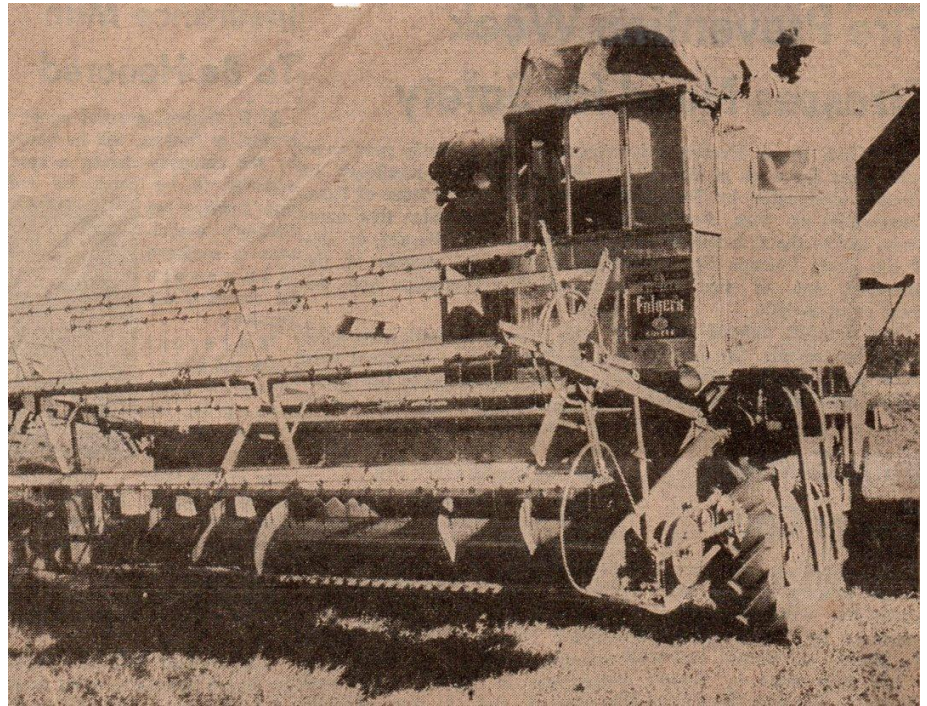


The paper has browned a lot since 1958 but the picture is still there and it brought back a lot of memories for me. I've written about the old Oliver 40 combine before but just got my hand on the picture you see to the right. My cousin Patti Ryg Krier, whose parents were Gordy and Olive Ryg, keeps a scrapbook of anything family. Her mom saved a lot of old newspapers and Patti salvaged a lot of family articles when they cleaned out her mom's



shed back in 1991. I always remembered this picture and was so happy to see it again. I was only 4 years old when it was published in the Rochester Post-Bulletin back in October of 1958. I always thought it was a local story from the West Concord Enterprise but Patti proved that wrong.

The caption in the Post-Bulletin that day said the soybean harvesting begins. Elmer Kleven, West Concord farmer, finds harvesting beans and corn a more comfortable job thanks to this home-made cab he mounted on his self-propelled combine. Materials, including storm windows salvaged when he installed new aluminum windows on his farm home, came to less than \$5. Equipped with a picker head, this combine makes quick work of harvesting corn in the West Concord area.

The cab was not fancy but it kept him out of the cold winds of fall. It was a very heavy canvas tarp that was on the roof. And you can see the tin Folger's coffee sign on the front of the cab. He evidently needed a little patch work on that corner. The story that was associated with the picture in the paper that day talked about the harvest in southeast Minnesota being better than what was predicted a month earlier. The summer of '58 was a cool dry one and that kept yields down somewhat. Although soybean yields would be below those of 1957, they would probably average between 18 and 20 bushels per acre. An elevator manager in Stewartville was quoted as saying the leading varieties of soybeans were Blackhawks and Chippewa's.

Budd Hoglund, of the Kasson Elevator Company said soybean yields were running as high as 22 bushels per acre. He added that one fellow got 25 bushels from 1 ¼ acre but another man averaged only 15 bushels per acre from a 6 acre field.

A couple years ago I wrote how it was so wet in the fall of 1964 that with a two row cornhead for this combine, my dad kept getting stuck in the mud. He put the beanhead on so he could put the dual wheels on the combine. If you know how these old combines worked, harvesting corn with a beanhead meant a lot of corn fodder went through the machine so it was a very slow process. Add in the mud issues and that made it even slower.

Looking at another newspaper clipping Patti sent me, we fast forward to October, 1961. You can see the entire newspaper clipping at the bottom of this column. My dad was selected as Dodge County's outstanding soil and water conservation farmer and winner of the Star and Tribune award by the Dodge County Soil and Water Conservation District in 1961. That framed certificate was signed by the chairman of the Minneapolis papers at the time, John Cowles Sr. I still have that somewhere in a box. I knew about the award but never got the whole story of what my dad did through the 1950's to get this honor.

The article said the award came after 8 years of planning and layout of conservation practices. My dad started running the farm I grew up on in 1953. My parents finally moved there in the fall of that year, two months before I was born. Over those years in the 50's, my dad designed contours and built terraces and would lay field tile in a few acres each year. You couldn't tile an entire 40 or 80 acre plot in a day like you can today. He did 6 acres one year, 7 acres another and 5 in another year. In my later years and by that I mean in my early teens, I helped with the cement tile. My dad, Gale Callister, Ed Roberts and Karl Mosher had bought a tiling machine together and did most of the tiling themselves. Dad planted 1.3 acres that was a sandy ridge into evergreen trees for wildlife shelter and field windbreak protection.

Its great memories but those 'good ole days' were a lot of work. When they talk about blood, sweat and tears going into family farms, they weren't kidding. My daughter gave me a calendar for this year with pictures of old restored tractors. I look at those John Deere A's and B's and Minneapolis Molines, Allis Chalmers, Olivers and Case and Cockshutts and McCormick-Deering and others and think back to what it must have been like. Now farmers from the greatest generation started with horses so these mechanical marvels were a godsend. But if we had to use them today, well it just wouldn't work. But it did back in the 'good ole days'.

Continue scrolling to see the actual newspaper clippings that were written about in column.

## Elmer Kleven Wins Star-Tribune Award

Elmer Kleven, West Concord area farmer has been selected as Dodge County's outstanding soil and water conservation farmer and winner of the Star and Tribune award by the Dodge County Soil and Water Conservation District for 1961.

Kleven's award comes at the end of eight years of planning and layout of conservation practices. In the spring of 1953, Kleven started by requesting soil maps and planning assistance from the Dodge County Soil and Water Conservation District Board.

In 1954 he contoured 22 acres and tile drained 7 acres of land. In 1956 one-half acre of grassed waterway was built, another 5 acres of land was tile drained and 1.3 acres of trees were planted. Evergreens were planted along a sandy ridge in two rows about 1200 feet long for wildlife shelter and field windbreak protection.

In 1957 six more acres were tile drained. 1958 saw another 1.0 acre of grassed waterway built and seeded. One mile of parallel terraces were built, 3.0 acres waterways constructed and 30 acres of contouring were laid out in 1959.

Six-tenths more miles of parallel terraces were built and 20 more acres of contouring were laid out in 1960. This completed the mechanical erosion control practices needed for getting his erosion problems in control on his farm.

Then in 1961 additional planning toward a definite crop rotation to maintain soil tilth and reduce erosion still further took place plus about 15 more acres of wet cropland were tile drained.

Besides these conservation activities Kleven has regularly limed and fertilized his farm lands, improved his pasture and provided several areas for wildlife shelter on his farm. He has an experimental waterway grass plot planted to ellsberry brome, creeping reed foxtail and creeping bent on his farm for observation by Soil Conservation Service plant materials specialists. Kleven consistently encourages his neighbors to use conservation farming methods.

Below is article from Oct 6, 1958

## Much Better Harvest Likely Than Predicted Month Ago

With soybean combining expected to swing into full speed this week as a result of perfect Indian summer weather, farmers are counting on a much better harvest than had seemed possible a month ago.

Corn crop prospects are much brighter than they were in early September. Bean yields, although below those of 1957, will probably average between 18 and 20 bushels to the acre.

Elevator operators in the area credit a frost-free September with improving prospects for both corn and soybeans. A cool, dry summer had held back these crops but now the outlook is for a "fair yield" throughout the area. Some soft corn is expected but not the large

percentage feared a month ago.

At Stewartville, manager Wendell Lenton of the Farmers Elevator Co., said the bean harvesting is just getting under way. Yields probably will range around 17 to 18 bushels to the acre, he said.

Lenton, who said Blackhawks and Chippewas are the leading varieties in the Stewartville area, said the corn yield will be down in comparison with last year's bumper harvest.

Lenton added that fields planted to early-maturing varieties are drying out in good order. The frost also was a boon to the soybean fields, killing the weeds which had been growing rapidly as a result of warm weather and good rains.

Eldon Roddis of the Roddis Feed Co., Rochester, said most soybean plants have only two beans—sometimes one — to the pod whereas they normally have two or three.

"Just by way of comparison," he said, "one farmer obtained \$1,000 from his soybean field last year. This year he got a check for only \$365 for beans from the same field."

Roddis said all signs point to a fairly good corn harvest, however.

Budd Hoglund of the Kasson Elevator Co. reported four farmers had marketed their beans with yields running as high as 22 bushels to the acre.

"One fellow got 25 bushels from 1¼ acres," he said, "but another man averaged only 15 bushels from a six-acre place."

Hoglund added that several farmers have said their corn is further ahead than it was last fall at this time. Ears, however, aren't filled out to the ends as they are in a normal year, he said. Germination was uneven in many fields.

"This has caused different degrees of maturity within the same field," he said.

Warm and windy days in September boosted corn prospects and although scattered frost hit in some areas last week, the corn was far enough along to escape injury in most cases.