

A collector of heritage

Harold Peck is at it again

It's easy to get lost in Harold Peck's workshop. Not that the converted barn at his Upper Rhea Creek farm is all that big, it's just that it's filled with so many nostalgia items and bits of history, it tends to make the mind wander.

You wind your way through the workshop, skirting a wood lathe here and a Model T fender there, and look up at the walls and shelves. They're covered with spurs and bits and harnesses, calf weaners and hoof nippers, buggy parts, "T" parts and "A" parts, railroad lanterns and hurricane lamps, tongs and hinges fashioned from hammered out horseshoes. A McCormack reaper lies outside waiting for a few more spare parts and a hand-crank clothes washer sits waiting for the next load.

Harold Peck is a collector of heritage. He not only collects, he also restores and revitalizes—turning worn out discards into showcase pieces. His attention is particularly drawn to those irreplaceable machines and implements used by the early settlers and if he hears something is available, he'll do some traveling to get it.

"I find things all over the place, especially at antique and farm sales," Peck says as he dismantles his latest find—an antique steam cooker he found at a yard sale in Lexington.

"The parts were scattered all over the barn but I finally came up with everything," he said.

Coming up with the unusual is nothing new for Peck. He's been pleasing the crowds at the Morrow County Fair for years with his antiques and oddities. And he's picked up more than a few blue ribbons along the way.

Peck will be back at the Collectors' Corner this year with several "new" items including a hand-powered cement mixer which he says poured "half the original city of Arlington". Also featured will be a hand-powered corn sheller, one-horse cultivator, feed grinder, corn planter, wooden hay fork and a hay cradle. Each is in working order and looks like it came right out of the mail order catalog down at the general store.

Not limiting himself to the elbow grease era, Peck also has a few prizes from the early motorized years. In fact, it was a couple of vintage motor cars that got him started in the collection business.

"I heard there was a 1907 International and a 1906 Sears and Roebuck autobuggy at a



sale in Three Rivers," Peck recalled. "I went up there, not expecting to buy anything, and ended up bringing back both cars. I've been collecting ever since."

The Sears and Roebuck car sits in another of Peck's storage barns and still turns over smooth as a sewing machine on the second crank. The International chauffeured the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Court at this year's coronation. One of the two will make an appearance at the upcoming Fair parade, Saturday, Aug. 27.

Although Peck enjoys his hobby of finding and restoring the old items, he says people should be able to catch a glimpse of their past more often than the annual exhibits at Fair time. With his own storage areas filling up, he is looking for support from the Morrow County community in the establishment of a historical machinery museum.

Space is already at a premium at the present County Museum and Peck feels it will require another structure to accommodate the tools and machinery. He is now looking into the possibilities and is open to suggestions.

Harold Peck is one man who doesn't want to see one of the most vivid links to our past wither under a layer of rust and neglect. One look at his Collector's Corner entries will tell you that he's doing something about it.

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