

Members and volunteers of the Nittany Antique Machinery Assoc. built this gristmill in Centre Hall, Penn.



## Volunteers Built Working Gristmill

A working gristmill in a timber-frame building with a water wheel is the newest attraction at the fall show of the Nittany Antique Machinery Association (NAMA) in Centre Hall, Penn., thanks to a group of volunteers.

With a fascination for gristmills, retired telecommunications engineer Bob McLaughlin began the journey to build a gristmill in 2007 when NAMA agreed to support the project. After finding two 42-in.,

1,500-lb. millstones in 2010, McLaughlin and other volunteers started working on the building and mechanism to use the stones.

They cut the red oak timbers for framing with NAMA's sawmills, and a professional carpenter volunteer planned the mortise and tenon construction using oak pins made by a local Amish man.

Donated old mill parts were used to create the gears, pulleys, and bearings to turn the grindstone. Much planning went into the

design to support the stones and include viewing areas from above and below in the 16-by-30-ft. 2-story building.

"Our first grind (using corn) was in 2018 at the fall show," McLaughlin says. "These were locally manufactured stones, and the grooves are deeper." So, the stones do a good job of grinding corn, but not wheat.

The gristmill attracts 150 to 200 visitors at shows. A local farmer provides the corn for the mill and takes the ground corn home to feed his animals.

McLaughlin and other volunteers meet regularly to maintain and work on the mill. The building and mill turned out well, but the water wheel is a work in progress. Until it's operational, an antique tractor and belt pulley provide the power to turn the mill. It can also be powered by steam and stationary engines, which fit well with NAMA's focus.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bob McLaughlin, Howard, Penn. (RLM101@verizon.net).



Two 42-in. 1,500 lb. millstones were used in the two-story building.

Loren Book's 107-year-old Universal tractor pulls a 2-bottom plow.



## Moline Collector Cherishes His 100-Year-Old Tractor

By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor

"I guess you could say Minneapolis Moline tractors and implements and Moline Plow Company equipment have been in my blood for more than 7 decades, and they're not about to leave anytime soon," says retired Iowa farmer Loren Book. "My dad was an MM dealer, and we farmed with their equipment, so it's my heritage."

Book and his wife Ruth have collected, restored, and exhibited MM and Moline Plow Company equipment since the mid-1980's. Their homestead museum also houses toys, signs, advertising memorabilia,

and just about every knick-knack the two companies produced.

The pride of Book's collection is a 1918 Moline Plow Company Universal D Orchard Tractor. Book bought it at an Indiana auction in 2005, fixed its imperfections, and repainted it with shiny lacquer. It's been on the Classic Tractor TV show, at the Farm Progress Show, and for years he's taken it to local and national shows, including the national MM collector's events. In 2023 they'll have it in Minnesota and northern Indiana.

People are always intrigued by the

Universal and always have questions. Book usually has the answers. "The company started in 1870 after the firm of Candee and Swan won a patent lawsuit against John Deere that allowed them to use the Moline Plow name," Book says. "They produced plows and other implements and eventually bought rights to build the Universal Tractor, which they built from 1916 to 1923."

Book's tractor, the Orchard Model, is one of three known to still exist in the U.S. It has two large steel wheels, is powered by a 4-cyl. engine, and pulls trailing implements that the operator rides on and controls. "The tractor was designed to work fields, cultivate row crops and replace horses," Book says, "and it did a darn good job. They marketed it across the country, in Canada, Mexico, Spain and Australia. I've used my tractor to pull a 2-bottom plow, a disk, and other implements."

Book has nearly 75 MM tractors in his collection, including a rare KTA and a U High Crop LP model. His implement collection includes a bale-o-matic baler, a corn and bean planter, a grain drill, threshers, harrows, a hay loader, rakes, and several plows. They're all part of the long line of equipment produced by the Moline Company, rivaling similar equipment made by Deere and other manufacturers. Book says the Moline company may have expanded too fast in the 1920's, even producing Stephens Six touring cars, commercial trucks, and a full line of wagons. That diversity, competition, and the tough economic climate led to the company's



Book displayed his rare Minneapolis-Moline 'U' High Crop LP tractor at the 2022 Farm Progress Show.

demise. In 1929 it merged with two other companies to form Minneapolis-Moline.

"The Minneapolis-Moline brand was a thriving business from the early 1930's until the late 1960's, and my dad was fortunate to have a very good dealership that he started in 1950," Book says. "He sold it in 1959, then bought a Deere 4020 for the farm. I started collecting MM tractors and implements 38 years ago."

Today, Book and his wife Ruth carry on the MM heritage with nearly 600 other collectors in the U.S. and other parts of the world through the Minneapolis Moline Collector's Club.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Loren Book, 18581 600th Ave., Nevada, Iowa 50201 (lgbook46@gmail.com).

## Tractor Collectors Look For Pre-Production Models

Todd Markle is an active collector of Farmall tractors and is constantly on the lookout for interesting or unique variations and models. One such piece of equipment is a pre-production tractor that was built as a test prototype.

The Farmall A was the cheapest tractor in the IH lineup. When they began manufacturing these models, constructing prototypes was expensive, so only a few were built. There were no computers to create images and promotional materials so actual prototypes were manufactured and photographed for customers to view them in action.

"Any pre-production tractor that survived

is rare," says Markle. "Normally, these prototypes were destroyed as production parts were often updated and modified to correct weak points and faults found in testing. It would have cost the company extra money to make custom parts for these prototypes."

He says some unique features of the Farmall A pre-production models were white stripes on grilles, a lack of serial numbers, solid wheel discs instead of spokes, different fuel tank shapes and supports, and distinctive seats and upholstery fastenings.

Sharp-eyed collectors have found exclusive features not used in actual production

machines by studying the early promotional photographs.

"As collectors, we're always on the lookout for unusual tractors," Markle says. "It's hard to qualify, but sometimes the pre-production units can be much more valuable than the normal run-of-the-mill models. The rare ones bring a lot. Still, it takes the right collector being interested."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Todd Markle, 3536 Penns Valley Road., Spring Mills, Penn. 16875 (farmallgray@aol.com).



Photo Courtesy of TractorData.com

Unique features of the Farmall A pre-production models were white stripes on grilles, a lack of serial numbers, solid wheel discs instead of spokes, different fuel tank shapes and supports, and distinctive seats.