

Moonbows

In July 1988 the decision was made to install an irrigation system at 455 West Florence Road. The equipment which seemed the most sensible was called a walker. The sprayer on a 3-wheel cart was pulled thru the field by a cable that was motor driven. The revolving water arc covered many rows of corn on all sides of the cart. (You made sure you never got caught under that arc because you would get drenched and that water was brrr! cold. Below are the sprayer and its cable cart:



The source of water came from a large rubber hose which trailed behind the “walker” (or sprayer) and was filled by 20-foot-long aluminum pipes. These were laid out to two creek-and-spring-fed

lakes that were dug on the property.

Below are the pipes:



A tractor-driven pump pulled the water out of the lakes.
The water pump is pictured below:



We bought the system from a man in Wisconsin and I remember the day the man's worker delivered some of the pipes. He had them (20' long, mind you) strapped to the roof of a beat-up old station wagon. That must have been a challenge, driving thru down town Freeport...and I'd bet traffic gave him plenty of room.

At the end of each trip thru the field the equipment had to be realigned for another pass. The process was extremely labor-intensive and a number of people were hired to help move pipes and other equipment. I can still picture James Steele, weighing maybe 120 pounds, walking across the field with a pipe balanced over each shoulder. Tommy Kubly was there too, as were our dear friends, Art Ross and the Pickett family.



One of the prettiest sights I've ever seen was a rainbow (or, maybe, you could call it a moon bow) that appeared one full-moon night when the system was running.

Things went well until one of those pipes sprung a pinhole leak. Then the water, under heavy pressure, shot up in the air like a geyser or it carved a deep hole beneath the leaking pipe. This caused the whole system to be shut down until repairs were made. Oh, such a hassle that was!

I don't know, when you factor in the cost of the equipment, the cost of repairs, all the wages, and groceries required to keep all those people fed, whether it was all that great a decision but we did the best we could for six growing seasons to save thirsty corn crops. Neighbor Rich Meyer once told us that he was always happy to see our irrigation system running because that meant it would probably rain in a couple of days.

