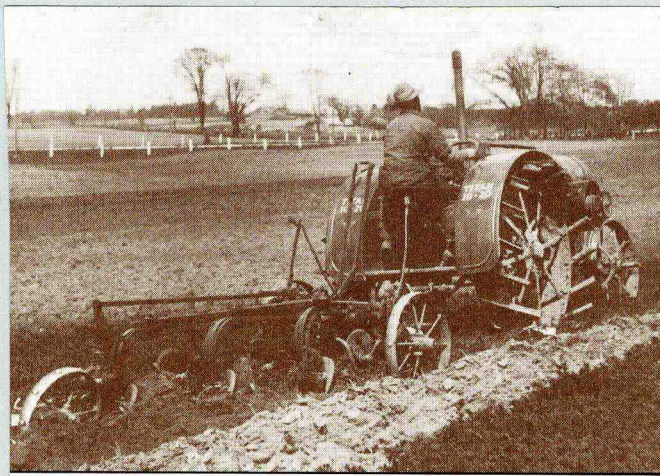


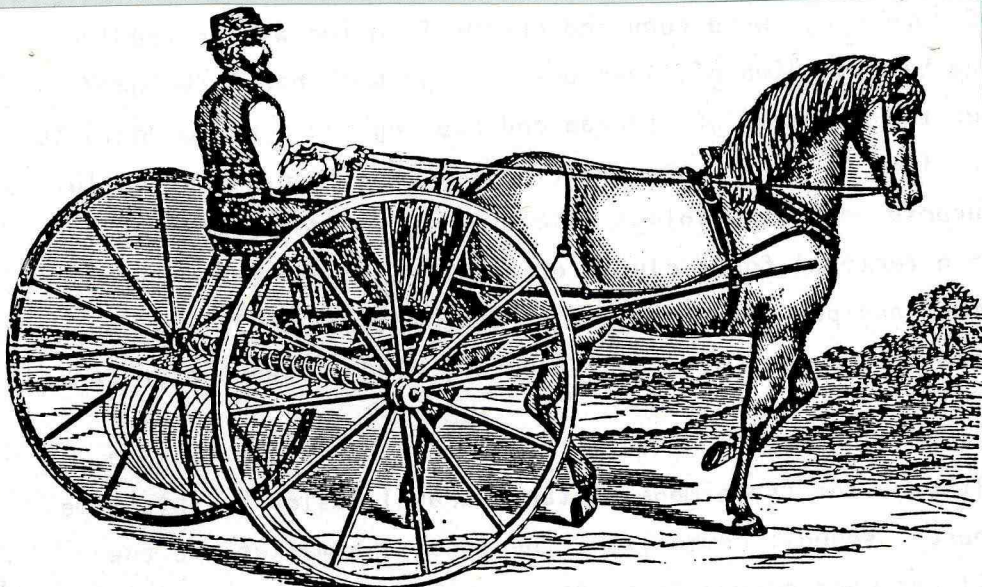
A turn-of-the-century plowman earns a respite.



Mechanized seeders now help ease the task of planting.



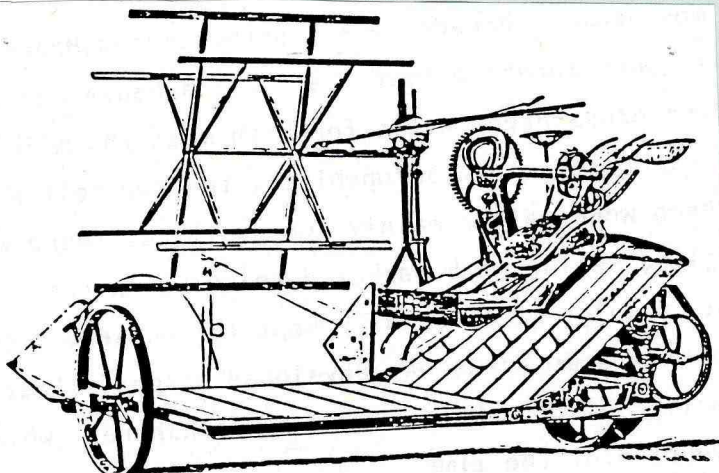
Early tractors ran on steel wheels.



Sulky Rake



In 1916, apples were packed in stout barrels.



Binder

DDT Blamed for Disappearance of Bald Eagles from Elgin

How many pairs of Northern Bald Eagles are still actively nesting in Elgin County?

The answer to this question would be welcomed by area naturalists who have become alarmed about the rapid decline of nesting eagles in this vicinity. A concentrated effort has been made this spring to survey new and old nest sites to try and determine the present nesting status of this species. The results of this study will be forwarded to Sergej Postupalusky, who is associated with the Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin at Madison, Wisconsin. Mr. Postupalusky has requested assistance in his project of surveying the eagle

population of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario.

According to his 1968 report, there were only five pairs of eagles nesting in all of Southwestern Ontario and of these nests there was no conclusive proof that any young were raised. Present information indicates that Middlesex and Elgin Counties each have at least one active nest.

This may come as startling news to many who remember numerous nest sites within the county but have not noticed their gradual disappearance. The late W. E. Saunders, a prominent London naturalist, made the statement in one of his nature articles that "there was an eagle nest for every mile of Lake Erie shoreline at the turn of the century".

In Elgin County these are approximately 60 miles of shoreline and many miles of potential nesting territory along the Thames River on the north boundary of Aldborough, Dunwich and Southwood townships. In addition, nesting sites were known to exist on the larger streams flowing into Lake Erie, Talbot, Kettle, Catfish and Otter creeks. It would not be stretching one's imagination to place an estimate of 100 active nests producing young at the close of the past century.

What has happened to this magnificent bird, the bird chosen as the national symbol of the United States? There are several contributing factors. Agricultural expansion, lumbering, hunting, lake bank erosion, natural predators, and the human population increase have all had some effect. The fact that this bird nests near reasonably large bodies of water or streams suggests that its diet consists of a large percentage of fish.

The Elgin County eagles



The Northern Bald Eagle

were still not suffering too badly until sometime during the 1950's. During these years, pairs would nest, the female would start incubating in early March but when the nests were inspected again in late May, all was quiet and there were no young. This was a disturbing situation and local naturalists were concerned. It was some time before the real culprit was discovered — a pesticide called DDT or technically known as dichloro - diphenol - trichloroethane.

Recent research in England and in this country has shown that recent steep declines in certain raptorial and fish-eating birds have been accompanied by decreases in egg-shell thickness. The latter apparently results from disorders in calcium metabolism caused by enzymatic breakdown of steroid hormones induced by DDE, a Metabolite of DDT. Evidently this is the mechanism by which residual organochlorine pesticides cause reproductive failures in these birds. The immediate

simultaneously on two continents.

What hope is there for preserving the remaining eagles? Practically none. There are still plenty of nest sites available, but with the continual use of DDT there is no hope of reproduction and the remaining pairs of eagles will gradually die off. Agricultural officials say that DDT will remain on the market and be used only under "strict" regulations. People today will not accept anything less than perfect fruit and these sprays, even if they eliminate some of the fauna, are essential.

Dr. Keith Reynolds, who used to write a weekly column, Mostly Birds, stated on September 29, 1962: "Chemicals are wrecking the balance of nature. All of these pesticides were developed, of course, because there was, and still is, a demand and need for them. Unfortunately in many cases the technology of their development and production often out-paced the conduct of adequate research to determine the biological impact of their use".

The St. Thomas Times-Journal published an editorial entitled "DDT Getting its Lumps" on March 10, 1969.

The story is still the same but the production of this controversial pesticide is not decreasing. The facts are quite evident to the Pesticides Control Section of the Department of Health. They have the DDT lion by the tail but still seem reluctant to twist it.

The late Charles Broley was a Canadian bank manager who, retiring at the age of 60, banded more than 1,100 young eagles. Most of these birds were banded in Florida but his work contributed a tremendous amount of new scientific knowledge about the habits of eagles. When Mr. Broley lectured at St. Thomas in 1953, he expressed concern about the population decline of the southern race of bald eagles.

Millions of pounds of pesticides are produced annually by big companies — companies whose shareholders would find it difficult to comprehend why anyone would worry about the loss of a few eagles while their shares were reaping handsome dividends.

The late Rachael Carson in her book "The Silent Spring" rocked the chemical world with her philosophy and predictions on the use of pesticides. The chemical companies, naturally rallied to defend their products and tried to smooth the tide of uncertainty that was developing in the minds of potential customers. Today, some of the former doubters are beginning to realize that Rachael Carson was not writing fiction and many of her theories are proving to be correct. It is a rather strange world we live in when chemicals that have been proven detrimental to many forms of wildlife are allowed to remain on the market.

Yes, we now live better electrically, but are we and other forms of life on this earth living better chemically?

We may not be able to save the bald eagle in Ontario, but many people could help in

this study of present and former nest sites. The adult bald eagle is a very large bird with a wing span up to seven and one-half feet. The adults have a white head and tail with the remainder of the body and wings very dark brown. Their bulky nests, sometimes 12 feet high with a four-foot diameter platform, are usually built in a fork of the tallest, most-difficult-to-climb tree in the woodlot.

Mrs. Florence Weekes of 883 Riverside Drive, London, has been very enthusiastic about this study and has tracked down many of the nesting sites. If you are familiar with bald eagles and know of any active or inactive nests, please forward the location (lot and concession number of the townships) to Mrs. Weekes, Earl Lemon, RR 7, Tillsonburg, or Marshall Field, 89 Elm Street, St. Thomas.

All Elgin County nesting eagle sites, past or present, will be plotted on a county map and retained by the St. Thomas Field Naturalists Club as a historical county

nesting distribution chart. A student of ornithology from Cornell University spent seventy days at Hawk Cliff near Port Stanley in 1967 observing the fall hawk migration. During that entire period, his total count of bald eagles was seven. Some 15 years earlier, 21 bald eagles were tabulated on a single September day's migration count. The odds for their survival are great and it is conceivable that the bald eagle could become extinct in Southern Ontario before the end of this century.



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In
Appreciation
and with
Gratitude

The Citizens of the Township
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Dutton present this Book as a
Tribute to the Valour of their
Sons and Daughters who
served in

World War II

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