

# THE PLOWSHARE

## News for John Deere Collectors



### Horicon Works' history spans product lines

John Deere Horicon Works celebrated a century with John Deere this year, but the factory's history goes back much further and involves a variety of Deere product lines.

The foundation for the business was laid in 1860 when George Van Brunt carved a model of a force-feed device for a seeder out of a turnip. The design, later known as the fluted force feed, seemed promising, and Van Brunt and his brother, Daniel, built seven seeders in their Mayville, Wisconsin, shop that year.

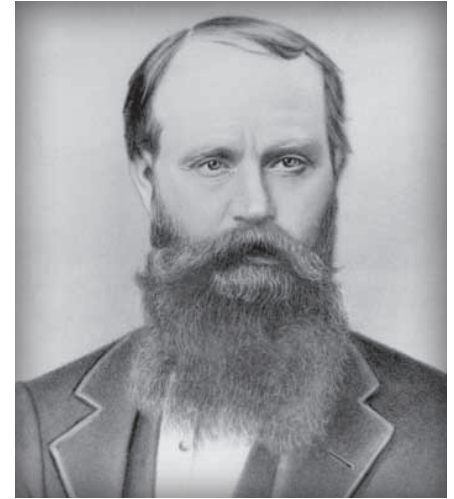
The early Van Brunt machines included the feed and a scattering device, combined with a cultivating attachment, designed to cover the seeds before hordes of passenger pigeons — which then lived in North America — ate them off the ground. The seeds were broadcast on the ground and a set of cultivator teeth followed to scratch soil over them.

The brothers travelled around the Mayville area, demonstrating and selling the seeders. Farmers were skeptical about this completely new type of machine initially, but soon saw that the Van Brunt seeder did help address the pigeon problem. The Van Brunts' business began to flourish.

In 1861, the Van Brunts moved their operation to nearby Horicon, Wisconsin. The new location offered better shipping facilities, access to a mill and iron foundry, and potential waterpower.

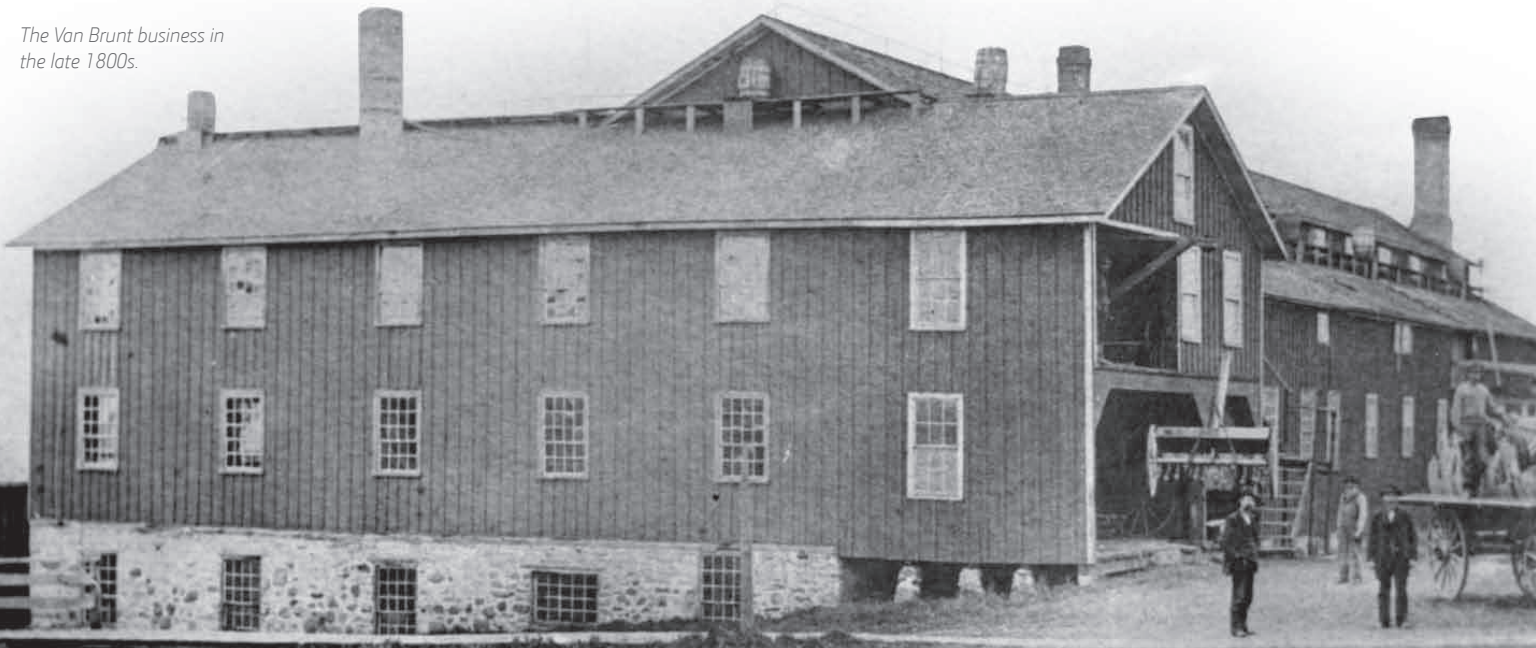
That year the brothers produced and sold 60 seeders. Soon the seeder was being used in Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas, as well as Wisconsin. By 1880, Van Brunt seeders were also being sold in New York and Canada.

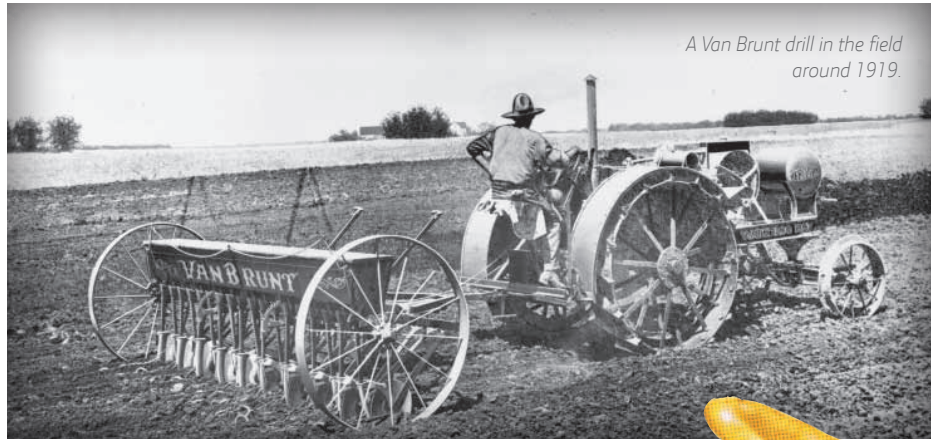
In 1900, Van Brunt introduced the first successful disk drill with closed delivery. According to one account in the Deere & Company archives, "With this device all the difficulties of seeding in mud, gumbo, and trashy ground were overcome. As a result, the disk drill is now the preferred type of seeding machine wherever grain is grown."



*John Deere Horicon Works can trace its history back to a force-feed device for a seeder that George Van Brunt, seen here, designed.*

*The Van Brunt business in the late 1800s.*





*A Van Brunt drill in the field around 1919.*



*Daniel Van Brunt co-founded the business that later became John Deere Horicon Works with his brother, George.*

The business continued to grow with Daniel Van Brunt leading the company — George had left the business years before. When Daniel died in 1901, his son Willard took over as president and would see the company through many changes.

One of these changes came in 1911, when Deere & Company purchased Van Brunt. Willard Van Brunt stayed on as president and the business continued to produce a variety of disks and drills, broadcast seeders, sowers, and cultivators in Horicon.

The Van Brunt product line had evolved consistently since the company's founding, but in 1918 changes in farming prompted a time of significant product development for Van Brunt. Stronger, faster-moving implements were needed as many farms began to transition from horses to tractors, and Van Brunt began to offer more streamlined products and replace wooden parts with steel.

Like many other Deere factories, Van Brunt's focus shifted during World War II. The factory stopped production of its regular products and began manufacturing utility trailers for the United States Army and bulkheads for freighters operated by the U.S. Maritime Commission.

After the war, Van Brunt returned to producing field and orchard cultivators; lime, fertilizer, and calcium chloride distributors; drill attachments; and a variety of grain drills. Due to their dependability in varied field and soil conditions, the drills were very popular among farmers, and had helped make the business the largest grain drill factory in the world.

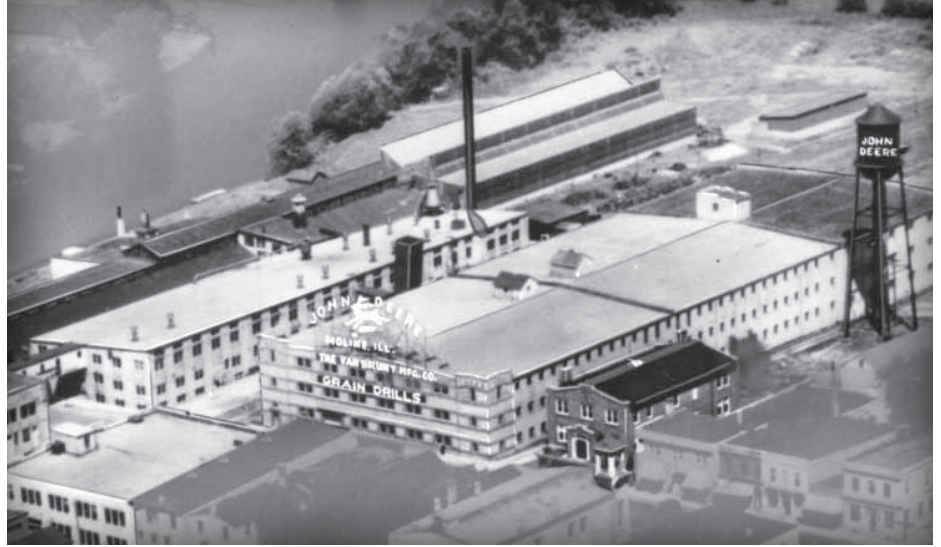
The John Deere brand became more prominent in Horicon between 1948 and 1954 as the factory gradually transitioned to painting products traditional John Deere green and yellow. In 1953, a new grassland drill was introduced. It was the first Horicon-made machine without the Van Brunt name. In 1958, the Van Brunt name disappeared completely when the factory name changed from John Deere Van Brunt Company to John Deere Horicon Works.

By 1961, Horicon Works had grown considerably since the Van Brunt brothers moved their business to Horicon 100 years earlier. The factory now spanned 600,000 square feet, and included its own foundry and forge.



*The first Horicon product to use only the John Deere name was the grassland drill.*

The 110 was introduced in 1963, successfully launching the John Deere lawn and garden line.



The product line was also growing. In 1963, Horicon entered the consumer products market. The first lawn and garden machine off the line, a seven-horsepower 110 Tractor, was kept at the factory until 1970 when it was sent to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., for permanent display at the National Museum of American History.

Other consumer products were soon added to the Horicon line. Grain drill production moved to John Deere Des Moines Works in 1969, allowing Horicon to focus exclusively on consumer products. Soon, walk-behind mowers, tillers, snowthrowers, and, at one time, even snowmobiles were produced at Horicon.

Today, the factory produces lawn and garden equipment, utility vehicles, and golf and turf reel mowers. In April 2010, Horicon employees celebrated the production of the five-millionth lawn tractor made at the factory.

John Deere Horicon Works will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the John Deere lawn and garden equipment line in 2013. Watch for more information in *The Plowshare*.



A rendering of future exhibits at the John Deere Pavilion offers a look and a variety of new experiences.

## Horicon Works celebrates 100 years

More than 7,000 past and present John Deere Horicon Works employees and their family members celebrated the factory's 100th anniversary in August.

"One-hundred years of successful business is a great accomplishment. It is a true testament to the skill and ability of the past and present employees of the Horicon Works," said Steve Johnson, Horicon Works factory manager. "We are extremely proud to be celebrating our history and heritage with both Deere & Company and the city of Horicon, Wisconsin."

The celebration included a special video presentation about the factory's history, children's activities, blacksmith demonstrations, and a performance by country music artist Joe Diffie. In addition, a parade including a variety of vintage and new Horicon products was enjoyed by the Horicon community.



*In 1984, Horicon Works employees built John Deere's one-millionth lawn and garden tractor.*

## John Deere Pavilion announces major renovation

Since 1997, the John Deere Pavilion has shared the story of John Deere's ongoing contributions to agricultural development with millions of guests from around the globe. And, it's about to get even better.

A major redesign will feature new displays showcasing the company's global reach, and sharing a glimpse at how John Deere's high-tech products and services will continue to help provide food, shelter, and infrastructure for a growing global population. The company's rich heritage will also be chronicled through exhibits and equipment displays discussing a history reaching back nearly 175 years to the company's founder and his self-scouring plow.

Interactive exhibits will feature many of the businesses and global markets the company participates in, as well as its broad range of innovative products, concept vehicles, and corporate citizenship activities.

"We are proud of the facility's success, yet we are always looking for ways to improve," said Brian Holst, marketing manager for the John Deere Pavilion. "Next year will be the Pavilion's 15th anniversary, making this an ideal time to offer our guests and fans something completely new."

One thing that won't change is the Pavilion's commitment to entertainment and education for all ages. An expanded children's area will offer a variety of hands-on learning activities, ensuring the John Deere Pavilion remains an exceptional destination for the whole family.

The Pavilion will be closed from December 12 through mid-February 2012 while the enhancements are put into place. We hope you'll join us for the grand reopening and agree this experience was worth the wait.

To learn more about the Pavilion redesign, visit [www.JohnDeereAttractions.com](http://www.JohnDeereAttractions.com).

The John Deere Store, located adjacent to the Pavilion, and the equipment display floor at the Deere & Company World Headquarters, also in Moline, Illinois, will remain open during the Pavilion's renovations.

# From us to you: Something to look forward to

Thanksgiving has come and gone. Snow has been flying in some parts of the country for weeks. There's no denying it, winter is here.

This season may have just started, but for me, spring can't come soon enough. I don't enjoy the cold weather or the snow shoveling and occasional slip on the ice that comes along with it. But, this year, warmer weather isn't the only reason I'm looking forward to spring. I'm also counting down the days until the 2012 Gathering of the Green.

This year's conference is planned for March 14–17 in Davenport, Iowa, and event organizers tell me it's going to be a great time. In fact, after talking with them, the only complaint I can think of about the event is that there just won't be enough time to experience it all!

As always, there will be a variety of vendors, workshops focused on everything from power steering and part numbers to farm toys and flywheels, and a number of bus trips and tours.

You'll also have a chance to test your John Deere knowledge at a session that includes some trivia time. I'm serving as the co-host for the John Deere trivia event and am very excited about it. John Deere has experienced a lot during its 175-year history, and this is your chance to show off your knowledge of the company's milestones.

So, if you're like me, and are looking for something to combat the winter blues, I hope you'll make your way to Davenport, Iowa, in March to experience the Gathering of the Green for yourself.

Along with the great events that I already mentioned, you'll have the chance to meet fellow John Deere enthusiasts from all over the United States and even a few from Canada, Australia, and Europe.

I'm looking forward to seeing many old friends and hopefully making a few new ones.

Keep your hand on the throttle and your plow in the ground,

Brian

*Brian Holst reviews items from past Gathering of the Green events to prepare for the upcoming conference.*



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You have received this publication due to your relationship with John Deere. *The Plowshare* is free and is distributed quarterly. If you don't want to receive future issues, please call 515-267-3109, and ask to have your name removed from *The Plowshare* mailing list. We will then stop sending you *The Plowshare*, but you may continue to receive information about merchandise and upcoming events from John Deere.

## John Deere to celebrate 175 years

In 2012, John Deere will mark its 175th anniversary — a milestone that will be celebrated in a variety of ways around the world.

In the pages of *The Plowshare* you'll see articles about some of the proudest moments of the company's past, and why our long history of integrity, quality, commitment, and innovation makes us very excited about the company's future.

Some John Deere facilities and dealerships might hold special events. Currently several Canadian two-cylinder clubs are working with John Deere facilities in Canada to plan a John Deere show that will include equipment, memorabilia, and toy displays — visit [www.deerethruthetheyears.ca](http://www.deerethruthetheyears.ca) for more information.

Throughout the year you'll also find a variety of anniversary-related information on the John Deere website ([www.JohnDeere.com](http://www.JohnDeere.com)) and our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/JohnDeere](http://www.facebook.com/JohnDeere)). While you're visiting us on Facebook, be sure to "Like" us.

We're looking forward to this chance to reflect on some of the things that have made John Deere the company it is today, and we hope you're ready to celebrate with us.