

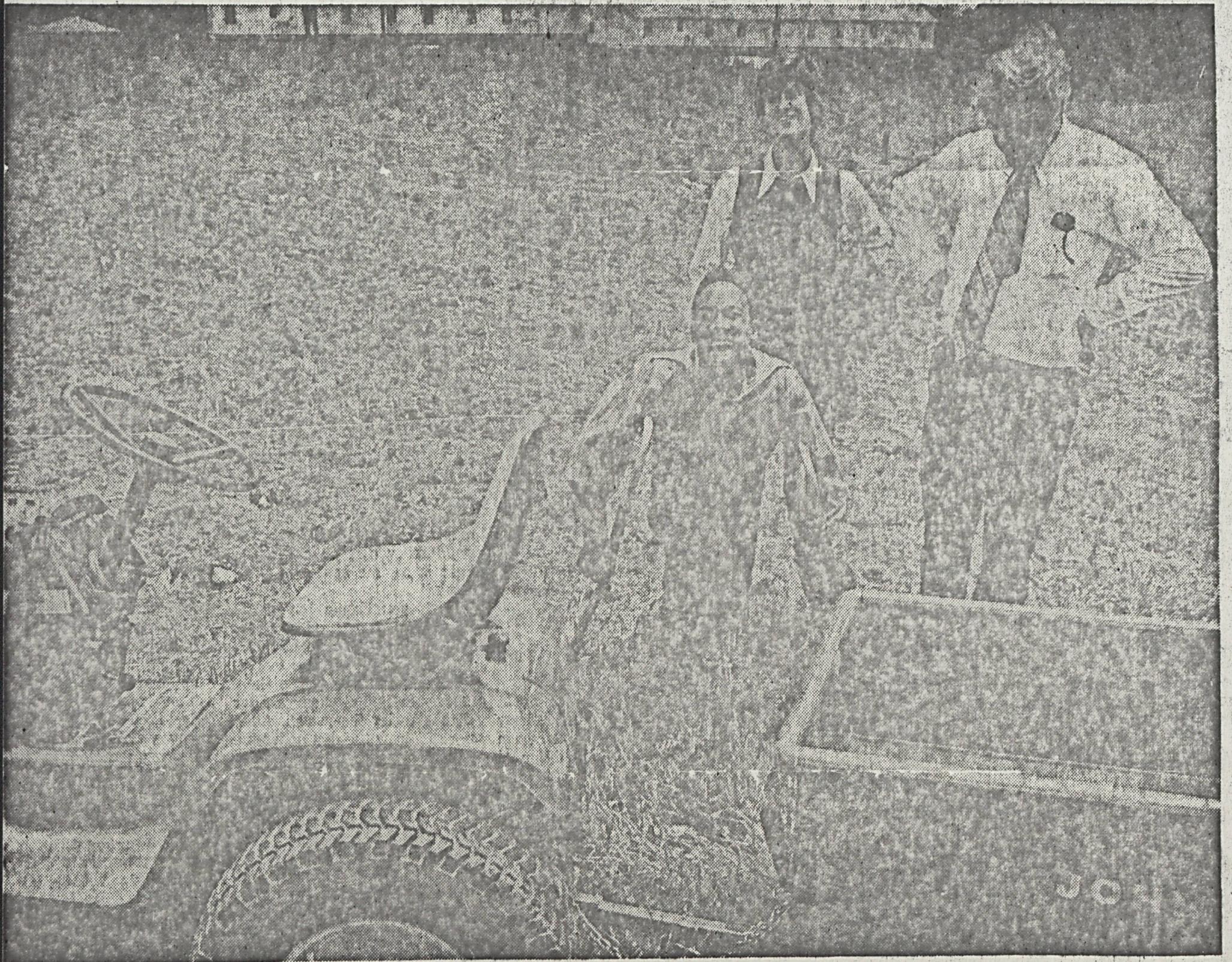
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Observer Photo by BILL McCALLISTER

Buck Young Lets Out A Scream Of Joy As He Sees His Name On Tractor

... Ann Watson (behind Buck), Farm Agent Phil Haas

Crippled Youth's Dreams Come True

By KAYS GARY
Observer Staff Writer

Thanks to scores of Observer readers, including a Rocky Mount family, a permanently crippled Charlotte youth's wildest dreams came true Friday afternoon.

You can call 17-year-old Buck Young, 222 Norwood Ave., "Farmer Buck."

It says so right on the back of the shiny, green-and-yellow, fully automatic, hand-operated garden tractor delivered Friday afternoon.

Thirty days ago young

Buck's wistful hope was for "a little piece of ground to make a garden" despite his withered, lifeless legs.

MECKLENBURG farm agent Phil Haas and others involved in allocation plots of Duke Power right-of-way to nearby families for gardening purposes saw that he got it.

With the first seeds he was able to obtain, the Kennedy Junior High youngster used his powerful arms and shoulders to pull himself through newly plowed earth to plant

"because all my life I been wantin' to make somethin' grow. With the price of food I sure want to help Mama, too."

With seeds barely in the earth a laughing Buck Young anticipated a summer harvest.

"Corn, I love. When it comes on, man it's gonna be butter on one side and teeth on the other. I'm gonna get me some squashes and beans and all that stuff!"

Farm Agent Haas had reservations only about how Buck could care for his garden with-

out some kind of riding device with which to plant, cultivate, fertilize, to haul water and implements.

"I'LL GET it done," said Buck, "and maybe next year I'll get me a kind of ridin' mower."

Observer readers responded quickly. He was showered with enough seeds to start a farm. He planted as fast as the seeds came, then decided to "share them with folks that ain't got enough." Some sent

Tractor Makes Youth Scream With Ecstasy

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squashes. Tomatoes doin' good. These cabbages was trying to die on me but they're comin' on. If I can just get at this grass comin' through..." He dug at the grass with his crutch tips. A small tractor was coming up the road.

"What would you do if you had a tractor like that?" Ann asked.

"Don't know who that is," Buck said. "A tractor like that I could farm the whole country!"

The tractor stopped. Big Jim Watson got out.

"What do you think of it?"

he asked. "Your name Buck?"

That's when he saw the yellow letters — his name.

He screamed with joy and kept screaming until he could hardly breathe... "Oh, law!... Oh, mercy!" He was laughing and trying to get his breath and, scrambling up onto the seat, was suddenly silent with shock as his hands reached, tenderly touched the controls.

"HERE'S HOW," said Jim, and softly explained starting, stopping, the hand clutch and hand throttle of the machine

his twin brother had adored.

His mother, Mrs. Princeola Young and grandmother, Mrs. Jessie McGowan, laughed and got wet eyes. Buck kept looking from Ann to Jim and back to the tractor. "I'm going to get me a little more land, I hope," he said nodding "and I'll try to do good. Law, I thank you... I thank y'all."

There is money too. It'll buy plow and cultivator attachments, garden tools and supplies with some in reserve for maintenance of his tractor. He will get a larger plot. Agents Haas and Joe Jackson, a 4-H supervisor, will give advice.

"I'm gonna do sump'n and do it good," Buck promised as he kept thanking the Watsons, waving from astride his tractor until they were out of sight.

"I don't hardly know what all happened," he said finally. "But for sure it's the best that ever did happen."

money to buy garden tools, garden hose.

In Rocky Mount, George Watson of Watson Seed Farms read about Buck. He was packaging seeds to mail when daughter, Ann, read the story.

That night she couldn't sleep. There was a tractor in the barn — a tractor the Watson family didn't talk about much anymore.

It had belonged to 11-year-old Gene Watson. His father had bought it, especially outfitted with electric starter and hand clutch, for a son paralyzed after an operation for a brain tumor.

"GENE HAD really done great with the tractor, keeping the grounds of the farm in great shape," his twin brother, Jim, now an N.C. State University senior, said Friday.

Cancer killed their brother. The tractor has remained a dust-gathering memory.

Ann was the first to say it. "Let's give the tractor to Buck Young. It couldn't be a better memorial."

For days Ann and brothers, Dwight, Jim and George and workers at Watson farms had checked it from A to Z even to painting "BUCK" in big, yellow letters on the tractor and trailer.

The youngster knew only that "some people want to see my garden" when the Watsons came to his door Friday afternoon. Agent Haas and Jim Watson had unloaded the tractor around a corner in the next block while Buck showed Ann and others his "crop."

"THERE'S GONNA be
See TRACTOR Pg. 5B, Cl. 1



Observer Photo by BILL McALLISTER

Buck Young Examines A Piece Of Soil

... "A tractor like that I could farm the whole country."