



The Land of Lincoln

The State of Illinois is 55,584 square miles. The Mississippi River forms the state's western border and Lake Michigan is the far northeastern border. Chicago, a port on Lake Michigan, is the third largest city in the US. Over 12 million people live in the state, and over 75% of the population lives in the Chicago metropolitan area. While Illinois is the 5th most populous state (behind California, Texas, New York and Florida), nearly 75% of the state is covered with farmland.

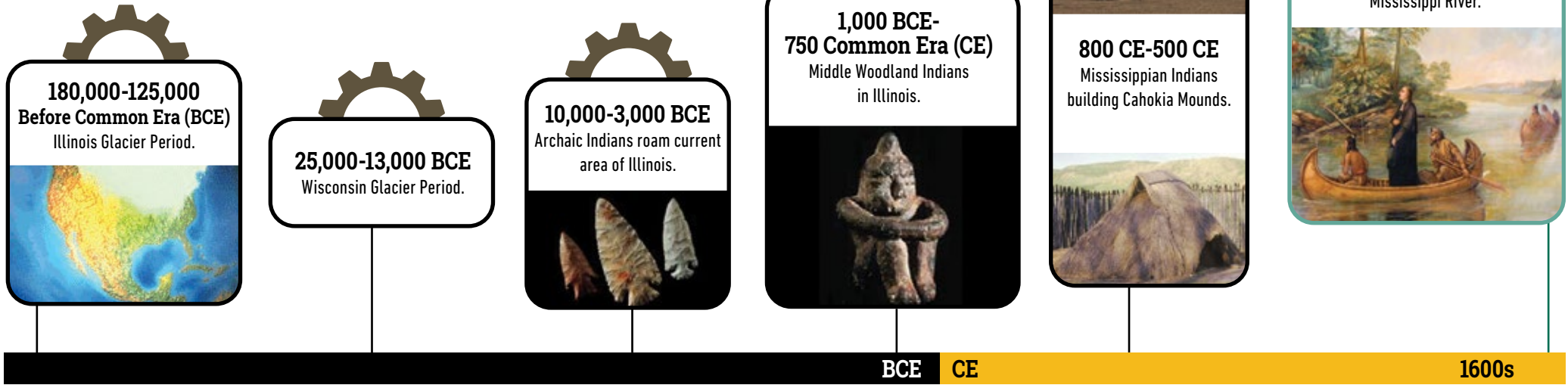
Illinois has over 70,000 farms covering over 27 million acres. Those farms account for over \$19 billion in revenue each year. Not only do we plant and harvest goods in Illinois, we also process and ship various agricultural products across the state, the nation and the world. Read on to see how Illinois became a 200-year-old agricultural powerhouse.



The landscape of Illinois that is favorable for farming is due mainly to the glacier periods from over the last 2 million years. Glaciers scraped the land leaving rock and sediment behind. This glacier movement formed our current lakes and rivers and as it retreated some of the most productive soil in the world was left behind. Drummer silty clay loam, the official state soil, is found on more than 1.5 million acres of Illinois land.

The Fertile Soil

When Marquette and Jolliet first visited Illinois, they noted the fertile soil and abundant plants. Much of Illinois was covered in swampland unsuitable to normal farming practices. Settlers drained the lands by creating drainage ditches and placing underground tiles to aid moving water off the land and into the local streams and rivers. Removing the water left Illinois with thick, rich black soil. The soil is dark because of the high amount of organic matter that comes from the decomposition of prairie plants that grew on the soil. Ditches were replaced by terra cotta (clay) tiles. Those have now been replaced by plastic tiles underground. Draining the soil allows plants to grow better. Drainage is even important with house plants; make sure there is a hole in the bottom of your pot to allow extra water to exit.



A Fight for Land

As both the French and English continued to explore the new lands of North America, both were looking for valuable natural resources to expand their empire. The Native Americans of the Illinois area supported the French and were living peaceably with them. Many tribes were trapping fur and trading with the French. When the English fought the French for control over the area we now consider the Midwest, many Native Americans fought with the French. These battles are called the French and Indian War. When the English won, they took control of all land east of the Mississippi, including Illinois.

Journey to Statehood

During the American Revolution, Illinois was considered part of the State of Virginia. George Rogers Clark raised an army under the control of the State of Virginia and led his army to peacefully seize control of Forts Kaskaskia and Vincennes.

Northwest Territory

After the American Revolution, the new U.S. Government established rules to encourage settlers into the new frontier. As part of the Northwest Territory, education and religious freedom were important, slavery was not allowed and settlers were allowed a trial by jury.

Indiana Territory

Although settlers started moving to the new area, many felt the size of the Northwest Territory was too large to provide protection from Native Americans and have control. In 1800 Illinois became a part of the Indiana Territory.

Illinois Territory

Still more settlers continued to move west. These settlers felt the government was still too far away to protect and serve them. In 1809 the U.S. Congress formed the Illinois Territory that includes present day Illinois, Wisconsin and parts of Michigan and Minnesota.

The Rush to Statehood

As more states were being admitted to the union, there was a goal to allow an equal number of slave and free states. Mississippi, Alabama and Missouri were all seeking statehood at the same time as Illinois. Making Illinois a free state was important to many members of Congress. Nathaniel Pope, the delegate from Illinois to Congress, worked to expand the boundary of Illinois, which originally stopped just south of Lake Michigan and did not include access to Lake Michigan. Pope worked to push the border of Illinois north 31 miles to include modern-day Chicago to use as a port on the Great Lakes as well as the lead rich area around Galena located on the Mississippi River in far northwestern Illinois.

Fort Dearborn

In 1803, the U.S. Congress authorized a new fort to be located on Lake Michigan near the Chicago River. Named after Henry Dearborn, an American Revolution hero and Secretary of War under Thomas Jefferson, the fort was situated across the river from a farm and trading post established by Jean du Sable. Many believe the word Chicago is translated from the Native American word that means 'the place of bad smells' because the river and swampy area around it had a distinct odor! Fort Dearborn was the site of a bloody battle during the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain.



Fathers

Ninian Edwards **(1)** was the first Territorial Governor of the State of Illinois. Edwards' cousin was Nathaniel Pope **(2)**. Pope served as the Illinois Territory Representative to the U.S. Congress. Pope's nephew was Daniel Pope Cook **(3)** who was a supporter of Illinois Statehood. Cook would serve in the U.S. House of Representatives as our second representative. Both Cook, and Pope were anti-slavery supporters. Our first representative was John McLean **(4)**, who was in favor of slavery expanding to Illinois. When Illinois was named a state, War of 1812 hero Shadrach Bond **(5)** was elected Governor. If you look closely on the map, Illinois has counties named after each of our founding fathers.



Roads and Rivers

As settlers continued to move west into Illinois, there were three new inventions that helped them travel. The National Road was started by President Thomas Jefferson in 1806. The goal was to provide citizens with a method to travel west. From Cumberland, Maryland toward St. Louis, Missouri, the National Road was funded by the U.S. government. In 1828, the National Road entered Illinois near Marshall. Work continued through 1837 when it reached the Illinois capital of Vandalia. Although called a road, we would consider this a wide trail.

Steamboats became a major way to move people and supplies after Robert Fulton improved the design of earlier boats. Steamboats were able to carry heavy loads and because they had flat bottoms, rivers didn't have to be as deep for these boats. The Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio and Wabash Rivers each had significant steam boat traffic after the steamboat "New Orleans" first entered the Mississippi River in 1811.



Work began in 1836 to build a canal from Lake Michigan to the Illinois River, which would connect the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Workers earned \$1 per day for a 15-hour day. The canal provided transportation for passengers as well as agricultural goods. When the Illinois and Michigan Canal was finished Chicago became the largest inland port in the nation!

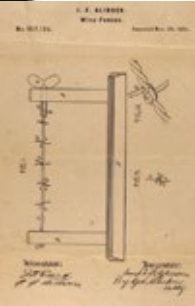
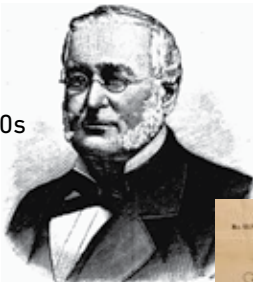
Cyrus McCormick

McCormick was born in Virginia to an inventor father. Although he invented a reaper in Virginia, he struggled to sell and manufacture the harvesting machines in the hilly area of the east coast. In 1847, he and his brother moved to Chicago and established a factory. Chicago provided water transportation of raw materials and the new railroads that allowed him to ship his product to market. McCormick named his new company McCormick Harvesting Company. Thanks to his invention, Illinois farmers had a faster way to harvest wheat and other grains.



Joseph Glidden

Joseph Glidden moved to DeKalb in 1842. In the 1870s Glidden's wife, Lucinda, complained about livestock getting into her yard and garden. Shortly after her complaints, she noticed her wire hairpins were disappearing from her dressing table. Joseph was using those pins to work on a new type of fencing. In 1874 Glidden was issued a patent for his barbed wire fence. This new fencing was made from a combination of round and thorny barbed wires. Glidden's wire helped contain livestock without using wooden fences. The new fencing limited the open range of cowboys and ranchers and the nomadic ways of Native Americans. This created arguments about who controlled the land. At the time of his death, Glidden was one of the richest men in America. Before his death, he gave 63 acres of his land as a site for the North Illinois Normal School. A normal school was a place to train teachers. Opened in 1898, the name was changed in 1957 to Northern Illinois University.



RAILS

As the transportation infrastructure continued to expand, the Illinois Legislature looked for ways to carry more agricultural products from the farms to market. As early as 1830, ideas were discussed to build two primary rail lines. The Northern Cross Railroad would bisect the state from Danville to Quincy. The Illinois Central would go from Galena in the north to Cairo in the south. To fund the railroads, the state gave the railroad companies land on each side of the routes and the company sold the land to pay for the rail lines.

Building railroads and canals required a great number of new workers. Many of these workers were immigrants, people who left their homes in other countries to come to Illinois to live. The city of Teutopolis was founded by German immigrants because of the location and well drained soils. In 1846, Swedish immigrants founded Bishop Hill. Augustana College, in nearby Rock Island, was originally a Swedish college. Many Irish immigrants came to work on the rails and were quickly assimilated or taken into the new society.



John Deere

Deere was born in Rutland, Vermont and learned the trade of a blacksmith. Deere moved to Grand Detour, Illinois in 1836. Farms in the east were using wooden plows, but the thick, rich soil of Illinois would stick to the wooden plows and farmers would have to stop plowing to scrape the soil off. Deere saw the problem and set off to design a plow that would clean itself. Farmers were in awe of the new self-scouring plow made with a polished steel curved blade that Deere developed in 1837. In 1848, Deere moved to Moline and established a factory with river access.

Deere's plow allowed Illinois farmers to plow larger fields more quickly and plant more crops.

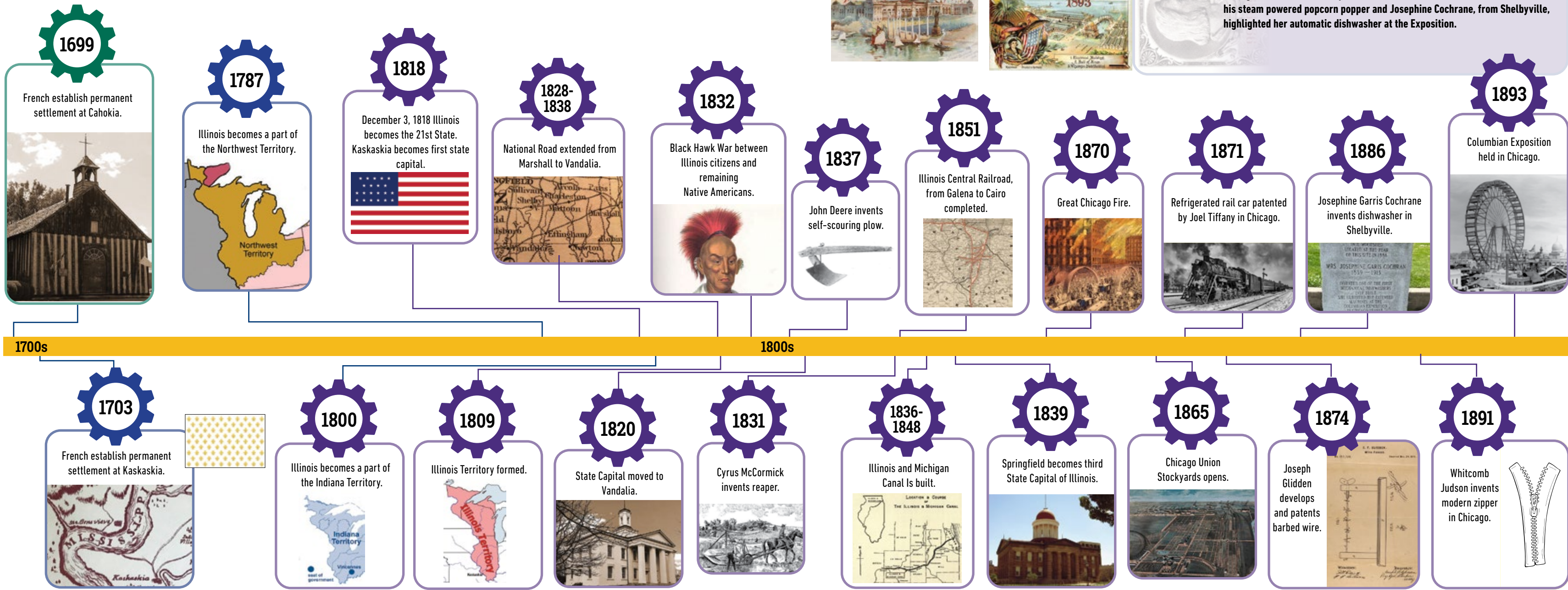
World's Columbian Exposition

Organized to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus's landing in the New World, The World's Columbian Exposition was a showcase for Chicago. The event was held only 22 years after the great Chicago fire and 28 years after the end of the Civil War. Chicago businessmen, including Marshal Field (department store owner), Philip Armour (meatpacker), Gustavus Swift (meatpacker) and Cyrus McCormick pledged financial support to win the fair. Highlighting the Exposition included the invention of the Ferris Wheel standing at 264 feet. Additionally, Cracker Jack, Shredded Wheat and Wrigley's Juicy Fruit gum debuted at the Exposition. Charles Creators, from Decatur, unveiled his steam powered popcorn popper and Josephine Cochrane, from Shelbyville, highlighted her automatic dishwasher at the Exposition.

SYMBOLS

state

State Tree:	White Oak
State Flower:	Violet
State Song:	"Illinois"
State Bird:	Cardinal
State Slogan:	Land of Lincoln
State Insect:	Monarch Butterfly
State Wildflower:	Milkweed
State Animal:	White-tailed Deer
State Fish:	Bluegill
State Prairie Grass:	Big Bluestem
State Soil:	Drummer Sitty Clay Loam
State Snack Food:	Popcorn
State Fruit:	Goldrush Apple
State Vegetable:	Sweet Corn
State Pie:	Pumpkin Pie
State Grain:	Corn
State Bean:	Soybean



Elgin Butter:

How does butter link to Illinois? As more people moved from rural to urban areas, many looked for convenient ways to help feed their families. Elgin, in northeastern Illinois, was home to many dairies, and they produced excess butter. Elgin was known as the butter capital of the world. Butter was traditionally sold in one-pound lumps, but when consumers asked for more convenient ways to store butter, businessmen in the Elgin area invented a butter printer, a fancy word for a cutter. All butter sold east of the Rocky Mountains in the familiar stick form typical to Illinois is called Elgin Butter. When western dairies grew and began using surplus milk to produce butter, the butter printers were outdated and new printers produced shorter stubby sticks. The names stuck and butter is referred to as Elgin Butter or Western Stubbies.



A. E. Staley

Augustus Eugene (Gene) Staley was first introduced to the soybean in the 1870s when a church missionary brought some back after a trip to China. Staley planted the beans and continued to harvest them for years as a youngster. By 1916, he had opened a corn starch plant in Decatur and was convinced that soybeans would be beneficial to Illinois farmers. He began speaking with farmers and encouraging them to try growing soybeans in rotation with corn. In his plant, Staley crushed the soybeans he had farmers growing and used the oil and meal for a variety of new products. In 1917, Staley formed sports clubs for his workers to participate in and in 1920 George Halas was hired to lead the football team. The Staley Bears moved to Chicago in 1921 and played as the Chicago Staleys. In 1922, the team was renamed the Chicago Bears.



new corn



Farmers continually look for more ways to improve their crop. Farmers noticed that some plants produced larger ears of corn, or had better stalk strength. While they were harvesting, farmers saved the seeds from the best plants to plant again. In the late 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, many began experimenting with the concept of a hybrid. Because corn typically fertilizes itself, (the pollen from the same plant fertilizes the silks on the ear), hybrid corn involves crossing two specific types of corn to form a new “hybrid”.

Illinois Corn Pioneers



Tom Roberts began his work with hybrid corn in 1923. He began selling seed corn in 1935 as part of the DeKalb County Agricultural Association, later called DeKalb Seed.



Lester Pfister began his work to breed better corn in 1925 near El Paso, Illinois. After many years, and narrowly avoiding financial ruin, Pfister struck gold and his corn was planted across the state.



On a family farm in Funks Grove, McLean County, **Eugene Funk** began looking for ways to produce high yielding corn as well as prevent disease from attacking corn crops. Funk Bros. Seed Company was formed with Eugene Funk and 12 other family members.

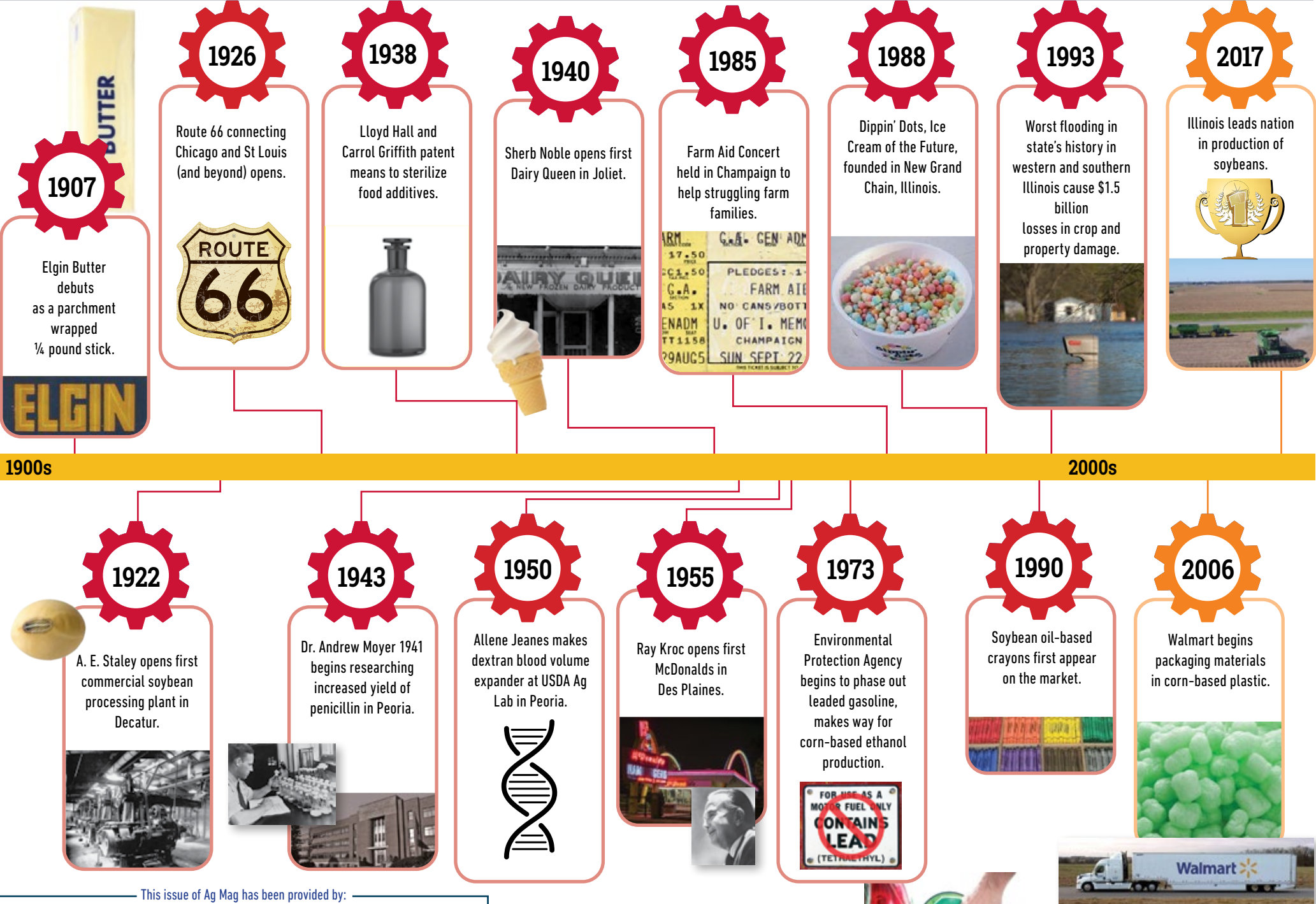
Ethanol

When sugars from corn ferment, they produce alcohol that can be burned. In the 1820s Samuel Morey developed an engine that ran on ethanol, and in 1896 Henry Ford built one of his early cars that ran on pure ethanol, or fuel made from corn alcohol. In the 1970s, due to the oil crisis, the popular gasoline made from corn known as ethanol became more popular. In addition to burning cleaner, which is good for the environment, ethanol is a renewable resource. A popular co-product of ethanol production is distillers' grains which are the proteins of the corn plant that can be used for livestock feed.



ROAD Improvements

As Illinois grew, the relationship between roads and railroads strengthened and railroads expanded and roads needed to catch up. In 1913, laws were passed to improve roads. In 1926, Route 66 opened, connecting Chicago and Santa Monica, California. While the route connected many smaller roads, Illinois was the first state to have our route entirely paved. Route 66 linked small towns and cities but lost popularity starting with the 1956 Interstate Highway System.



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