

40 YEARS 1945 TO 1985
with the
HARDIN COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

by Carroll J. Hobson
commissioner



Hardin County Soil Conservation District

TO PROTECT AND TO CONSERVE
40 YEARS 1945 - 1985

P.O. Box 108, Eldora, Iowa 50627
Telephone: [515] 858-5692

NEWS RELEASE - IMMEDIATE

by Carroll J. Hobson

Hardin County is rich. Rich in natural resources and rich in production. It is rich in history. This county has been blessed with great soil, plenty of quality limestone for building and agriculture purposes. The glaciers left us with plenty of good gravel and sand. Rainfall is adequate on an average basis and we have fine well water in the aquifers underneath us at a reasonable depth. In short it's a wonderful place to live if you are associated with the business of farming.

Hardin county's residents prior to 1849 were Indians. Mr. Greenberry Haggin erected a log cabin and made a home for a family in 1849 in what is now Hardin County. The Haggin family were the first white stttlers. Several families came the next year from North Carolina and Hardin County was on its way.

Early historians described our county as a beautiful land unvexed, by man and his plow. Unfortunately man knew more about plowing soil that he did about saving it in the beginning.

Another factor that caused extensive erosion was the tilling of hills. Only the high ground that drained itself naturally could be farmed. No drainage tile was available for those early settlers in Iowa. The rich black flats and river bottoms were left untouched for many years until they could be properly drained.

By 1930 erosion had become a very serious problem in the state of Iowa. D.N. Darling is famous for his artistic and poigant cartoons depicting 160 acres

farms going down Iowa's rivers and the scary gullies he drew. Dean H.H. Kildee, Iowa State University, made the statement in 1939 that "If erosion of the soil is not retarded, future generations of Americans may find it increasingly difficult to maintain the present standards of living."

Hardin county had its share of gullies and eroded soils too. Early in 1946 B.R. Wood, New Providence, C.J. Kelsey, Iowa Falls, and W.C. Vigars, Eldora decided to do something positive. These foresighted men along with E.I. Rosenberger and James C. Halasey planned and organized the Hardin County Soil Conservation District. A memorandum of understanding with the federal Soil Conservation Service was signed by the Commissioners and a Charter was issued April 12, 1945. Chester Vigars was elected the first chairman of the new district. E.I. Rosenberger was the extension director at that time. James C. Halasey represented the Soil Conservation Service.

Farmers are never anxious to change farming methods, some made fun of the new soil saving ideas. It took a lot of organizing and showing to prove the value of new techniques. Demonstration plots were distributed around the county so more people could see their worth. Contour farming, strip cropping, and terracing soon became popular methods to save soil and increase yields. Most farmers had little or no training in the discipline of soil management. They operated like their fathers and grandfathers who took pride in plowing clean and black so that no vegetation was left standing. Some people plowed up and down the hills to make matters worse. New methods are hard to teach and slow to catch on. W.C. Vigars put some of the county's first broad based terraces on his rolling farm and used it as a demonstration model so people could see for themselves. Many saw, liked and made conservation a first priority on their own farms. Others went right back to their old ways.

In one years time the new district had enlisted broad support in the county. The following people pledged to do what they could to support and further the aims of soil and water conservation at an organizational meeting: Gustav Huenn,

Dewey Eller, Stanley Dreier, Wm. Schuneman, Chas. Walters, Homer Calkins, R.A. Scott, Lloyd Roland, Roy Engel, H.D.W. Clemons, Kenneth Meier, W.C. Cook, John Graham, Lee Lundy, Wendell Clampitt, Harold Clark, Lloyd Beecher, and Carl Hamilton.

The Hardin Soil District sponsored a contour plowing contest in the fall of 1949. People came from all over the county to work and make that contest a success. The Wildlife Club under the leadership of Kay Setchell gave their support to district activities as they do to this day. Hardin county supervisors, Wilson Hadley, Frank Beran, and Martin Ryken, offered their help. The field of interested citizens was enlarging each year.

In November of 1953 plans were made to organize the Pine Lake Watershed. The minutes of the district report that John L. Butler, local pilot, flew the staff and interested parties over the area for an overall perspective of the entire watershed area. County newspapers certainly did their share in publicizing and promoting the good work.

The period 1945 to 1965 was a fruitful period for soil conservation. Farmers learned what terraces, strip cropping, and contouring could do for their farms. The public interest and support base broadened greatly during this time. New technical help was added to the staff to help carry the work load. Soil commissioners serving the interim 1945-1965 were: B.R. Wood, C.J. Kelsey, W.C. Vigars, Ralph Streyfeller, Bernnard Reece, Lloyd Roland, Kenneth Meier, Dean Kelsey, Harold Marsh, Leland Reece, Homer Calkins, Dale Petty, and Paul Primus. Technical help at that time was provided by Dale A. Schadle, Calvin Moore, Charles A. McCarty, District Conservationists. Dean E. Miller and Wayne Fisher were federal technicians. On July 16, 1958 the Soil District was allowed to hire its first full time clerk, Mrs. Eileen Miller. She was a State of Iowa employee. The minutes were longer and neater thereafter.

The Eldora post office bought 20,000 four cent stamps that commemorated soil conservation in 1959. It's hard to believe now that a four cent stamp entitled you to mail a letter first class. In a period of twenty years thousands of work plans, letters, soil tests, soil rotations, hundreds of new cooperators and farms had to be handled. It was routine work and has been remarkably well done. Many new ideas had to be initiated, many old habits broken. It was a noble achievement by a conscientious staff, dedicated commissioners, and helpful citizenry all working together. Hardin county has a right to be proud of those who started with nothing and built a strong district in twenty years.

People from the entire county have served conservation ably and well without financial remuneration. Soil commissioners have never been paid. I know of none who wish to be. Saving top soil is a pleasure and a patriotic duty not for us in our time but for the countless millions who will follow. Many in today's world go to bed hungry, often because of ignorance and wasteful soil practices.

Let's hope our citizens understand and continue to be devoted to saving and maintaining our national heritage; the greatest country and the most fertile land in the world.



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NEWS RELEASE - immediate - Second in a series by Carroll J. Hobson

I think most people agree that nature richly endowed Hardin County with natural resources of all kinds in the beginning. Granted all that, what do the citizens want done to correct and maintain those resources. Conservationists come in all shapes and sizes. They also have different personalities and a great variance of views with regard to what should be done. I've taken the position in all conservation affairs that first of all, conservation has to be affordable to the taxpayers. It must be practical, useful, steady, and attractive to a majority of the citizenry. Conservation of every kind, soil, water, rivers, lakes, recreation, and all of the rest is open ended; it cannot be done in one energetic drive by a few exceptional people. It must go forward every year and every day at a steady, careful pace by a good majority of citizens. It seems to be the nature of some people to waste, despoil, and use up, the usual motive being corporate or personal profit. They must be restrained. For others it is natural to conserve, protect, and save for a rainy day; these must be encouraged.

Nothing I know glows like the eyes of a child who has planted a first seed and awakened to a new day to find a plant rising from the soil. I was such a child; born on a farm (still there) with a life to death love affair with the land and most everything that grows in it.

Water on all farms, drainage, the rivers and creeks that carry it away and all the plants and animals with their habitat are all an important part of our lives here in rural America no matter who you are or how you are employed.

Those too lax in conservation matters can allow serious losses. Those too fervent will likely turn off the electorate so that critical public support is lost just when it is needed.

District Conservationist, Calvin Moore resigned from the Soil Conservation Service effective December 1964. Mr. Moore had done an excellent job bringing along a young soil district. I found him to be steady and forthright in every way. He was the first person to interest me in serious soil conservation.

Early in 1965, the Soil Conservation Service transferred a new District Conservationist to Hardin county. Charles A. McCarty was a young, ambitious, and talented man, with a host of new ideas. He had a good staff to work with. He was a good judge of people and a master organizer. He put everybody he could to work doing conservation.

McCarty had trained in western Iowa where the land was steep and severely eroded. He had trained under the tutelage of Walter Weiss (area conservationist there) who was noted for his forceful nature, dedication, and drive. Western Iowa had employed methods and ideas not yet used in this county. Hardin county soil conservation had entered a new phase.

One of the men McCarty relied on was Dean E. Miller (retired now) from Ackley, Iowa. Miller was extremely conscientious, a hard worker and a man who felt high pride in quality work.

McCarty also had an experienced clerk. Eileen Miller met the public well and was enthused by new approaches to old problems. Joe Shore had joined the staff previously as a state technical aide. Shore was interested in all kinds of conservation. Shore brought youthful fervor and ambition as well as drainage experience.

The Hardin Soil Conservation District asked for a memorandum of understanding with the State Conservation Commission, (fish and game). The Conservation Commission representative was Everette Pierce, an enthusiastic, and forthright man who wanted all the conservation he could get around state lakes. McCarty's aim was to organize all the Pine Lake Watershed area and prevent the siltation of Hardin county's only lakes. Those people knowledgeable about soil and water conservation realized that two extremely valuable ends could be accomplished by organizing and completing the Pine Lake Watershed. The lakes and the farmland around them could be saved at the same time. An eight member Pine Lake Watershed board was elected on April 5, 1965. The board members were: George Blythe, George Primus, and John Janssen from Grundy county. (Half of the erosion comes from Grundy county.) Al Janssen, Joe Beach, Lee Lundy, and Milton Jordening were elected from Hardin county. The Pine Lake Watershed was to be one of Hardin county's most important conservation projects, if not the most important.

In March 1967 the State Field Days and Plowing Match committee asked the Hardin County Soil Commissioners to hold the 1968 Field Days here. April 24, 1967 the soil commissioners approved that request; little did we know how much would have to be done.

Meanwhile the Pine Lake Watershed was proceeding apace. This watershed was of immense interest to people from other counties and organizations for aforesaid reasons, in August 1967 the Soil Conservation Society of America sent a delegation to look it over.

Organizing for the oncoming field days and plowing match was a huge task. About that time we adopted a little pep slogan "Don't be late in '68." Paul Primus, Steamboat Rock was named chairman. John Jaspers, vice-chairman, Carroll Rubow, treasurer, George Tesch, Harold Dettbarn, Carl King, Robert Gunderson, and Carrol White comprised the main committee. Others in charge were: Orville Lamb fire, Lowell McCormick traffic, Paul Barnard commercial exhibits. Doyle Felton publicity, Joe and Lowell Granzow wagon train, A . P. Travis on hospitality, Aage Jensen finance, Carroll Hobson education exhibits, Bruce Froning parking, Everette Rogers clean up, Don LaVelle, Herman Harris, and Jack Piper food. Harold Marsh outdoor classrooms, Orville Asher power, Vic Reist water, Bill Hollingsworth and George Martinson telephone and public address systems, Herbert Runke wildlife projects, Lee Lundy conservation projects, George Janssen plowmans banquet, Troy Jones airport, Curtis Daggs flag raising, Mrs. Gordon Reisinger womens education.

Preparations were going forward for the field days during the last months of 1967 and early 1968. The Pine Lake Watershed drew more and more interest and outside comment. The Soil Conservation Society tour had introduced our project to people from Canada, Australia, and from every state in the Union. We were all very proud.

The agriculture Research Division of the United States Department of Agriculture was interested in contracting for a research station to test run off from the new Pine Lake Watershed. They signed an agreement with Ray McDowell, local landowner to carry on 5 years of intensive research to record silt loss, water, and chemical run off near the center of the Pine Lake Watershed. Those records stand today as a valuable standard in man's quest for better methods to control soil, water, and fertilizer losses. The Economic Research Service, also a branch of the USDA did a cost study evaluation during this same period. Those records are available at Iowa State University.

Paul Primus reported at the June 1968 regular meeting that 1496 reservations had been received from schools around the state to tour the outdoor classrooms that would be a part of the field days, the field day preparation was intensifying. Many important people were planning to attend among them Govenor Hughes. Iowa State University sent a dozen or so of their distinguished professors in to serve the research plots. Machinery of all kinds was displayed. Even helicopter rides were available.

The district commissioners asked for help from clubs, newspapers, Iowa State University, the Soil Conservation Service, and hundreds of private individuals. People willingly responded to our need. We were very grateful, without cooperation from every direction the job could not have been done. On September 5 and 6 the Iowa State Field Days and Plowing Match was held in the central pine lake area. Plowing and terracing demonstrations took place on the Richard Crosser farm. A Plowman's Banquet and Queen Contest was held in conjunction with the activities.

All the usual work the district had to do went forward in spite of the field days. 1968 was a hectic but highly productive year for Hardin county. During this important period in our district's history we had been guided by this policy statement: "The Protection and Development of our resources is the primary function of the Hardin County Soil District. To achieve this goal, planning for their proper use is essential and must include all phases of community development, taking into consideration both human and natural resources." It was a fine creed. We had far exceeded our goals. The exceptional outpouring of time, talent, and service from all over the county shocked and surprised us. Those goals were attained by showing specific needs and asking our fellow citizens for help to attain them. 1968 turned out to be a great year for conservation.



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NEWS RELEASE - immediate Third in a series by Carroll J. Hobson

Hardin County, rich with natural resources was no less fortunate in the category of human resources. There is neither time nor space to review all the able, willing, and capable people who served our county over time. However I intend to tell you about those close to the soil conservation district.

McCarty had persuaded me to become an assistant soil conservation district commissioner in 1965. I've been privileged to meet a great many fine conservationists in the twenty years since.

Keith Kinion, a conservation technician from the Mason City office was a capable photographer. McCarty conceived the idea that aerial photographs of various conservation scenes and projects would be an asset to the district. I enjoyed flying airplanes. McCarty could see a natural opportunity wasting. He sent Kinion and his speed graphic camera out to get photographs with me doing the flying. Kinion later made some great pictures after he learned to trust the pilot. Those pictures have been scattered far and wide. Two of them were given to the Hardin County Supervisors. They hang on the west wall of the Hardin County Courthouse.

Some of those photos are displayed at the Conservation Club in Steamboat Rock, others are in the ASCS office at Iowa Falls. The district office display several on their walls, yet others are in Iowa State offices in Des Moines. The idea was a good one with lasting benefits. Pictures show clearly so much that is hard to explain about soil conservation.

J.C. Whitehead served our county so long and well that people sometimes overlooked the good work his brother Kermit could and did do. Among the many who served the district in a superior way you find Kermit and Mary Whitehead. To my knowledge they never refused a job that needed to be done for the soil conservation district. Mary

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is artistic. She colored many large photos depicting a variety of conservation scenes. She gave the county a legacy that the rest of us could not. Over the years the New Providence area produced a number of fine public servants, the Whiteheads were among them.

Chairman Paul Primus did his job so well the Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners made him Outstanding Soil Conservation District Commissioner in the entire state. Dean Kelsey was made an honorary member of the Iowa Association for life. Caleb Knutson, Radcliffe, who is still serving, helped give Hardin county its start with minimum tillage. The wives of all the commissioners were often asked to do what they could to promote conservation. One of the most obvious things about conservation is the terrific need. There was an abundant opportunity for everyone to contribute in some way.

In reviewing the record, I note that during October 1968 an awards banquet was held at Blanche and Ethels Tea Room. The tickets were \$2.50 per head. Look what inflation did. I can almost taste Blanche's good food and for the unbelievable price of \$2.50.

In soil conservation districts as in all organizations there are hundreds of mundane jobs to attend to from month to month. One of those jobs is how to finance new programs. Sometimes federal or state cost share can be had. The amount often depends on the skill of staff and commissioners and their programs of work. Some district staff people are paid by the federal government and some by state government. Cooperation is essential through the chain of command from the USDA and the state government to the soil conservation district. Cooperation is not always forthcoming which makes the job substantially harder.

Commissioner Paul Primus said farewell to the district on January 27, 1969. He had served during an extremely busy and successful period. We certainly wished him well. I was made chairman of the district to fill the vacancy.

The Hardin Soil Conservation District over the years has won many distinctive prizes for outstanding work. The most distinctive of all were the Goodyear prizes. Two are given in the State of Iowa each year. Hardin county won in 1962, in 1969, and again in 1974. One farmer (who initiated the project) and one soil commissioner were sent to Arizona in the winter for a free week of luxury vacation at the Goodyear Village. Dean Kelsey, commissioner and Harold Marsh, farmer went in 1962. Paul Primus and Kermit Whitehead represented the district in 1969. Milton Jordening, Eldora farmer and Caleb Knutson, commissioner in 1974.

Our soil district organized several watersheds. Pine Lake was the most publicized. However a lot of organizing work was put into the Honey Comb (south of Iowa Falls) and the Union Watershed (a plan to prevent the flooding of the town of Union) and the Morlee in Hardin and Franklin counties. In the end the citizens of Union rejected the idea of installing the 566 (U.S. Government specification) project in as much as part of the golf course would have to be changed. They elected to continue as they were. 1969 was a year of flooding. Reports came in from Franklin and Hardin counties showing heavy terrace, crop, and hiway damage. Hardin county was allowed \$50,000.00 F-4 federal disaster funds to repair the damage to conservation structures.

In September 1969 ten farmers from Argentina arrived to tour the Pine Lake Watershed. Polly Granzow translated speeches by C.O. Rubow, Lew Throssel, Gary Karr, and Carl King into spanish so they could be read by the Argentines while the speeches were made in English. In October the State of Oklahoma sent a large delegation of officials to tour the conservation projects in our county.

Charles McCarty finished his duties for Hardin county in November 1969. He was promoted to coordinator of a four county Resource Conservation and Development Project in Centerville, Iowa.

1970 was an eventful year. Richard Bassett and his wife Joan arrived to fill the district conservationist vacancy in January 1970. I was named outstanding soil commissioner in Region III and appointed to the State Soil Conservation Committee to

represent the Iowa Cedar Conservancy District, an eight member board appointed by Govenor Robert Ray.

Over the years the district has sponsored several contests among them the conservation art contest. The art contest was the most popular. An extraordinary large number of county artists entered the competition. Selected conservation art work was displayed in the local bank lobbies for a two week period each year. Mrs. Shirley Shirley and Mrs. Lowell Ushkrat headed up the project at different times. The artists in our county certainly proved their interest and ability. A great quantity of beautiful work was displayed.

The Iowa laws were changed in 1971 requiring five soil district commissioners to be elected by April 1971, from each district instead of three. Richard Rubow and Emerson Calkins joined the district as new commissioners. Dick Rubow was this county's first soil commissioner to be elected from an urban area. Previously soil conservation district commissioners had to be farmers.

These were only some of the people who enjoyed working with conservation, during this period. There were countless others who contributed in dozens of useful ways. Everytime a new person understood the need for conservation and everytime a new project was finished, Hardin county became a little better protected.

Soil losses in Iowa are the most severe in the United States because of our intense row cropping. We are losing approximately two bushels of soil for every bushel of corn raised. Soil scientists tell us that if these losses are not stopped hundreds of acres will be destroyed beyound repair by the year 2000. The friends of conservation in our county are doing all they can to avoid such losses. Won't you join us?



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NEWS RELEASE - Immediate - Fourth in a series by Carroll Hobson

In the beginning Hardin County must have been an especially beautiful place to be. Our rivers and creeks would have been full of fish, sparkling clear and pristine pure. Hard wood timber must have stretched for miles. Two of my late neighbors who grew up north of Eldora (childhood around 1890) told me 35 to 40 years ago about large timbered areas. Carrie Fouts told about a huge shellbark hickory grove north and west of Eldora in sections 5 and 6 of Eldora township. She said the timber was very dense west of the river. She also described the diagonal dirt road that ran north of Eldora toward Steamboat Rock that was only wide enough for two buggies and their horses to meet and pass. Mr. Harry Ward told how his father sold 5 acres of white birch trees to the local bakery for fuel (about 1885-1890).

We Hardin Countians are still blessed with more and better natural resources than most. However the time has come when strict discipline will have to be exercised if we expect to keep what is left of them for our descendants.

Nitrogen fertilizers are infiltrating the underground acquifers in many Iowa counties contaminating the drinking water. In the short time since the first settler, (136 years) we have allowed most all our hard wood timber to be wiped out. I'm told Hardin county now has only 3% or less of its area in trees of any kind, (good or bad). Our topsoil has eroded from an average of 18 inches thick to half of that or less. A new standard soil survey has been completed, published, and delivered in this county. This is the first survey since 1923. We now know exactly what we are dealing with. Our records show the survey was authorized in 1972. The soil survey has been along time in process. We are all very grateful to have it to work with.

In spite of serious erosion our present agricultural production is terrific. Hardin county had 1180 farms (1983 census). The average size farm was 295 acres. In one year, 1984, we produced 21,114,000 bushels of corn and 4,447,000 bushels of soybeans in this county. (Iowa Crop Reporting Service). Assuming the modest price of \$2.50 per bushel of corn and \$5.50 per bushel of soybeans this county produced \$77,408,500.00 of new wealth from the land besides all the hay, silage, fruit, vegetables, the feed for 290,000 head of hogs and many, many cattle both beef and dairy in one year.

Somehow we forget all this production is not automatic. If we've lost half of our top soil in 136 years how can we hope to produce in quantity by the year 3000? The sad truth is unless we change our ways we cannot. We are a very young county and even younger state.

Our past record is very bad. When people are overfed (most of us) and all foodstuffs are in surplusage it's very hard to convince the voting public of the need to save. Natural resources of all kinds are easily used and often wasted because they are in plenty at one point in time.

Even though it's depleted in places we still have enough top soil. A few generations down the road our descendants will be left out. Some people spend a lifetime struggling to leave their children better off than they were. Some of the same people waste the land, the timber, and contaminate the rivers and lakes; somehow it doesn't make sense. How can we expect the people from cities to understand if we who farm the land don't comprehend and ask for change. We desperately need a strong national conservation policy. We must insist on excellence in our state conservation programs.

In their book "Topsoil and Civilization" Vernon Carter and Tom Dale describe how man mastered his environment only to become extinct because he wasted the natural resources that sustains all life forms. These men tell how ten major civilizations failed because they refused to recognize the need to conserve those resources in time. Are we more foresighted? I certainly hope so.

Soil districts to be effective need to concern themselves with many things that are in the public interest. In the 1970's and early 1980's our district gave assistance

to a number of farmers and feeders who built animal waste lagoons and confined manure pits. Richard Bassett and his staff did a lot of constructive work on lagoons besides all the usual terraces, ponds, and drainage. Bassett was instrumental in getting the standard soil survey approved as well.

Homer Calkins and his brother Emerson, Iowa Falls, have devoted themselves for many years to the development of outdoor classrooms and the training of school children in the value of resources that sustain and sweeten our lives. They, along with many others worked to create and promote the Greenbelt area which is truly unique.

The Iowa Legislature passed the Iowa Conservancy District Law in 1969. In 1970 this law created six watershed conservancy districts all conforming to the major river basins in Iowa. For the first time permission was given by law to attack the erosion problems watershed by watershed. The Conservancy District Law demanded that every county set a minimum annual limit for soil loss. At a public hearing held on September 25, 1972 our county adopted a 5 ton per acre per year soil loss limit. Thereafter it was illegal to allow more than 5 tons of silt per acre per year to drift onto your neighbor. The Conservancy District Law is an excellent, farsighted attempt to solve erosion, drainage, and pollution in Iowa. A great law if it's used to the fullest extent.

I was highly encouraged by these new opportunities. Little did I realize all the forces that would resist the changes called for in the new law. Every county now has a soil loss limit. The new law has been tried and settled in the courts successfully. These are very positive and progressive steps, however, little or no state watershed work has been done. Federal Soil Conservation Service officials regard watershed work as their prerogative and have vigorously resisted state watershed planning even though they had no funds to do the work themselves.

Having observed the scene for 20 years I have no hope that enough federal time or money will be appropriated to save Iowa's eroding soil. Our representation in Washington D.C. is too small. Our population is not large enough. Our soil losses are so great that we can't afford to wait. Many of our state officials do not understand the bureaucratic

and political problems that impede soil conservation progress. We do not even teach soil and water conservation in our public schools. Millions of our people don't know that half of the soil is already gone. When I asked the representative of the Department of Public Instruction why we don't teach conservation in Iowa schools; he told me the curriculum is full already and there is no textbook available. I don't regard these answers as reasonable or responsible. The State of Iowa is currently spending over \$8,000,000 on soil and water conservation. A lot of good work is being done. We continually need to revise and reassess and review our attitudes and policies. We need to improve our efficiency. Ideas are far cheaper than taxes.

Martin Broer, Iowa Falls was elected soil commissioner in 1973. It was a good day for the district. Martin is dependable, forthright and capable. He is still serving the county as a commissioner.

Mulch tillage, minimum tillage and ridge tillage were all new methods to save soil, water, and fertilizer. These new tillage methods had been used on a few farms for several years, however minimum tillage came of age in Hardin county in the 1970's. The new tillage methods could be used by any farmer if he provided the proper management. All of the new tillage methods saved soil and fuel as well. Farmers were finally trading their plows for discs and chisels.

On June 9, 1974 Richard Bassett accepted a position with the Forestry Service in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

July 22, 1974 Thaine Hogue was transferred to us as our new District Conservationist. Thaine was experienced, capable and was especially knowledgeable about drainage. In his first report to the commissioners Mr. Hogue said "I plan to maintain and expand the District programs. I also plan to take part in community activities and participate in county wide programs that will expand the influence of the Soil Conservation Service and the Soil Conservation District. These goals we could all agree with. Several good men had come and gone. Much work had been done. Lots more work was waiting. The District was thirty years old.



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NEWS RELEASE - Immediate - LAST in a series by Carroll J. Hobson

In previous articles I counted for you some of the ways we are destroying our national heritage. I drew attention to the general disregard for top soil loss in the United States. 6.5 million tons of soil erode annually from our nation's farmland (source USDA). I said how the majority of the people in this state do not realize that we have washed away half of our top soil in a little over one hundred years. I speculated on how our descendants could survive on what's left by the year 3000. I pointed out how tragically few of our legislators understand the soil and what to do to save it. How the land means so much to some, so little to others. I mentioned the very small percentage of people (less than 3%) who are producing today's food bounty and how our people spend less for food than any others in the world.

The seasons come and go, the years pass, man lives out a short life but the soil must continue producing for the many unborn millions to come. It's very easy to take soil for granted. We Americans are prone to use more of everything than we need.

Organization and order are required. In a political system like ours the decisions will be no better than the people demand. Those decisions can be no better, wiser, or more honest than the people we elect to office. If we consider the futility of reducing the national debt and Iowa's present financial condition it is not surprising to have people throw up their hands in despair. Yet less than half of the eligible voters exercise their right when elections are held. Despair and disinterest net nothing. High citizen interest and participation have always been the prerequisites for good government. Our only hope to be a strong long lasting society is to keep government honest and responsible. Poor governments are bad managers of resources including money. Do you vote at all

elections? If not, you are part of the problem. We need to somehow direct more time to our current national problems than we do to national sports.

In spite of serious problems everything is not negative. We have very positive conservation work being done annually in the county. Fortunately soil conservation has a broad base of popular understanding and support in Hardin county. We are grateful for that support.

The record shows the 549,639 feet of terraces have been constructed in the last ten years. 195 acres of grassed waterways, 23 ponds and grade stabilization structures and 102 acres of windbreaks planted during the same period of time. All this done since 1975.

Conservation tillage is becoming a popular soil saving method of farming and is gaining greater use every year in Iowa and surrounding states. All the present soil conservation commissioners are using some form of minimum tillage along with other measures. We are making more efforts to teach both adults and school children conservation values.

In my mind we must help as many people as we can understand what soil and water conservation losses really mean. How we can save those resources and create a national and statewide awareness of how fortunate our country was in the beginning. One of the better ways to accomplish that end is to train the young to appreciate the whole eco-system.

I ran across a statement the other day we all need to contemplate. "Whatever may be written on property deeds, the nominal owners of land are only tenants - - stewards, holding the land in trust for their children's children."

I received a number of letters from people previously connected with the land and the soil conservation district at the time of our 40th anniversary dinner. One of those letters came from Steven J. Lawless, a young man raised in a good farm family with solid values. He makes statements that speak for themselves. He says, "In A Note From A Son of the Soil: I wish to recognize the inspiration

and perspiration of saving the soil. Though I spend my time on asphalt these days, the land I grew up on taught me the values of simplicity, humility, and reverence for all life. The fertile soil gave me the values for a full life and the means to interact with the world today. I am grateful for this privilege. It is my hope and prayer that my generation will continue these preservation efforts." Steven Lawless is the son of Harry and Evelyn Lawless, their farm home is in Jackson township.

The soil conservation district received several supportive and congratulative letters. One thank you letter came from Ted and Vera Cutler for district technical help in the 1950's. We should instead be thanking Ted and Vera for their help to the soil conservation district during that period.

Like all occasions there are many fine people to remember and many good deeds done. Since I am human and fallible I will have unintentionally missed something or someone, somewhere. I want to thank everyone who helped and supported the soil conservation district during these past 40 years.

Lots of technical work has been accomplished. The district has brought a measure of understanding and good will to others. Researching through 40 years of soil conservation district history has been an interesting experience for me. It has also been a pleasure to have been one of the workers for half that period. Today you are served by Steven Manternach, district conservationist, Anthony White, soil conservaionist, Earnest Hoffa, engineering aide II, Susie Reece, clerk. Five soil conservation district commissioners: Gary Walters, Martin Broer, Gene Roberts, Caleb Knutson, and myself along with Harry Lawless, assistant commissioner. All these people stand ready to help you in any way then can.

It's been a fine forty years. Here's hoping the next forty will be better. Every new tomorrow offers us another opportunity for improvement.

