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Company Information

Company Chronology

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1837-1859

This chronology is adapted from *Genuine Value: The John Deere Journey*.

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1837 John Deere fashions a polished-steel plow that lets pioneer farmers cut clean furrows through sticky Midwest prairie soil.

1838 John Deere, blacksmith, evolves into John Deere, manufacturer. Later he remembers building 10 plows in 1839, 75 in 1841, and 100 in 1842.

1841 First practical grain drill patented. First emigrant train of covered wagons reaches California. New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio are the chief wheat-growing states.

1842 John Deere adds retailing to his business, filling orders for the Patent Cary Plow.

1843 Deere and Leonard Andrus become "co-partners in the art and trade of blacksmithing, plow-making and all things thereto..."

1844 John Gould, a partner, on Deere's work habits: "Hammering in the morning... at four o'clock, and at ten o'clock at night; he had such indomitable determination to... work out what he had in mind."

1848 The growing plow business moves to Moline, 75 miles southwest of Grand Detour. Moline offers water power and transportation advantages. Deere chooses a new partner, Robert N. Tate, who moves to Moline and raises the rafters on their three-story blacksmith shop by July 28.

1849 A work force of about 16 builds 2,136 plows.

1850 Company called Deere, Tate & Gould

1851 Most one-horse plows sell for \$6 to \$9. A larger "breaker" sells for \$23.

1852 Deere buys out his partners. For the next 16 years, the company is known variously as John Deere, John Deere & Company, Deere & Company, and Moline Plow Manufactory.

1853 Sixteen-year old Charles, Deere's only living son, joins the firm as a bookkeeper following graduation from a Chicago commercial college.

1854 The railroad reaches Rock Island. Six hours to Chicago, 42 to New York.

1855 Most employees earn 58 cents to \$1.50 a day. A speedy piece worker paints 180 plows at a dime each—\$18.00 for a week's work.

1856 The first railroad bridge across the Mississippi River links Rock Island with Davenport.

1857 The improved Clipper Plow has a rolling coulter to cut vegetation, resulting in a clean furrow slice.

1858 The business totters during a nationwide financial panic. Maneuverings to avoid bankruptcy shuffle ownership and managerial arrangements. John Deere remains titular president, but managerial power passes to Charles Deere.

1859 Charles Deere takes over at age 21, and runs the company for 49 years.