

Schmitt Implement

My Great Grandfather, Harry Schmitt, decided to begin a business in Daykin, NE, as his sons were completing their grade school education. Using cement, Harry, Ralph, and Sidney made the cement blocks at their farm for their original building. This building still stands at the east end of Main Street, and was used for storage.

The business open in 1915 under the name of Harry Schmitt and Sons. They sold McCormick Deering and Case machinery, implement parts, and Buick, Dodge, and Studebaker cars. They repaired cars and also did custom corn shelling, threshing, and trucking. Many times they would haul cattle into Omaha for farmers and then bring back implements from the International Harvester Company district office/warehouse located in Lincoln as they returned.

In November, 1929, Harry Schmitt died very unexpectedly of a heart attack. Then Ralph and Sidney ran the business under the name of Schmitt Brothers. When a new building was planned in 1948, partnership papers were drawn up between Ralph Schmitt and his son Harold. Sidney then retired from the business.

In January, 1950 the grand opening of Schmitt Implement was held in the newly completed building. Many International Harvester Company officials attended this event, and refreshments were served during the day. In the evening, a group of entertainers presented a variety show to a packed house.

Faithful employees contributed to the operation of the business. Employees from 1950 to 1982 included Kenneth Griffin, Raymond Workman, Carl Geertz, Henry and Richard Krause, Ralph Strothman, Otto Jordening, Donald Bartels Jr., and Carl Rafert. Winford Schmitt always helped too, when needed. Harold's wife, Bernice Schmitt helped with the office work. Those who were always willing to help do custom windrowing or other necessary tasks during the busy summer months were William Yantz, William Endorf, and Ed Mussman.

In 1962, Ralph's only grandchild, Ron Schmitt, was born, and grew up in the business. Ron enjoyed going along with his grandpa and/or dad to help get machinery. During his last two years in high school, Ron drove for his grandpa and helped with the selling.

In October, 1980, Ralph died after several years of doctoring for leukemia. This brought an end to the partnership and the contract with International Harvester Company. Ralph had been honored by International Harvester the year before with the presentation of a diamond studded tie clasp for having been a deal with the company for 65 years.

The business had a year in which to return parts to the company. An auction sale was held in April, 1981, to dispose of farm machinery and the building. A second sale was held in October to sell remaining parts and the business fixtures. This ended the IHC farm implement business which had served the Daykin area for four generations.

By: Ron Schmitt

