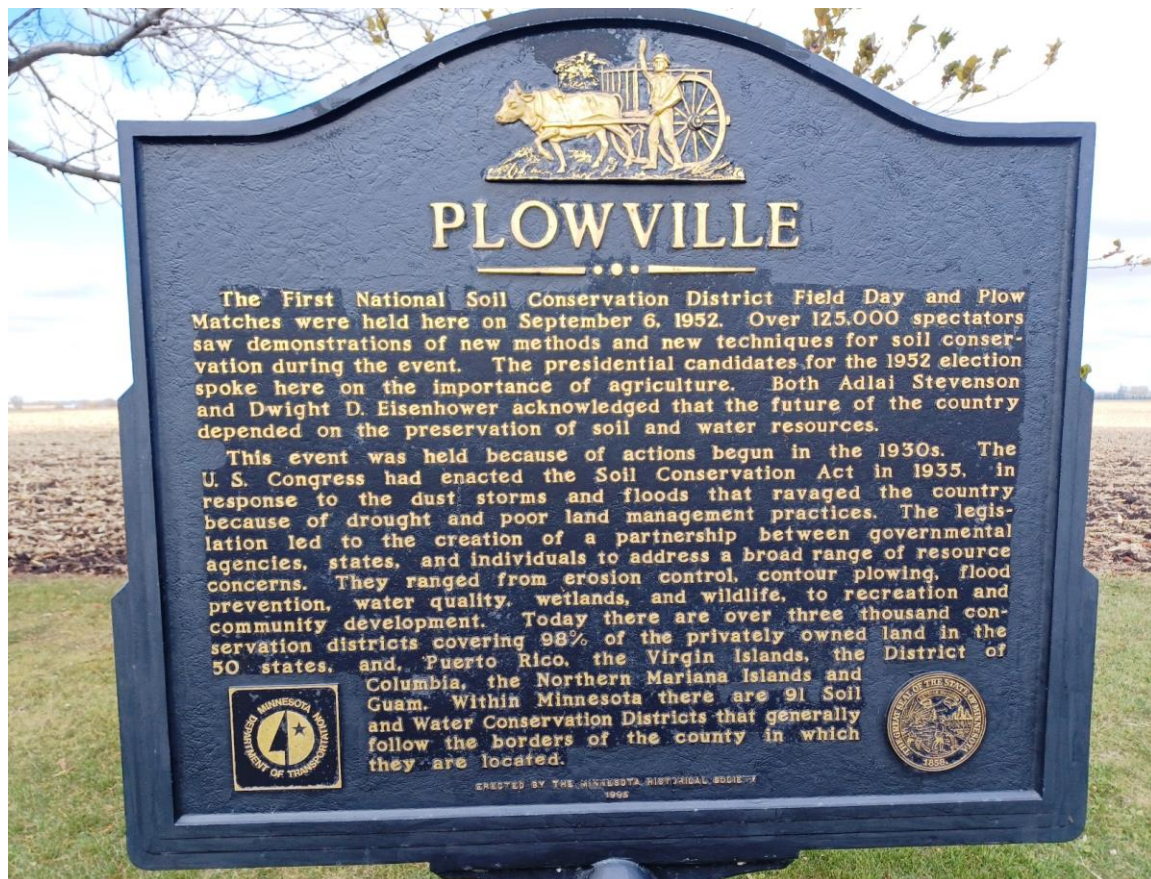


I heard the news of Senator Bob Dole's death on December 5th and that took me back to Farmfest 1976. This was when Farmfest was held just outside of Lake Crystal west of Mankato. Bob Dole, a U.S. Senator from Kansas was the Vice Presidential candidate of Gerald Ford. Dole came to Farmfest to campaign a day after Democratic Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter had been at Farmfest. My parents were at Farmfest that day and I went the next day. While they saw Carter they did not get to meet and greet him. I on the other hand, got to shake hands with Senator Dole as he was greeting people there. It was my first time to meet and shake hands with a Presidential or Vice Presidential candidate. Many of you might recall that because of a serious injury from World War II, Dole's right hand was not used by him except to hold a pen in it. He shook hands left handed after the war. In 1996, Dole was his party's nominee for President against the incumbent Bill Clinton.

As a side note, it was President Clinton who in 2000 invited me and a number of my farm broadcast colleagues to the White House to take part in a large meeting in the East Room as he was championing permanent normal trade relations with China.

Speaking of Presidential candidates, in late October I took the 'old' highway 14 from Dodge Center to Kasson and stopped at the historical site that is along the now County Road 34. It had been many years since I actually stopped there and I needed to refresh my memory of the event that took place in 1952. The first thing that struck me as my memory was being rebooted was that the crowd was estimated at over 125,000 spectators. My dad was among the many and I heard the stories but really never thought about it much other than the fact that General Eisenhower was there.



The second thing that struck me as odd as I look at it today is that a huge Soil Conservation field day would be called Plowville. It reminds me of a South Dakota State University agronomist and conservationist who once told me that he would never drive through Minnesota during daylight hours as he did not want to see all the land that was still being tilled with a moldboard plow. Now granted this was about 20 plus years ago and we have made great strides to make lawn ornaments of most moldboard plows but to name the first National Soil Conservation field day complete with plow matches Plowville is a bit of an oxymoron.

As I was tearing some old flooring in our new house to be replaced with new flooring, I found some classified advertising from the January 27, 1973 Capital Times newspaper out of Madison, WI. There were a lot of old Farmall and Oliver tractors listed in the want ads. The car ads were quite interesting as well. If only you could buy a 67 Pontiac for \$688 today. There were Mavericks, Pintos, Galaxie 500's and Datsuns for sale. There was a 1947 Willys Jeep in lime green with carpeting throughout and only 59,000 actual miles. No price was listed. On another page there was a dairy farm and a beef farm for sale listed by Gochenaur Realty of Richland Center, WI. Is that any relation to you Larry?

People forget that there was a lot of tobacco grown in Wisconsin and Minnesota years ago. Here's a case in point in this farm listing from 1973. A farm for sale just south of Madison near Stoughton, WI had an ad that read; 41 acres with 11 acres tobacco base, good 6 bedroom home with large modern (that's how it was spelled in the paper) kitchen, gas heat, large attached garage, set up for beef and dairy. Large tobacco shed. \$50000 - good terms.

May your Christmas be Merry and your New Year full of happiness.