

# Museum Features Amazing Train Carvings, Collections

Warther Kitchen Cutlery was started by Ernest "Mooney" Warther in the early 1900's. It continues to provide a living for 30 employees. Mooney was a master carver who left his family another special heritage - detailed carved historical trains, appraised by the Smithsonian as "priceless works of art," which can be seen at the family-owned Warther Museum.

Mooney quit school after second grade to support his widowed mother and four siblings. He watched the neighbors' cows for a penny apiece per day, and when he found a rusty knife he whittled to pass the time. He was intrigued when a hobo carved pliers for him in 10 cuts, with no shavings. The young boy figured out how to do it and family members estimate he carved more than 750,000 in his lifetime. He once made a "plier tree" of 511 working pliers from a single block of wood.

Unsatisfied with available knives, Mooney designed his own hand-ground knives and started his business. He also switched from whittling to carving, focusing on the history of the steam engine. His 64 incredibly detailed carvings of antique steam engines were carved from bone, walnut, ivory and ebony.



Frieda Warther's collection of 73,282 buttons is also on display at the museum.

Mooney traveled across the country with his train collection, even appearing on the Johnny Carson Show. Mooney felt his best carving was The Great Northern 2577, a 1930 Baldwin locomotive that has 7,752 separate pieces.

When he was 72, his son, David, convinced him to carve "Great Events in American Railroad History." He carved 12 trains in 10 years including the Nashville engine, which pulled Lincoln's funeral train. Mooney's largest carving - and the worlds' largest working ivory carving - is the New York Central Empire State Express carved from an 8-ft elephant tusk. Mooney died in 1973 at 87.

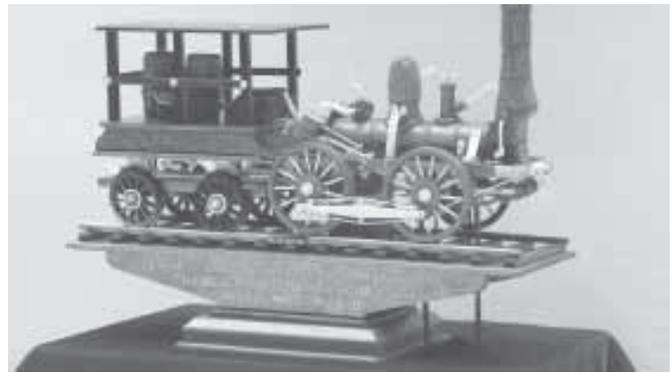
"He was a character supreme," says Mark Warther of his grandfather. Warther is director of the family-owned museum and has fond childhood memories of playing on the 70-ft. rope swing Mooney built in the backyard. "He just loved kids."

Mooney worked hard, carving from 2 a.m. until breakfast, then working in his knife shop. But he also played hard, Warther says. After 3 p.m. he spent family time, taking hikes, looking for arrowheads, gardening. The 30,000 sq. ft. museum is located in a 10-acre park, with Swiss-style landscaping and gardens including 6,000 annuals planted each year.

About 70,000 visitors come annually, Warther says. It takes at least two hours to see the gardens and all the displays which include trains, pliers and Warther's wife Frieda's button collection. All 73,282 buttons are sewn to wall hangings around the museum.

The museum and knife shop are open year round, except for holidays. Check out the website or call for times and guided tour fees. Each child gets a free wood pliers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Warther Museum and Knife Factory, 331 Karl Ave., Dover, Ohio 44622 (ph 330 343-7513; info@warthers.com; www.warthers.com).



Warther carved extremely detailed and authentic models of famous locomotives.



Warther's carvings are on display at the family-owned museum.

## 1/2-Scale IH 660 Tractor

Lyle Scott created this eye-catching 1/2-scale International Harvester 660 tractor using the rear end and axle off a Cub Cadet hydro garden tractor, and the engine and radiator from a Fiat 850 cc car. The front wheel hubs also came off the car.

"This was my first attempt at building a 1/2-scale tractor, and I think it turned out pretty good," says Scott, of Dickinson, N. Dak.

He chose the Fiat 850 cc car engine "because it was one of the smallest 4-cyl. engines I could find. The real IH 660 tractor has a 6-cyl. engine, but the small Fiat 4-cyl. has high rpm's and sounds a lot like a 6-cyl. engine."

He made a new exhaust manifold for the engine and modified the radiator and water pump. He used sheet metal to make the grill, hood, and frame. The rear fenders are modified trailer fenders. The garden tractor-sized battery is located in a box under the seat. "I made the seat, and my wife sewed and covered the cushions with white and black vinyl," says Scott.

The rear wheels started out as 15-in. car wheels and are fitted with 12.50 by 15 tires off a trenching machine. He cut out the center bolt holes and welded in new metal with a 5-hole pattern to fit the Cub Cadet axle. Then he widened the rims by 5 1/2 in. in order to fit the tires.

The front wheels started out as 400 by 9 wheels off an old IH mower. He cut the center out and made 5-spoke centers to fit the car wheel hubs. "The front wheels were one of the hardest parts to make. A local tire store was able to order 400 by 9 tri-rib tires to fit the wheels," says Scott.

He cut sections of 6-in. steel pipe and made end caps with bolt heads to resemble planetary gears. The steering sector is also from the Cub Cadet and was shortened and modified.



Scott powered his half-scale IH tractor with a Fiat 850 cc car engine.



The tractor is complete with a set of half size gauges that Scott bought at Wal-Mart, and the muffler was purchased from a farm supply store. Apilastic bowl was used to make the air cleaner.

"To make the lettering I used hardware store stick-on letters and some pin stripping," says Scott. "I made the front IH emblem by cutting and welding 3/8-in. key stock. The grill bars are made from 1-in. sq. tubing. The headlights are pvc end caps with plastic ceiling fixtures cut round and glued on for the lens.

"The steering wheel is the only thing that isn't half scale. It's off the Cub Cadet," notes Scott.

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## Arborsculptor Turns Trees Into Art

Like the Australian "tree shaper" featured in our last issue, Richard Reanes makes interesting shapes from living trees, by bending, pruning and grafting. Some call the technique "arborsculpture". Reanes has authored books on the topic and speaks at events. He has resource information links and photos - including historical photos of older creations - on his website, www.arborsmith.com.