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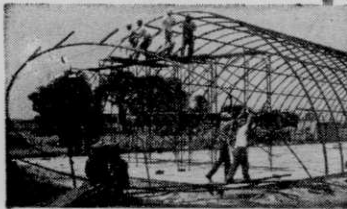
Model 3-P Model M Model LR MORRILL Rake

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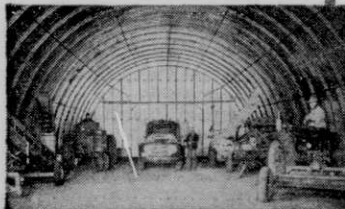
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Golden Anniversary

(Continued from page 1)

Timers who attended the annual field days and picnics at Moccasin that were a regular part of community life in central Montana years ago. In the early days of the experiment station attendance at these affairs ran close to 4,000. Farm families came from as far as 40 miles, a considerable distance to travel in a Model-T over dirt roads that frequently were nothing more than wagon ruts across the prairie. Special trains from Great Falls and Billings brought picnickers to Moccasin. A carnival, complete with ferris wheel, and a baseball game were regular features of these field days.

The picnics led to the formation of the Judith Basin County Annual Picnic Association, which was responsible for planning the affairs. Drought and depression during the 30's, however, caused a decline in attendance, and the association was dissolved in 1933.

The Central Montana Branch Station came into existence March 9, 1907 by an act of the State Legislature. It was first known as the Fergus County Substation. When Judith Basin county was formed in 1920 it was called the Judith Basin Branch Station. The present name was chosen in 1943 because it is located near the geographical center of Montana.

The original land purchase for the station was 160 acres. In 1912 adjoining school land was leased from the state, bringing the acreage up to 640, the present size of the station.

Problems, Opportunities

From the very beginning research work revealed both the problems that agricultural development would face in the area and the opportunities that existed for dryland farming. In 1909 the annual report stated that "alternate thawing and freezing of winter grains seeded later than August 1 reduced stands and yields by one-half." By 1911 it could be reported that several varieties of winter wheat could be profitably grown on dryland in the Judith Basin.

Particularly interesting is the change in recommendations that were made, as more knowledge of the area was revealed through research. The 1913 report said "any intense method of cultivation practice for conservation of moisture in Judith Basin soils is a waste of time and money." Summer fallow was not recommended in 1916. The 1919 report stated that "yields after fallow were the highest and the relative advantage of summer fallow was

more marked than in the past."

Furrow Drill

Work was started on the development of a furrow drill in 1924. In 1929 "the furrow drill lessened winter killing 34 per cent and increased yields 5.1 bushels per acre."

As research information from the experiment station was revealed to



This electric nursery cutter, shown with its portable power unit, is one of the machines used in small grain research at Moccasin.

farmers, showing the great potentialities of the area, and more and more virgin prairie was put under cultivation, new problems began to arise. In 1926 "soil blowing was so extensive that wind-blown soil from the fields of neighbors south of the station completely covered rotation plots with 6 to 8 inches of soil. Much of the wind-blown soil was removed from the plots with a Fresno." Soil blowing had become one of the most important problems confronting the agriculture of the region by 1929.

Clouds of Dust

James L. Krall, superintendent at Moccasin since the retirement of Ralph M. Williams in 1955, is a native of the Judith Basin. When a junior at the Lewistown High School in 1936, Krall says he can remember that it was necessary to have the lights on in the classroom during the day because of the dark clouds of dust that blew in from the farm lands east of town.

Krall was born in Danvers, 15 miles northeast of the station, and graduated from Montana State College in 1943.

The 1935 annual report stated that "fall plowed plots suffered more loss of soil from soil blowing than any other plots in the rotation." It was also noted



Central Montana Branch Station has been instrumental in the development of introduced grasses. Superintendent Jim Krall is pictured in a plot of Russian wildrye, first grown at the station in 1928. This late maturing grass is highly drought resistant and is an ideal pasture supplement to the earlier maturing Crested wheatgrass, which has been under test and development at the station since 1915. Present day clipping studies of 17 grass varieties to determine protein content at various stages of maturity gives promise of yielding valuable information for the stockman.