

# Antique Wagon Auction Brought In Big Bucks

During his lifetime, Walter Umphrey built a huge collection of Western, pioneer and hunting artifacts at his Timberline Ranch north of Beaumont, Texas. He was known far and wide for his philanthropy and work as a personal injury lawyer, especially when his team won a \$15.3 billion settlement against the tobacco industry for the State of Texas. Umphrey died in September 2021, and family members held an online dispersal auction of his personal items. The sale included a large collection of wagons, carriages, farm tools, implements and equipment. His collection of horse-drawn buggies, carriages and wagons was always stored inside, so they were in original condition and brought top dollar from collectors, says Terry Allen, who lived at the Umphrey's ranch for 30 years.

Texas pioneers and ranchers no doubt used Umphrey's original 10-ft. long chuckwagon in the late 1800's. Weathered and worn, but still in working condition, the wagon had a large wood storage cabinet on the back that folded down into a worktable. Bidding started at \$525, and the wagon sold for \$17,500.

Umphrey owned a horse-drawn hearse made by the Riddle Coach and Hearse



A Newton grain wagon and glass-sided hearse were among classic Pioneer memorabilia that brought several thousand dollars at a November 2021 auction in Texas.



Company sometime in the late 1800's. The hearse was painted black, had glass sides, a rear lander and rode on 47-in. wheels. It sold for \$15,550.

A 125-bu. capacity wood wagon made by John Deere started at \$500 and sold for \$7,150. A similar wagon made by Newton sold for \$8,600. Other wagons made by lesser-known companies brought \$4,000 to \$5,000 each.

One of Umphrey's personal favorites was a classic white carriage with a Bimini top, cushioned red seats and electric lights. Similar carriages are used for touring New York's Central Park, the streets of New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah and other cities. The selling price was \$7,100. A large collection of wooden wagon wheels, wagon parts, harnesses, old signs and wagon chassis also brought top dollar.

Seven Hills Auctions along with Coleman and Patterson conducted the sale noting that sale prices were good because Umphrey was so well known and the items were in original shape.

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Wagons at the auction sold as high as \$17,500.



Photos by Greg McCaffrey, Fernley, Nevada

After restoring the 1956 Kenworth, LaPlant found and restored a 1952 Union Pacific Railroad trailer.

## He's Restoring A 1926 Kenworth Truck

After his positive experience restoring a 1956 Kenworth truck, Kevin LaPlant is eager to tackle an even older model, a 1926 K-W Kenworth, that he first saw parked in a California field.

"It's not pretty, but everything is there and is fixable. It's a neat truck. Kenworth started building them in 1923, and I think it might be one of the first 100 they built," LaPlant says.

One big difference between it and his 1956 truck is the Buda motor.

"I've been doing research for parts and not finding them, so I want to find an experienced machinist/mechanic near me," he says.

He's begun disassembling the truck which often requires spraying a penetrating lubricant a few days in a row or grinding off rivets. He carefully documents everything by taking photos and marking parts. Removing the rotting wooden frame of the cab requires extra care so a pattern for a new wood frame can be made. LaPlant has a local custom car builder who will replace the metal parts.

The retired law enforcement officer admits he's not a mechanic, but he had some experience as a young man working with a

truck and later buying his own truck and trailer.

In his retirement, he has had time to focus on his fascination for the industry and the trucks. After restoring the 1956 Kenworth, LaPlant found and restored a 1952 Union Pacific Railroad trailer. While driving the

truck and trailer to a show in Oregon, the highway was parallel to a train track, and he noticed a Union Pacific train engineer waving to him. Later, he learned about a photo of his truck and trailer posted on the railroad's website.

The 1926 Kenworth is providing a new learning experience with all its mechanical parts including worm drive rear end gears, 4-piece brake shoes, vacuum diaphragm fuel pump, and a bottom draft carburetor.

"The transmission looks like a 3-speed from Brown Lipe. The wheels were cast metal and had pneumatic tires," he adds.

LaPlant's biggest concern is getting the

Buda motor overhauled correctly in a timely manner.

"My original goal was to finish it by 2023, the 100th anniversary of Kenworth," he says, adding he's interested in talking to FARM SHOW readers who have information about the motor or are truck restorers.

"This truck is going to stand out because of its age. I've seen a couple of 1920's models in museums, but not at shows," he says.

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LaPlant carefully documents everything by taking photos and marking parts. Removing the rotting wooden frame of the cab on his new project, a 1926 truck, requires extra care so a pattern for a new wood frame can be made.

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