

IN PURSUIT OF A DREAM

Although Tennessee is now primarily industrial, with most of its people living in urban areas, many Tennesseans still derive their livelihood from the land. The state's leading crops are cotton, soybeans and tobacco. Additionally, cattle, dairy products and hogs are principal farm commodities.

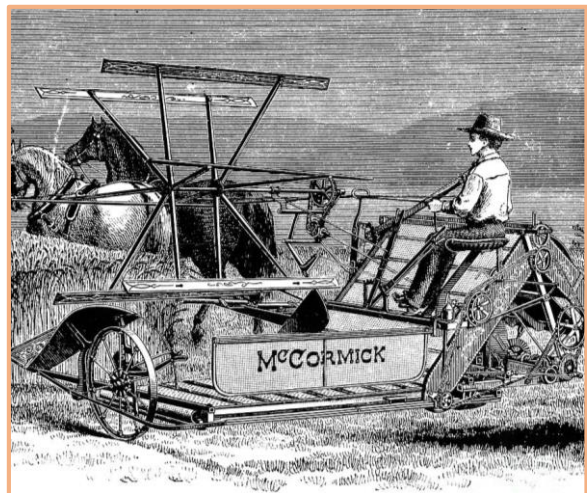
Agriculture, then, has played a dominant role in Tennessee's economy from my earliest memory. Tools that made harvesting better and more efficient were important to farmers in this state and others across the country.

Consider, for example, the mechanical reaper, which is a semi-automated contraption that harvests crops. Its development was a big deal to people who depended on the land for their living.

Robert McCormick of Walnut Grove, Va., was a mechanical genius who invented many farm devices, but he had become a laughingstock of his community because of his failure to make a grain-cutting implement operate successfully. He designed the McCormick Reaper, but was unable to perfect it.

In spite of the discouragements of his father and the ridicule of the neighbors, McCormick's son, Cyrus McCormick, took up the cause. After years of experiments and failures, Cyrus McCormick finally succeeded in constructing a reaper that would cut grains, and McCormick secured the patent for it in 1834.

But even then, jealous opposition prevented it from being used, and it was only after years of labor to introduce it, and his personal guarantee to each purchaser that it would harvest the crop, that McCormick was able to begin making sales. After long years of waiting, he arranged with a firm in Cincinnati to manufacture 100 machines and the famous McCormick Reaper was born. McCormick's firm, McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, became part of International Harvester Company in 1902.



(more)

What characterized the push to make the dream of Robert McCormick – and then his son, Cyrus – to become a reality? Several factors, including:

1. An unwavering belief in the need for the product, and how it would positively impact farmers everywhere.
2. A determination that weathered ridicule and laughter of a product deemed foolish by many.
3. Perseverance that overcame setbacks and obstacles that would have derailed lesser individuals.

What about you? Do you have a passion for the pursuit of your dream or profession that won't be denied?

Such endurance brings success in both the secular and spiritual realms.

We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Romans 5:3-5).

– Beecher Hunter