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Who is Charles Deere Wiman?

I know this isn't about Jesse or the Lindeman Crawler but Jesse had such a high regard for the Colonel and visa versa, that I needed to add it to the story page, Jesse was known as the colonels boy among the engineers at John Deere.



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Who is Charles Deere Wiman?



Photo courtesy
Deere Archives

By Cindy Ladage

For John Deere collectors, it is no secret that John Deere originally came from Middlebury, Vermont and in 1836 settled in Grand Detour, Illinois. Once his business was up and running, John Deere moved from Grand Detour to Moline, Illinois in 1848. The move was a practical one—Moline provided access to the Mississippi River, which offered both energy and transportation.

John Deere and his wife, Demarius Lamb Deere, lived in several locations, but eventually they built a big house on a hill called "Red Cliff." The historic home is now owned by Roger and Cheryle Colmark, who are in the process of restoring and furnishing the home. Collectors lucky enough to attend the Reunion on the River had the opportunity to tour the home and listen to seminars about the home and furnishings that will fill it once it is complete.

Charles Deere, John Deere's son, carried on the family business in Moline and became the company's second president. Like his father before him, he built in 1872 a home on a hill that is called "Overlook" where he, his wife, Mary Little, and daughters, Anna and Catherine, lived. Catherine Deere eventually married William Butterworth, who became the third president of Deere and Company. Charles Deere built the Butterworths a mansion for their wedding present near "Overlook" in 1892. The two never had any children, but Anna, Catherine's sister, married William Wiman and together they had two sons, Charles and Dwight.

In 1906, Anna Deere Wiman died and in 1907, her father (Charles Deere)

died as well. At that time, Mary Deere invited her son-in-law and grandsons to move in with her. The boys lived there until their father and grandmother died. Charles and Dwight were then cared for by William and Catherine Butterworth. The four lived in the Butterworth Mansion.

As Charles Deere Wiman grew up, he went to Yale and worked at Deere and Company. While Charles stuck with the company, like his father and grandfather before him, his brother, Dwight, went to New York and became a Broadway producer and quite famous in his own right.

Randy Leffingwell, author of *John Deere*, wrote that Charles Deere's work history at the company began with Charles working from the bottom up: "... Wiman joined the firm in 1915 as a line employee in the shop, earning 15 cents per hour. In 1919, he was named to the board, and in 1924, he was appointed director of manufacturing, in time for the first wave of new tractors. Wiman was well liked and respected by both shop workers and board members."

When Charles Deere Wiman became a member of the board in 1924, he also began serving as John Deere's vice president in charge of factory operations. Wiman served in the military as well as working at Deere.

Deere's company history is outlined on its website, www.deere.com, and states, "His career combined dedication to the company with loyalty to his country. Wiman took several leaves of absence from John Deere to serve in the military. In 1916, he trained

as a civilian pilot, received his license and flew for three months before being injured in a fall. After recovery, he returned to Deere and Company until the United States entered World War I. Wiman joined the U.S. Army and was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He was promoted several times and reached the rank of captain before being decommissioned in 1919."

It was in 1920 that Charles and his wife, the former Pattie Southall, moved into Overlook. Here they raised two daughters, Mary Jane and Patricia. It was when his uncle, William Butterworth, retired in 1928 that he took over at the helm of the company and served as president at the young age of 35. Charles Deere Wiman's accomplishments over the years with the company included emphasis on research and new product development.

Serving not only in World War I but also in World War II, in 1942 Wiman was commissioned as a colonel in the U.S. Army. The Deere website states that in 1944, Charles Deere Wiman "was appointed director of the Farm Machinery and Equipment Division of the War Production Board. To carry out his duties, the Army placed him on inactive status. He rejoined Deere and Company in mid-1944 and remained at its helm until his death in 1955."

After his death, Charles Deere Wiman's wife Pattie continued to live in Moline at "Overlook" until her death in 1976. Upon her death, she donated the home and the surrounding property to the William Butterworth Memorial Trust, which also runs the Butterworth mansion.