

Uncle Ab From Abington — April 25, 1976

By Jim Jones

Got around to welcoming an old friend to the place the other day -- got a new subscriptions to the Indiana Prairie Farmer. Hadn't taken the paper for many years and felt it was time to renew the acquaintance. This is the oldest farm paper going as far as I know--got its start back in the 1840's and has played a prominent part in Midwest agriculture for many years. All the old timers were still there ---Rev. Don Jennings, John Turnipseed, Slim and Spud, Carl Eiche, and so on. Written especially for the Indiana farmer (there are Illinois and Wisconsin editions) one can really see Hoosier agriculture action in its large format, and many pages. Comes every 2 weeks too--a real bargain.

Prairie Farmer was quite a campaigner for the farmer thru the early years of this century. they took over radio station WLS from Sears, Roebuck back in the 20's and for the first time the farmer had a radio station that was a part of his family, This made a great difference on long winter evenings when entertainment was scarce.

Diggin' thru Aunt Opal's possessions when we closed the Greenfield house, we found a Prairie Farmer Poultry Punch. This was a contraption used to tattoo a number on the wing web of chickens to aid in identification if they were stolen. Each buyer was assigned a number which the punch applied and the number with the owner's name was sent to all law officers in the Midwest. Chicken thieves became a problem after the roads were improved and cars became common. In 2 years Prairie Farmer sold over 84,000 of these punches. Aunty's punch was still in the original box and was mailed with a 7¢ stamp. Her number, PF 80699 was hers alone. This punch was no toy-- made of heavy cast metal with the number outlined in needle-sharp points to penetrate the web of the chicken. Don't know how many chicken thieves this method caught, but it would upset one if he happened to sit on the punch.

Well, the poultry punch is no longer around, but the Prairie Farmer is. Seems like old times to find one in the RFD box again. Almost as much fun as the Wish Book.