

## Opening corn fields with Pa

In the Fall of 1950, John was in the first grade, and I was four.

Pa had a new 8N Ford.

We shared a one-row, pull-type, New Idea corn picker with Uncle Louie.

Louie always drove the tractor that powered the harvesting machines.

He liked that job, he was good at it, and he always owned the biggest tractor.

Louie had a Farmall M and a smaller H in the early 1950's.

In about 1955 he replaced the M with a Farmall 400.

Until the mid-50s Uncle Al, Uncle Norman co-owned and farmed the "home place" with Louie.

Uncle Al never farmed with us. He drove a cattle truck, mostly.

The tractor, picker, and trailing wagon needed two rows of space.

To get that space it was necessary to split or "open" the field.

It was simplest to hand pick two rows to make the space.

Then the tractor, picker, and trailing wagon could drive over those two rows.

Our way to open a field was to have a kid drive over two rows with a tractor towing a small trailer.

Pa walked behind hand-picking the cobs of corn.

We had our small Ford tractor and two-wheel trailer.

The 8N had convenient platforms under the pedals on both sides.

Pa would put the tractor at the slowest speed, with me standing on the clutch.

Then when he was ready, I would release the clutch by stepping off the clutch and onto the platform.

Of course I would need to steer. Steering was generally easy because normal rows were straight.

Often Pa could pick at the speed of slowly creeping tractor.

He was good at this.

But if Pa fell behind, I would stand on the clutch again.



### **Henry Schoepfer, and Ernie Barthel (Pa) husking corn in the early 1930's.**

The standing bundles in the background are "corn shocks".

The bundles of corn stocks, with the cob still attached, were produced by a horse drawn "corn binder", then stacked in shocks by men and boys.

In this photo Henry and Pa are posing as if they were salvaging the grain from the jumble of cut corn stocks. Uncle George had two younger brothers, Henry and Frank.