



Western Electric

WESTERNER

Omaha Works
June 1983



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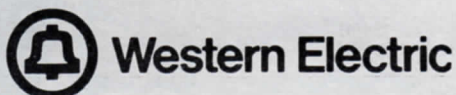
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On the cover

Happy 25th anniversary, Omaha Works! In 25 years, you've seen a lot of changes and a lot of faces. But many of those people who entered your doors during those early years are still here to help blow out the candles on your cake. They are the employees who helped make you what you are today. Among them are people like Jeannie Smyth (front, from left) of Dept. 441; Lowell Iske, Dept. 435; Bessie Harmon, Dept. 023; (back, from left) Roy Seals, Dept. 282; Ed Brumbaugh, Dept. 435; and Lilie Mae Rozmus, Dept. 533.

WESTERNER

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WE, the people

Whole towns of people have reported to work every day since the Omaha Works officially opened for business 25 years ago.

That's only figuratively speaking, of course, but just think: In the course of those years, the employee population has been as large as 7,200 people. Even at the current roll of 3,300 employees, our work force is larger than a number of small towns in Nebraska or Iowa.

Works employees, with their diverse backgrounds and skills and lifestyle preferences, represent a community — or "small town" — in themselves. They've come together these past 25 years to mold a business community and establish a respected reputation in all of Western Electric.

What kind of people make up the Omaha Works? On these pages are a few examples of who you will find among WE, the people.

Have pass, will travel

What's a nice guy like Ernie Wesolowski doing visiting other Western Electric locations during his vacation?

Ernie smiles when asked that question, apparently accustomed to people wondering why anyone would spend vacation time in an atmosphere so similar to his work environment.

There's a perfectly logical explanation. An electrician in Dept. 034, Ernie is a "DXing" enthusiast. DXing is a hobby that pertains to the distant reception of AM and shortwave radio stations all around the world.

"Radio and telecommunications are similar," Ernie noted. He's found that side trips to WE locations are good opportuni-

ties to see firsthand the technology so similar to that involved in DXing. "You can meet people interested in similar hobbies," he added, and being a Western Electric employee, he often is given a personal or a more extensive tour than available to the general public.

In the last 20 years, Ernie has managed to visit all 50 states, 25 countries and nine provinces of Canada. When he knows there is a Western Electric location where he will be vacationing, he calls the location in advance to arrange a visit. To date, Ernie has visited 20 locations — including several AT&T locations — some of them more than once.

He's been to the Atlanta Works twice, the first time a dozen years ago when it still was under construction. It's probably his favorite location to visit because "it's new and makes products similar to Omaha's," Ernie said.

Many of the plants he has visited are similar in structure to the Omaha Works, specifically those built in the '50s and '60s. "Most have courtyards and the familiar water tower," he recalled, and they've been built out in the country with the neighboring city growing up around them.

He also has taken a tour of the Long Lines control center in Bedminster, N.J., where long distance trunks are monitored. And up in Andover, Maine, Ernie visited a Telstar project ground station. Telstar was the nation's first "active" or retransmitting satellite developed by AT&T for experimental purposes. It paved the way for communication by earth satellite.

Ernie, a bachelor, sometimes travels alone. Other times, his parents have accompanied him

on his tours of Western locations, and a couple of organizations (of which he is a member) have taken tours, thanks to Ernie's arrangements.

Even when Ernie's not visiting a company location during his vacation, he keeps meeting people associated with the company. Once a former co-worker called out to him on a street in Waikiki, Hawaii, and Ernie met four WE employees from Greensboro, N.C., in — of all places — Iceland.

Now he makes it a point to wear Pioneer jackets and T-shirts on his vacations. Others who work for Western Electric come up to him and introduce themselves, he said.

When Ernie's not traveling about the countryside or absorbed in DXing, don't expect to find him home watching TV. He's a volunteer director of transportation services for members of the Tri-County Federation of the Blind. He also is a member of the Pathfinders, a fraternal insurance organization, and each year is responsible for the controls and lighting for the WEOMA Club talent show.

Maybe that explains why Ernie hasn't had the time to visit the WE service center location right here in his own hometown.

Long-distance commuting

In cities like Los Angeles and New York, hour-long rides to and from work are commonplace. But in these parts, an hour generally is considered a long time to be commuting.

That hasn't stopped a large group of employees who live in Lincoln from driving to Omaha every day for the past 25 years. They are former employees of the Lincoln Shops, a pilot plant

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A TRAVELING MAN . . . Like many vacationers, Ernie Wesolowski takes in tours on his trips. But you might be surprised where.

WE, the people

MILES TO GO . . . Soupy weather hasn't kept Lincoln residents from their jobs at the Works. In front (from left) are Laverne Elfeldt, Ruth Ann Foster and Charlie Struble; in back are Bob Meeker and Ken Frame. Ruth Ann, Charlie and Ken used to work in the Lincoln plant.

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Western opened in 1944.

The shops handled overflow work from the Hawthorne Works during wartime, manufacturing step-by-step switchboard systems, surface wire and frames.

The Lincoln Shops were never meant to be permanent, and when the Omaha Works was built the shops were phased out. Lincoln employees could apply for jobs in Omaha, and they did.

In the early years of the Works, about 300 former Lincoln Shops employees made the trip to Omaha on weekdays, using old Highway 6. One of them was Ruth Ann Foster, a secretary in Dept. 270, who's in a car pool of five Lincolnites.

She chose to commute to Omaha at the time, she said, because she had 15 years of service with Western and "didn't want to start all over." The pay was better than she could find in Lincoln, so the ride was worth it. "And we must enjoy it, or we wouldn't all do it," she added.

Fellow car pool member Ken Frame, a production control clerk in Dept. 531, didn't want to uproot his family, especially since his oldest daughter was about to enter the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. So, he decided to live in Lincoln and commute, "because it was a good job and I had nine years of service," he said. And in all those years, "I've had maybe four flat tires."

Lincolnite Charlie Struble, an investigator in Dept. 023, had intended to move to Omaha when his children were out of school. "But by then I was in the routine" of commuting and he stayed in Lincoln.

Inclement weather has caused Charlie to miss no more than four or five days of work since 1960 when he began here, he said. Looking back, "I didn't think it would be as good as it turned out."

The number of Lincolnites commuting to Omaha has dwindled to 29, due mostly to attrition. Also, some moved to Omaha. Others who still com-



mute are the following: Merv Carstens, Irish Donahoo, Dick Dormer, Chick Lange, Charlie Patterson, Ernie Janecek, Henry Gruenemeyer, Don Akeson, Richard Rinne, Walter Dring, Richard Reid, Christopher Madsen, Gene Nelson, Lloyd Hartman, Mary Hartman, Toxie Greer, Kelly Fuller, Bill Upton, John Doan, Geraldine Hauck, Henry Fox, Donna Matthes, Tony Budell, Wayne McIntosh, Wayne Fiedler and LaRoy Campbell.

Citizen Wu

When Peter Wu was born in Shandong Province of Northern China, no one could have imagined that one day he would live in the midwestern city of Omaha, Neb. And they certainly wouldn't have thought he would be a citizen of the United States.

But last April, Peter and his wife, Hui-Chen, were sworn in as citizens of this country, 10 years after arriving in Omaha.

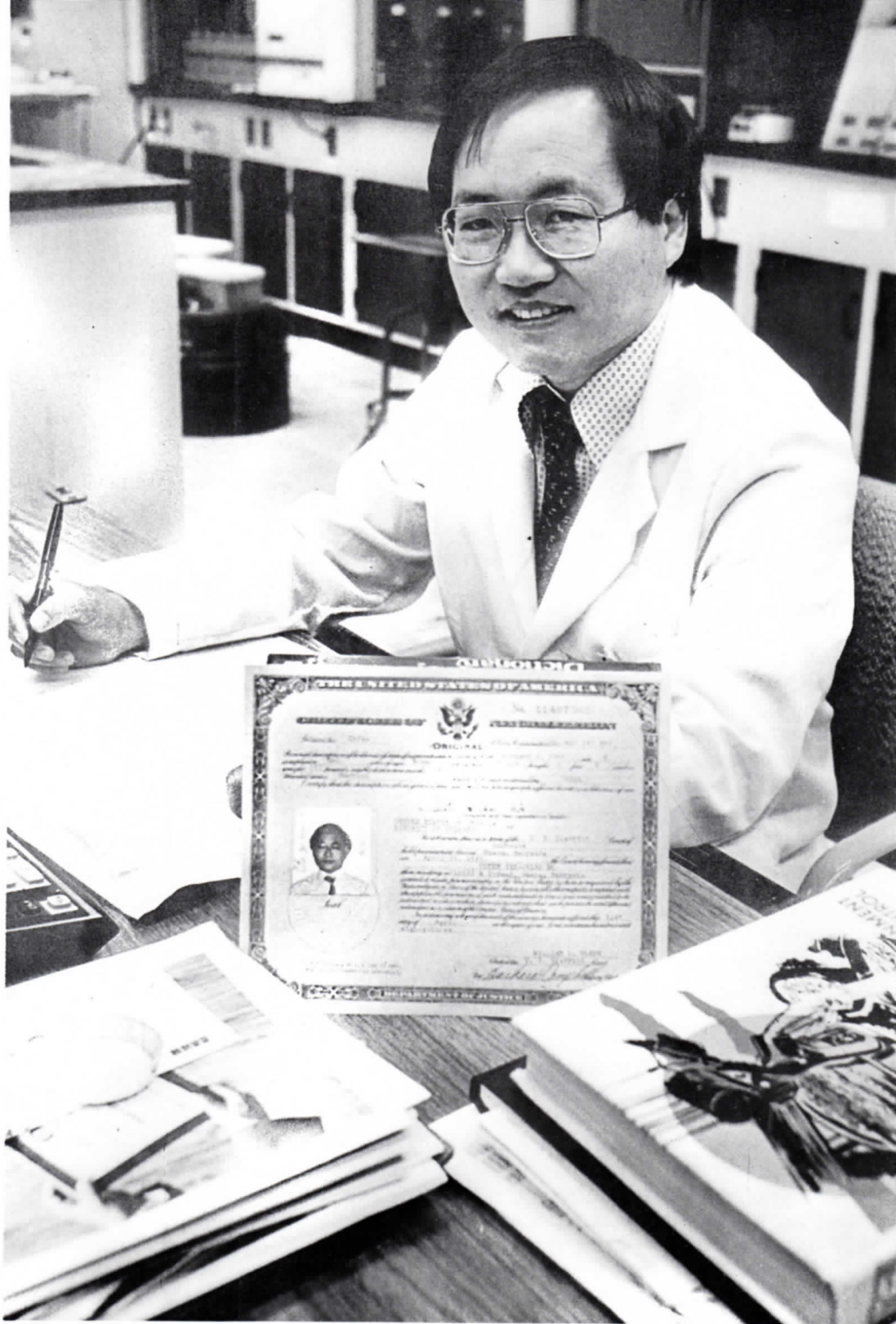
Peter (his baptismal and now legal first name), his parents, brothers and a sister eventually moved from China in 1953 and lived in Taiwan to escape a communist-controlled government.

He earned a bachelor of science degree in chemistry from a university in Taiwan, and decided he would like to work toward his master's degree in the U.S. Through the U.S. Information Service, he obtained a listing of this country's universities.

Peter applied for admission to five universities scattered across the country — in Oregon, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Arizona and Nebraska. He chose to attend Creighton University because "it offered me a teaching fellowship and wasn't so far away from Taiwan," he said.

The University of Arizona at Tucson also offered Peter a fellowship but "I didn't want to live in the desert," he explained.

After earning his master's degree, Peter worked as a chemist for several companies, among them Control Data and the Omaha Public Power District. By the time he had applied for permanent residency status in the U.S., Peter learned about an opening in the Works' chem lab. He was hired in 1978.



AMERICAN, NOW . . . Peter Wu took the U.S. citizenship test in April and passed. His certificate of citizenship, which he intends to frame, is in the foreground.

Peter recalled how overwhelmed he was by the magnitude of this country when he first saw the metropolitan buildings of San Francisco. He said the only real problem he had adapting to American life was speaking English, although he had an introduction to the language during his high school years.

Peter admits that living in a

country this size is like a dream come true. "It has many opportunities," he said, "and I like to travel. In this huge country you can go where you want, when you want."

China's bigger, he said, but he'd never live under its communist rule. When you get right down to it, the best part Citizen Wu likes about the U.S. is being free.

Seems like only yesterday

When industrial engineer Gary Reimers of Dept. 022 was a young boy, he used to visit his grandmother in her large white frame home situated at the northeastern edge of the small town of Millard.

In a corral built on the Reimers property, Gary tended what many a child his age would have envied — his very own horses. You could see them from 132nd Street, where it curves into Millard.

The house isn't there anymore. In its place stands a Sinclair gas station. And Gary, although he still tends to horses he owns, does so on his own farm just south of Gretna.

When the boy Reimers would turn his head to the northeast, how could he have known that those neat little farm homes he saw would one day be replaced by a huge industrial complex of buildings? And furthermore, how could he have guessed he

would work there?

PLANS TO build the Omaha Works in what was essentially a rural setting in 1956 might have seemed strange to the people living in Omaha, some of them working in the pilot plant buildings in downtown Omaha that preceded the Works.

After all, 72nd Street then was considered Omaha's western fringe. Anything beyond that was "out in the country."

L Street from 120th Street west was nothing more than a gravel country road. Between 84th and 120th streets, L Street didn't even exist. Not until the Works was nearly completed did construction begin to pave and extend L Street.

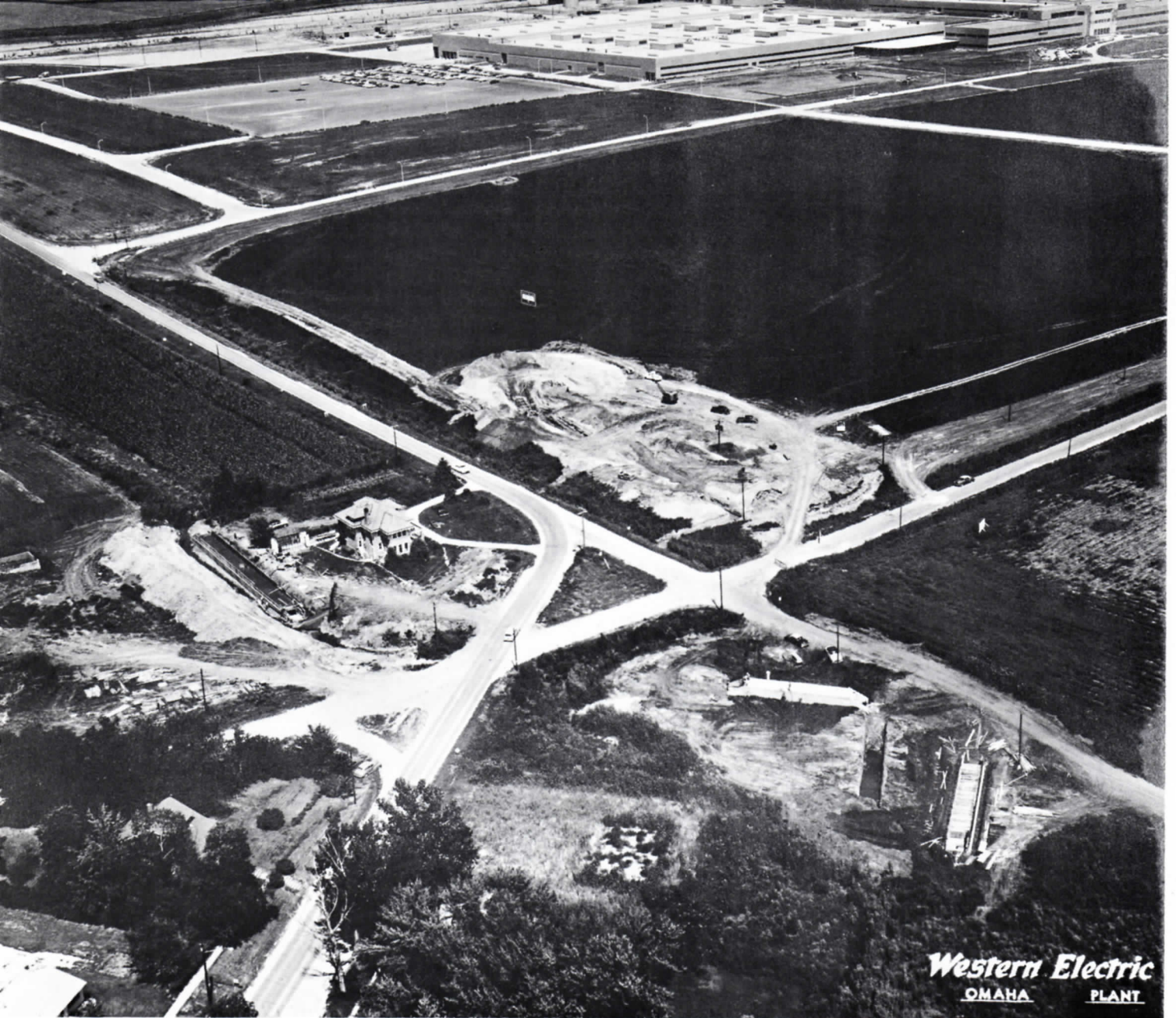
Early employees of the new Omaha Works in 1958 undoubtedly saw the huge, two-story brick home situated at the southeast corner of the intersection of 132nd and L streets. It

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TIME TO GO HOME . . . Do you see yourself in this 1959 crowd of employees leaving Building 30? If you do — and if you haven't already identified yourself in previous old photos in recent issues — come to the public relations office and pick up a gift.







Western Electric
OMAHA PLANT

L Street was muddy adventure

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belonged to Gary's uncle and aunt, Henry and Elsie Andresen.

The house was sold and eventually moved to a new location, to make room for road construction, Gary said. "You'll find that house behind the American Legion Club in Millard," he explained. Across from it is one of the farm houses formerly on Works property. Even the old Reimers house has been relocated in Millard's residential area.

THE "OUTER limits" location of the Works was intimidating, at least initially, to some Works employees.

Regina Fuksa, an account analyst in Dept. 071, recalled how she used to make "practice runs" to the plant before it

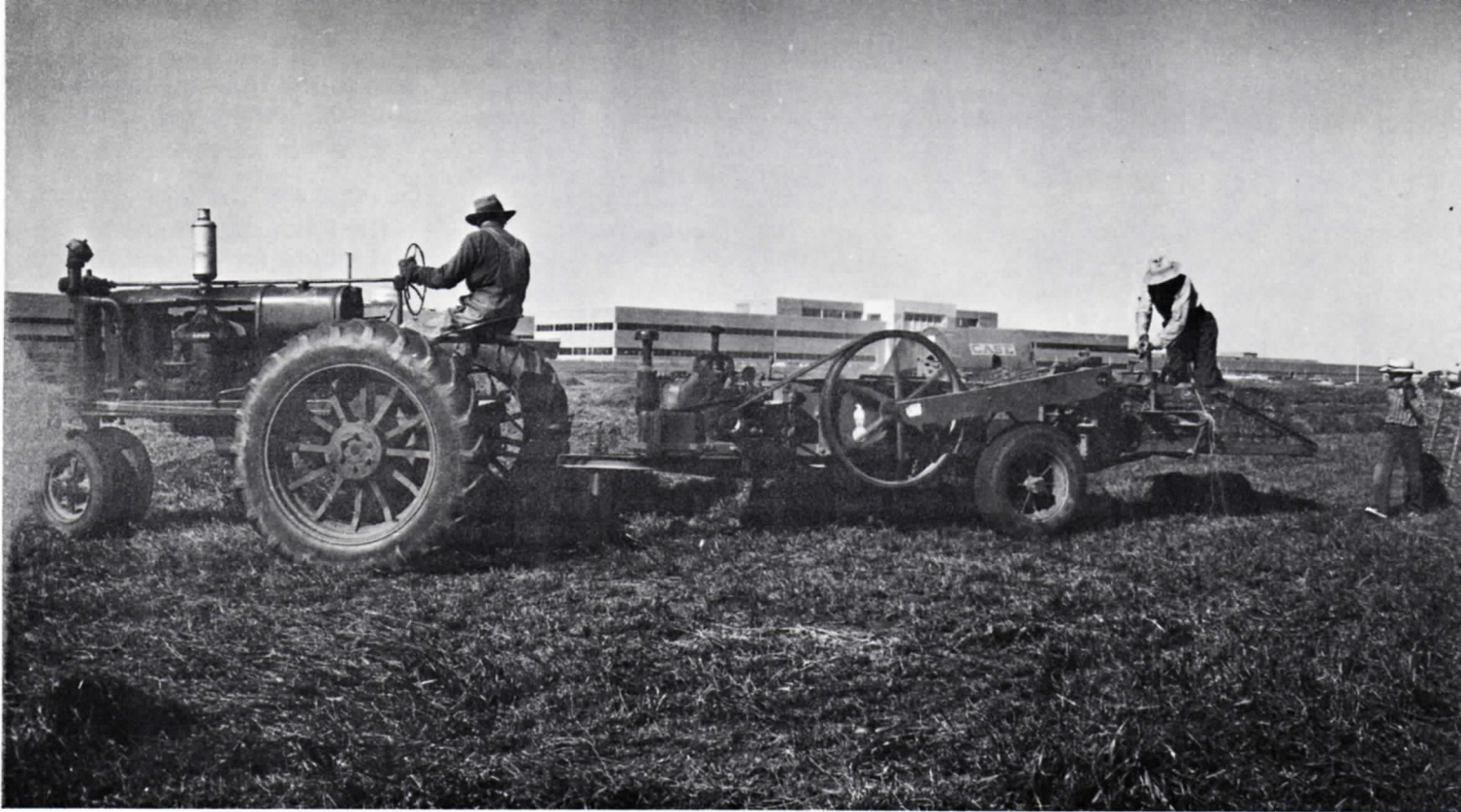
opened, to make sure she didn't get lost.

"I even thought about quitting, it seemed so far — and gas (then) was expensive," she said. Because L Street didn't cut through, she would drive from 42nd and Q streets to 132nd Street, then head north to the Works.

Lee Tweedy, a production control clerk in Dept. 531, remembers the practice runs, too. "I didn't even know where Millard was," she said.

And she remembers the day she and Regina decided to take a shortcut home instead of traveling on Q Street. Construction had begun on L Street, and both women decided to give it a try. The road got to be muddy,

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OPPOSITE PAGE . . . With the new Omaha Works in the background, the former Andresen home is shown west of where 132nd Street begins to curve into Millard, crossing L Street along the way. The former Reimers house, which had been in the foreground, already was moved when the photo was taken in August 1958. Above, alfalfa grown on the Works' front grounds is harvested and baled for Boys Town during the early years of manufacturing operations. Left, the Omaha Works held its first open house in 1959 with Ted Anderson, WEOMA Queen Karen Watts, Una Bowman and Will Rogers on hand to greet visitors.

etc.

Nostalgia bits

Delving into the Works' 25-year history uncovers all kinds of information bits.

Do you realize, for example, that a number of employees have worked in the same areas for almost all of those years? Among them are Margie Donovan and Stan Svoboda of Dept. 252, who have worked side by side since 1958 in their respective jobs. Margie's a tester and Stan is a repairer.

Glenn Lund has worked in waste treatment plant operations (Dept. 234) since July 1961 and Jerry Danahy of Dept. 532 has been a salvage analyst for at least 20 years.

Joyce Wermuth of Dept. 023 has been an inspector since her first day on the job in April 1956. Joyce, by the way, was the first person to be interviewed when Western Electric began taking applications for the pilot plant downtown. She was the third person hired.

Other bits of information uncovered include the fact that Horst Woellner, a senior planning engineer in Dept. 271, has been awarded the most patents among Works engineers. He has eight. And Rod Mach, a receiver

in Dept. 533, is the only Works employee to have received the Solleret Award for having avoided serious foot injury. (Ardis Knight of Dept. 441 has been nominated for the award.)

Of the 17 employees who were named Miss WEOMA in past years, just three still work here: Sharon Redlinger (Dept. 471), Sandy Prue (Dept. 445) and Mary Jo Pinkerton (Dept. 282). Gene Berg, now retired, had a hand in organizing the initial Miss WEOMA (Hello Charley) queen contest.

Trip to the Whitehouse

Looks like John "Andy" Anderson, a control systems technician in Dept. 232, will have a chance to meet President Reagan.

John's son, Walter, has named a Presidential Scholar. The President will present him with a medallion this month. No parent can stay home for an event like that, so John and his wife will accompany their son when he goes to Washington, D.C.

Walter is one of 141 students from across the country to be so honored.

Tricycles presented

The Spina Bifida Association of Omaha has two new tricycles thanks to the Cornhusker Chapter Pioneers. The specially built trikes feature hand instead of foot pedals.

Some parts for the trikes are made at the Omaha Works and

sent to the Rolling Meadows (Illinois) Pioneers to use in assembly.

Savings plan results

The following are the March unit values for the Bell System Savings Plan (BSSP), the Savings and Security Plan (SSP) for non-salaried employees, and the Bell System Voluntary Contribution Plan (BSVCP).

BSSP		
	Units Value	Units Credited Per Dollar
AT&T	3.4007	.2940
Government Obligations	3.1476	.3176
Equity Portfolio	2.4166	.4137
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.4397	.6945
SSP		
	Units Value	Units Credited Per Dollar
AT&T	1.5849	.6309
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.5378	.6502
BSVCP		
	Units Value	Units Per Dollar
AT&T	1.083	.922
Mutual Fund	1.277	.783
Money Market	1.042	.958
Guaranteed Interest Fund	1.064	.939

A reminder

Those of you who attend the Omaha Works' 25-year anniversary barbecue dinner June 14, 15 or 16, please remember: Other employees and their families will be waiting in line for their turns. Please observe the dinner time on your tickets and make room for others after you finish eating.



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INCORPORATED AND MIKE GREEN

Newcomers sparked a walkout

(Continued from Page 8) and Lee's car was "high-centered" in the muck.

The vastness that characterized the rural surroundings of the Works was just as apparent on the inside — all 44 acres under roof. When Leroy Stamp reported to the cable shop for work in January 1958, he could see from one end of the shop to the other.

He and Bob Oslin (now retired) were the first 35-grade inspectors brought to the Works, both having worked in the "A" Building downtown.

"There was nothing in the shop but one exchange insulating line," Leroy reminisced. All around were contractors working to complete the shop. Ropes sectioned off that area that was completed and officially Western Electric property from the area that was under contract work.

Bob and Leroy, now a quality assurance checker in Dept. 1231, couldn't begin their jobs until the insulating line was proven in. To keep busy, they grabbed a couple of brooms and began sweeping up debris in the shop.

"The next thing I know, Char-

lie Muehlhausen (now a retired department chief) was hurriedly walking toward us, telling us to put those brooms down," Leroy said. It seems the duo had digressed from WE property and had caused the contractors to stop work and walk out.

THE RURAL surroundings of the Omaha Works didn't change overnight, even after manufacturing was well under way. Some employees recall how alfalfa continued to grow on the south grounds of Works property. For several years, Boys Town was allowed to cultivate and harvest the crop as its own.

Other employees remember how at least one pilot of a small plane found the expanse of the Works' grounds too good to pass up. Then again, he didn't have much choice.

Engineering associate Fred Cottone (Dept. 233) was an electrician working seven-day coverage one Sunday in the autumn of 1958. On that day the pilot of a light plane ran out of gas and made an emergency landing on what is now the front lawn of the Works.

It was decided that the plane should be dismantled and removed from Works property. That would be safer than the pilot attempting a takeoff on a substitute runway.

Not long after, more trees were planted along the front access road and dotting the grounds. There hasn't been another plane landing at the Works since then.

Retirements



Darlene Fletcher
25 years



Doris Leadholm
24 years

Not pictured:

- Lyle Reuter — 26 years
- Eleanor Konczal — 20 years
- Frances Kennedy — 19 years
- Robert Hannon — 16 years
- Laurel Fletcher — 24 years
- Donna Cemer — 21 years

Safety lauded

For the third time in four years, the Omaha Works has been named the winner of the Cable and Wire Products Division Environmental Health and Safety Award.

The recipient of the award was selected on the basis of an overall safety program during 1982. In January of 1982, the Works had attained a million man-hours without a lost time case. Days away cases resulting from serious injuries dropped from 27 to 18 last year.

The fine safety record for 1982 is due to the safety consciousness of Works employees — people like Bonnie Spencer of Dept. 437, the latest member of the Wise Owl Club.

Bonnie became a member by having worn her safety glasses, thus preventing serious injury when hot plastic squirted out of a double extruder machine.



Bonnie Spencer

Service anniversaries

30 years

B. Z. Hofmann 400 6/6

25 years

R. L. Baker 231 6/2
 G. P. Christensen Jr. 231 6/23
 D. I. Davis 273 6/18
 J. A. Gau 232 6/27
 R. F. Hardin 022 6/23
 D. J. Harris 231 6/16
 G. L. Kahler 245 6/16
 R. W. Laughlin 231 6/16
 L. J. Nigh 232 6/16
 J. E. Stewart 475 6/23

D. B. Sundquist 232 6/17

C. F. Zoucha 472 6/25

20 years

S. C. Carpenter 445 6/25

15 years

G. L. Brummett 532 6/18
 M. S. Hollinger 287 6/18
 M. M. Nootz 435 6/17
 M. S. Reick 283 6/26
 G. W. Schabloske Jr. 449 6/10
 L. I. Slizoski 435 6/26
 L. P. Stamp 531 6/18



Last frame

One never knows what to expect from a customer.

A package arrived at the Product Display Center that contained an oblong wooden box with a note attached. It came from Dwain Runnels, manager — distribution services, for Wisconsin Telephone.

The box was an old Western Electric cable terminal that had been used in a Milwaukee building until recently when renovation of the building required its removal.

The note read, "We are returning this terminal for credit . . . the credit being it has served us for many years."

How many years is uncertain. Leo Thietje, who has been researching the origin of early Western Electric products displayed in the Employee

Activities Mall, estimated the old cable terminal dates back to the turn of the century. Its wires were wrapped in cotton string and covered with shellac to protect them from the elements.

We don't use shellac for protection anymore, but we still make cable terminals. Utility operator Larry Standley of Dept. 445 holds a 53A4-50 cable terminal manufactured at the Omaha Works. Ann Nemecek, a wireman in Dept. 445, shows its predecessor which eventually will be displayed in the mall.



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