

Oliver Hart-Parr 28-44

Chicago, IL 1936



On April 1, 1929, the Oliver Farm Equipment Company was formed with the merger of four companies: The Oliver Chilled Plow Works of South Bend, Indiana; the Nichols & Shepard Company of Battle Creek, Michigan, along with the American Seeding Machine Company, and the Hart-Parr Company of Charles City, Iowa, which was the first company devoted exclusively to manufacturing tractors.

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Corporate offices were set up in Chicago, Illinois, and the plants remained at their existing locations. The company could now supply the farmer with a tractor, tillage tools, planting tools, and harvesting machines.

In 1855, James Oliver of Mishawaka, Indiana, bought a one-quarter interest in a small foundry outside of South Bend. In 1857, he received his first patent for

his chilled plow. This chilled plow had a very hard outer skin and was able to scour in heavy, sticky soils with greater wear ability. Word of its success spread worldwide, resulting in an enormous amount of plows being manufactured and sold. Oliver soon became known as the "Plow maker for the World." In the 1920s, Oliver began experimenting with a tractor of his own. The result was the Oliver Chilled Plow Tractor. Only one example of this tractor is known to exist today. Shortly after its tractor venture, Oliver merged with Hart-Parr, which already was set up in the tractor business.

The Hart-Parr Company was originally formed as the Hart-Parr Engine Works in Madison, Wisconsin, by Charles Hart and Charles Parr. In 1900, the decision was made to relocate in Charles City, Iowa. Over the winter of 1901-1902, they produced their first gas-traction engine. Hart and Parr were credited for being the first successful mass production gas-traction engine company. They are also credited with introducing the word "tractor" to the English language.

By 1907, the Hart-Parr Company was well-established in the tractor manufacturing business and had six major branch houses as well as an ever-growing factory in Charles City. World War I was not a profitable time for Hart-Parr because they lost a lot of money retooling for the manufacture of munitions. Existing problems caused Charles Hart to leave the company in 1917. Charles Parr remained with

the company until his death in 1941. The Hart-Parr Company merged with the Oliver Chilled Plow Works in 1929 to form the Oliver Farm Equipment Company.

With the merger came a completely new tractor design using ideas from both successful companies. Collaboration breeds innovation and the result was the introduction of the first Oliver general-purpose tractor, the Oliver Hart-Parr "Row Crop" in 1930. Later in 1930, Oliver introduced two more standard tractors, the Model 18-28 and the Model 28-44. The 18-28 and the Row Crop remained in production until 1937 when the 28-44 was transformed into the Model 90 tractor, which remained in production until 1952.

The Oliver Hart-Parr 28-44 originally had several names. First it was dubbed the Model A, but it was also soon referred to as the 3-5 Plow tractor (the name it was tested under during the University of Nebraska Tractor Tests). The 28-44 designation went into effect after its testing at the Nebraska Tests in October of 1930.

The Oliver Farm Equipment Company became known as the Oliver Corporation in 1944. Over the years, various other companies were acquired under the Oliver Corporation name, but in 1969 the Oliver Corporation, Minneapolis-Moline, and Cockshutt merged their interests to create the White Farm Equipment Company.