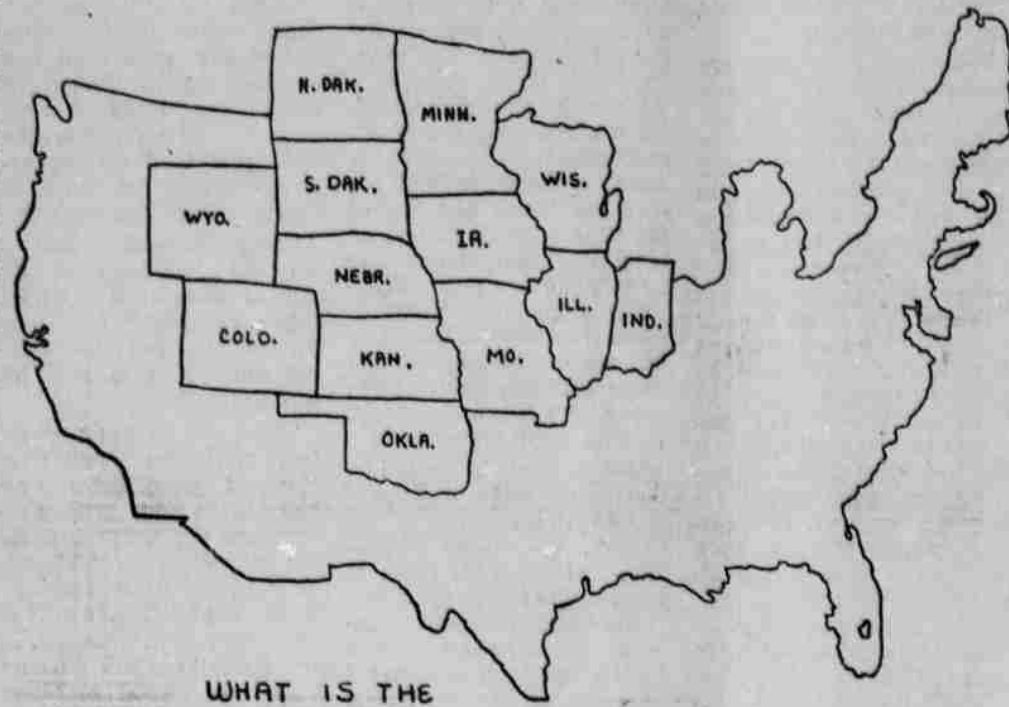
E. Lawrence, the late editor of the Lincoln (Neb.) Star, described the weather catastrophe of the 1890's like this:

"The sun rose in an ominous setting of smouldering heat and a savage wind on July 26, 1894. All day that gale from out of the south lashed at humans and vegetation . . . The thermometer registered 104; the wind velocity . . . 40 miles. Thousands of acres of corn, dark, healthy, promising, became a sacrifice to the insatiable appetite of the embattled elements. They still say, those who were here in July of 1894, that there was not a field of corn in the state which escaped without scars from the hot winds and merciless sun of a twenty-four hour period. It was entered upon the records as a total failure, a figurative term not wholly accurate, but near enough to describe Nebraska's experience that eventful year."

By the early 1900's the weather seemed to take pity on Dodge County. More and more people set claim on 160-acre parcels of land in the rich valley. By 1918, 231,000 acres were under cultivation. After a slight dip resulting from a post-World War I recession in the early 1920's, the figure had jumped to 323,722 acres in 1925. The gala age of the flappers and raccoon coats reached even conservative Dodge County. Farm prices rose to an all-time high . . . corn was \$1.67 a bushel.

Inscription to Elements
To the south, in Lincoln, the tower of a new state capitol was rising above the plains. An inscription on the elements, (the earth, air, capitol paid tribute to the water and fire) which had been so good to Nebraska and the county's residents. It read:

Earth . . . fostereth all that grows. Walking we breathe the pure air joyously for heaven is our friend . . . Gift of stream and cloud. Water is our refresher . . . in fire is light and work . . .
But then as the editor of the Lincoln State Journal, Raymond A. McConnell, Jr., later wrote:
The inscription was hardly dry when Nebraskans learned again that Nature is an uncompromising mother. These were the years of searing drought, when Earth fostered withered stems, animals wasted, and Plains people, grimly slamming windows against dust-laden air, retired night after torrid night with a prayer for Water or relief from the sky's scorching Fire.



WHAT IS THE MIDWEST?

The depression and drought of the 1890's had arrived. Along with the Dust Bowl came another kind of bowl — an alphabet soup bowl full of triplets and quadruplets of letters. WPA, PWA, AAA, CCC, FSIC, and SCS became part of the language. The steps of the Dodge County courthouse became the auction block for foreclosure sale after foreclosure sale. Farmers killed little pigs by the thousands . . . prices on livestock and grain hit rock bottom. The government came to the farmer's aid under the Roosevelt "New Deal." Price support became a by-word.

Rain At Last
By the late 1930's rain began to fall again, and one of the symptoms that would lead to surplus could be heard rumbling over hill after hill. Technology was on the march. Tractor wheels rolled over the fertile black soil of Dodge County. By 1940 there were 1,447 tractors, compared to 570 in 1925.

Fertilizer, another technological advance (and symptom) also arrived and Bob Beckwith, pulling a broken corn lister loaded with commercial fertilizer, started those momentous rounds of his corn field.
Production increased, the symptoms grew, and the surplus headache began to throb, but then along came World War II. It took everything the farmers could produce to help beat the tyranny of Hitler and Tojo. It was also a period of great changes on the farm. The tractor was even more of a rage and there appeared a new machine — the corn picker.

The farmers in Dodge County, as well as the rest of the nation, prospered, but when the war was over, demand slumped while agricultural production continued to increase. The symptoms of the headache began to reappear. The government started to store up surpluses to combat price declines.

Now little tin towns began to appear at highway intersections, in the backyards of the county's existing towns, and in the middle of open fields. The sole residents of these towns of tin were corn and wheat. Every day from 1948 to 1951, yards and yards of concrete were poured and sheet upon sheet of tin were bound together.

In the years following the construction of the tin towns, the government, under the leadership of Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, encouraged the farmer and private investors to enter the "big business" of grain storage.

Grain supermarkets began to pop up everywhere, almost overnight, as Dodge County citizens found that they could build the rectangular granaries almost as easily as they could drive to their nearest ASC office. Under the plan, the sprawling rectangular buildings could be built with federal loans and paid off in five years with storage fees paid by the federal government.

Regardless of the incentive programs, the Secretary of Agriculture found that his basic philosophy of automatic adjustment of supply and demand didn't move surplus grain as rapidly as he had expected.

The headache now became

a migraine. Production became bigger and bigger regardless of the Soil Bank land retirement program. In Dodge County there were 233 percent more bushels of corn produced in 1959 than there were in 1950 even though there were 6,587 fewer acres in production.

The pains sharpened with the help of the now-galloping technocracy. There were 387 more combines in 1959 than there were in 1950, 121 more corn pickers, 345 more hay balers, and 895 more tractors.

A Fremont implement dealer, Erv Froid, said that he has seen an increase of 25 horsepower in tractors in the last ten years.

"We sell combines with complex heads now that make the machine work as both a picker and combine," he said.

And Les Larsen, the engineer-in-charge of the world-famous University of Nebraska Tractor Testing Laboratory, says that over 50 percent of the tractors tested in the lab in 1961 will be diesel. Larsen explained this means tractors are getting bigger and more powerful.

High Cost of Farming
What does it cost to be up-to-date on a modern farm? Froid says that the average investment in machinery today is about \$20,000.

He adds that today's farmer can plow about three and one-half acres an hour where ten years ago one and one-half to two acres was the most that could be done in an hour.

"The average number of tractors per farm in Dodge County is about two and one-

half to three," he says.

Such a three-tractor farmer is E. T. Johnson whose farm is one and one-half miles east of Fremont. Johnson farms 440 acres with the help of three tractors, three plows, a harrow, two disks, a four-row mounted corn lister, two four-row mounted cultivators, a 14-foot grain drill, a seven-foot combine, a land leveler, two two-ton trucks, and a two-row mounted corn picker.

The Dodge County farm began irrigation about eight years ago with one well and open-ditch irrigation. He then went to gated pipe and added two more irrigation wells.

"I then added sprinkler irrigation to my non-leveled land so now I can irrigate the whole 440 acres," he noted.

Size a Symptom

The size of Johnson's farm is another symptom. His 440 acres and three tractors is a far cry from the 160 acres and a mule or a horse of the county's pioneers.

Johnson had 220 acres of corn last season, of which he sold 75 percent as seed. "I remember when I raised 45 bushels of seed per acre in 1945. This year I had a 100-bushel-an-acre yield," he added.

Johnson also had 75 acres of wheat and 150 acres of alfalfa last year.

"You know, you don't see much change in agriculture from year to year, but actually there is," he said. "I bought a ditching machine for making channels for open-ditch irrigation several years ago. Now I can't even sell it."

Johnson noted that he also bought a whirlwind fertilizer spreader. Within just a few years it, too, was completely outdated.

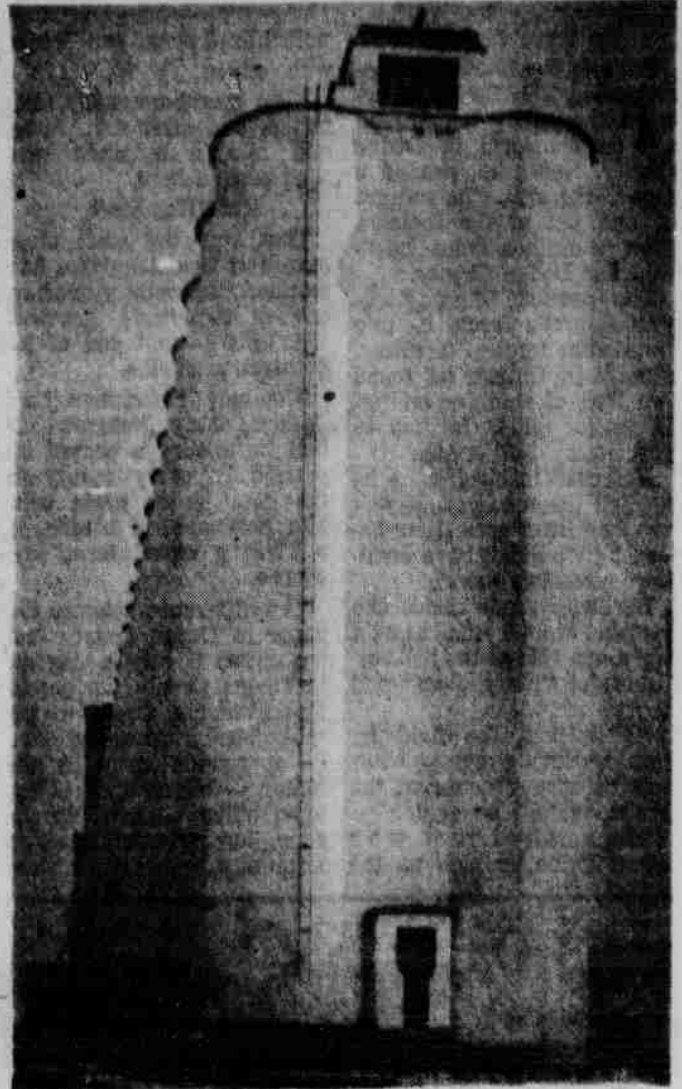
Bob Beckwith, the county's fertilizer pioneer, now is part of the 600-acre partnership of Spaulding Brothers and Beckwith. This farm is operated with six tractors and thousands of dollars worth of other machinery.

"We raise a few less than the 28,000 registered Spotted Poland China pigs now than we did in 1944," he said, and then added that they recently became partners on a large Angus herd.

"We also aim to milk 30 dairy cows a day," Beckwith said.

Headache a Migraine
So, while agriculture production has outgrown demand as swiftly as little boys' feet outgrow their shoes, agriculture surpluses have kept piling up, and the headache has become a migraine.

And while the storage bins



BATTLE SYMBOL— This tower on the plains of the Midwest symbolizes the constant efforts of grain men to keep their storage facilities adequate to handle the "plague of plenty."

bulged, came the two additional symptoms. They cropped up not on the farm, but in the grocery store and the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Population hadn't kept pace with the ability of agriculture to produce. The great advances in technology enabled the farmer to produce many times faster than the population had increased.

For example, in Dodge County the population rose from 26,265 in 1950 to 32,200 in 1959 — an increase of some 6,035 people. Compare this to the population of the United States which rocketed from 151 million in 1950 to 179 million in 1960. That 18.5 percent increase meant 28 million new mouths to feed. But in the same decade, Dodge County was able to produce 3,900,531 bushels or 233 percent more corn per year.

The second symptom turned up at the dining table. Americans were no longer satisfied with bread, beans, and potatoes. They wanted meats, fruits, and vegetables. Two Fremont grocers can tell that story to the tune of the cash register.

(Continued on Page 3)

Journalism Dept. Adds Staff Member

A veteran magazine editor, author and educator will join the University of Nebraska School of Journalism faculty on Sept. 1, Dr. William E.

Hall, J-School director, has announced.
He is Alan Marshall, who has served as head of the department of journalism at Butler University, Indianapolis, since 1958. His assignment on the School of Journalism faculty will be to develop programs in magazine and world journalism.

Professor Marshall joined the staff of Newsweek magazine in 1936 as a book reviewer, but was soon assigned to the national affairs department as a political writer.

After preparing an analysis of Newsweek's "back-

book" departments in the late 1930's, he was made editor of 10 of them, including art, books, education, movies, music, radio-TV, religion, science, sports and theater.

War Service
He joined the Office of War Information shortly after the U.S. entered World War II, having charge of the news and feature desks for Iceland, Sweden and Switzerland for two Hawaiian newspapers and a weekly column for papers in India.

He was transferred to London in 1943 where he edited cable copy and wrote news and feature material for British newspapers and magazines. This included an eyewitness account of the RAF's first 1,000 plane raid on Berlin. During this period he also edited a weekly magazine published in Dublin under State Department auspices.

Organized Magazines
At the end of the war he helped to organize two news and feature magazines for publication in France and

Germany, Vior and Heute, respectively.

He served as an editor and roving correspondent for Heute for more than a year, covering such stories as the opening weeks of the Nurnberg trials, re-organization of Heidelberg University, life in postwar Berlin and rebirth of the famed Salzburg music and drama festival.

His published works include fiction in the New Yorker and Esquire magazines and four mystery novels, one of which appeared as a motion picture. He is now completing a book on writing techniques.

Other experience includes technical writing and assignments for Encyclopedia Americana and service as an account executive with a public relations agency in Boston and New York.

He has taught at Lafayette College, Columbia University, City College of New York, Boston University, St. John's College and the State University of Iowa. He holds degrees from Columbia University and the State University of Iowa.

Fat Plus Stress: Cholesterol

Recent research at the University of Nebraska indicates that increased accumulation of cholesterol in the animal body may be not only the result of a diet high in fat, but also of stress externally applied.

Delivering a paper before the National Tissue Culture Association, Dr. Kenneth D. Rose, research chief of the University's Health Services, said that cells grown in blood serum taken from stressed chickens produce fat particles or cholesterol within the cells.

But, he explained, the cholesterol "is passed by some means through the cell walls" where it then accumulates.

Apparently, he added, the cholesterol is a by-product of the cell's altered lipid metabolism. "The fat droplet formation is associated with active cell growth and division and is not a function of degeneration."

The Nebraska researchers found that the amount of the available fat in the environment played no part in the development of the cholesterol droplets.

Dr. Houn Studies Chinese Press

A China-born and educated associate professor of political science at the University, Dr. Franklin W. Houn, is the author of a recent book on China which is likely to receive international comment.

Dr. Houn's book, "To Change a Nation," is a documented, popularly written treatise on what is happening to the Communist press and other media of propaganda on the Chinese mainland.

It traces the political impact of newspapering and literary art from the 1940's to the present and the consequent reaction of the educated mind.

According to Dr. Houn, "Marxist doctrine commits the party to the position that the revolutionary classes are the legitimate heirs of the best in their country's literary and artistic past. Practical politics and traditional cultural orientations thus come into conflict, and lead to extended verbal battles and the eventual use of political and economic sanctions."

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