



Restored 1925 Case Model X Suburban Coupe, one of only 139 built by the J.I. Case Equipment Company and the only one known to exist now.

Museum Houses Rare Case Automobile

By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor

Visitors to the Pembina County Historical Museum near Cavalier, N.D., see the shiny blue-over-black vintage automobile with wide whitewall tires on display and often think it's a Model T Ford. Museum Administrator Zelda Hartje is quick to point out they're wrong. The vehicle is actually a Case touring automobile, produced by the J.I. Case Threshing Machine Company of Racine, Wis., which was famous for its steam traction engines, stationary steam power plants, threshing machines and cross-engine tractors.

"That beautiful century-old car has strong ties to Cavalier, so when it came up for sale, our historical society vice president, Jim Benjaminson, and board member, Dennis Morrison, bought it at auction and brought

it home," Hartje says. "It's a one-of-a-kind vehicle, and we're glad to have it here."

The car's backstory and its ties to Cavalier are worthy of a documentary.

In 1910, the J.I. Case Company was a thriving equipment business with the world's largest dealer network. Company management, believing the network would sell anything Case offered, including quality cars, acquired the Pierce-Racine Motor Company (not to be confused with Pierce-Arrow in New York). Pierce had built automobiles in Racine for six years, with limited sales success.

Also in 1910, Case hired G.B. Gunlogson, a young man who'd left his family's farm in Akra, N.D., for Racine, seeking a summer job.

Gunlogson was assigned to the Case Motor Car Division, where he worked diligently

and, 14 years later, became its overall manager. Case built 30,000 autos over 17 years, but its vehicles, some priced as high as \$2,800, couldn't compete with basic Fords selling for \$600 to \$800. Gunlogson oversaw Case's exit from the car business in 1927.

In 1925, Gunlogson acquired a Case Model X Suburban Coupe, one of Case's first enclosed cars. Powered by a 52-hp Continental 6-cyl. engine, it was one of only 139 ever built by Case. The Coupe featured elegant lines, wooden-spoke wheels, and a rear deck for a traveler's trunk. The interior was plush, with carpeting, a padded dash, comfortable seating for five, and wooden trim on the gauge panel.

After retiring from Case, Gunlogson briefly returned to the family's North Dakota farm, where his sister Loa lived. He gave her the car, and she later traded it for a used 1948 Dodge from a dealer in Cavalier. That dealer, who also sold Case equipment, painted the car orange and added "Cavalier Motor & Implement" lettering to its sides. The car's next owner was the Case dealer in Lamoure, N.D., who kept it until his death in 1988. The car was later acquired by Herb Wessel of Maryland, who, along with his son, restored it. It's the only one of its type known to exist. His collection also included Case tractors, combines, plows, steam engines and five of the 110 known Case cars.

Jim Benjaminson says Board members discussed finding and returning the car to Cavalier.

"I learned that Wessel owned it and called him. Even though the car wasn't for sale then, we talked several times, and he later called and said it would be sold at auction. The Society arranged a letter of credit, and we flew to Maryland for the auction. We probably paid a premium, but the car was pristine, restored from the ground up,

and we knew it would be a big attraction in the Museum. Now I'm fortunate to drive it in various events and make sure it's well taken care of," Benjaminson says.

Hartje notes that although Gunlogson was prominent and successful, he remained in Racine and never forgot his local community and Icelandic roots. He donated the original homestead at Akra to the State of North Dakota to establish a state park and recreation area. The Icelandic State Park was established in the late '60s, and the farm building site remains intact. The Pembina County Historical Museum is located on property across the highway from the park, also donated by Gunlogson. The original garage where he stored the vehicle on the farm still stands. The car is stored at the museum along with several dozen other cars, more than 100 antique tractors, threshing machines and vintage combines.

Hartje says the Case car is a big draw for county museum events and parades.

"Visitors find it fascinating that a large farm machinery company built such a fancy car," Hartje says. "Having it here is a great tribute to Gunlogson and his Icelandic heritage."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Pembina County Historical Museum, 13572 Highway 5, Cavalier, N.D. (ph 701-265-2134; pchsm@polarcomm.com).



Model X has a 6-cyl. Continental engine that produces 52 hp.

Rare and Rarer MM Row Crops

Paul Proksch owns a rare 4-WD Minneapolis Moline (MM) G1000 Vista. Proksch understands that only 52 of the 110-hp tractors with Clark front axles were built. Approximately 1,600 Vistas were produced between 1967 and 1969.

"I've been told mine is one of about 40 that are still running," says Proksch. "They were really advanced for their time, with tilt and telescoping steering wheels. I always felt bad they didn't keep building them."

An even rarer MM row crop in his tractor collection is a 2-WD G1000 Vista with a 3-speed Ampli-Torc. Proksch understands that only 18 were made.

According to an article on Diesel World's website, the G1000 was MM's attempt to enter the big 6-cyl. row-crop tractor market. Over a three-year period in the late 1960s, they produced three styles: Row Crop, Wheatland and Vista, the latter with a raised operator's platform for a wider view. The Vista replaced the Row Crop in production in 1967.

Just under 7,400 of the three styles were built with the same basic engine, adapted for diesel, LP gas or gasoline. Both of Proksch's are diesel.

With around a dozen complete restorations, mostly John Deere, under his belt, the MM rigs stand out for still having their original paint. He did install a stainless-steel muffler with a heat shield on the 4-WD, and it has new rubber all around.

Both are in good running condition. In the case of the 2-WD, that took some work and some unusually good luck, given the fairly rare 3-speed torque.

"I had a guy in Iowa rebuild the 3-speed torque," says Proksch. "He found brand-new parts sitting on a shelf."

At one point, Proksch had a third G1000 Vista in his collection, which he's since sold. The other two are open stations, a style he prefers. He's had the 4-WD Vista for about 20 years and the 2-WD for about 15 years. In both cases, he's decided it's time to let them go.

"I have too many irons in the fire to work on them, and I really feel they should be restored," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Proksch, Stoddard, Wis. (ph 608-498-2882).



Minneapolis Moline Vista G1000.

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