

Cooking Up Interest in Tractor History

By Patrick Ertel

In the hills of central Ohio, just a stone's throw from Ohio's Amish country, sits a 36'x88' building that houses the Cook Tractor Museum. This little museum, owned and staffed by Marvin Cook and his son, Mark, opened in May, 1997, with a small, but impressive, collection of tractors.

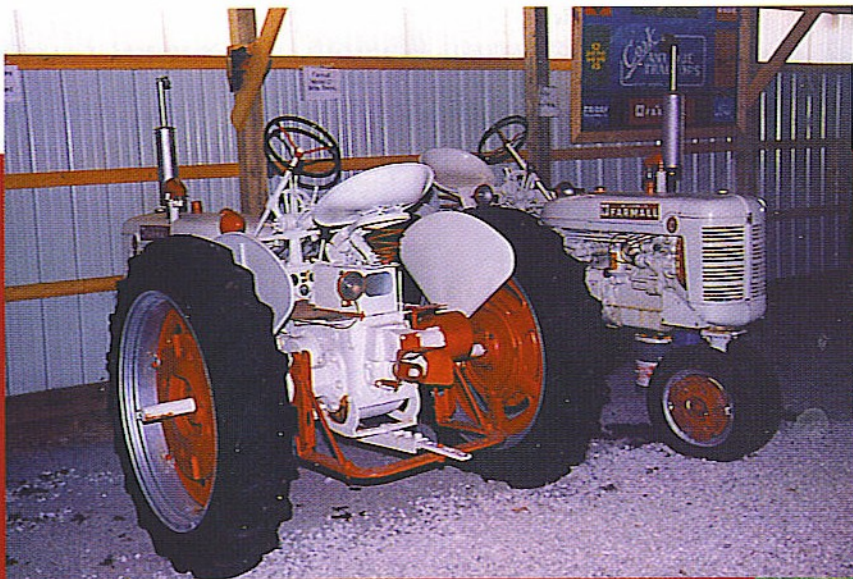
The Cooks have sought tractors that interested them or had some meaning for them personally. It houses an Allis-Chalmers WD45, the tractor Marvin bought in 1957 for his farm, right along with such rarities as an Empire and a Slopemaster. "We don't think in terms of numbers," says Mark. "We are trying to assemble a group of the rarest tractors we can find. Our visitors come because they want to see one specific tractor and this is the only place it can be found on display."

"This isn't the kind of place where people casually saunter in on a visit. Our visitors usually make an appointment and travel long distances to get here. Very few from this county have ever been in here, but we've had visitors from all over the United States.

Almost all visitors who come in see something they've never seen before.

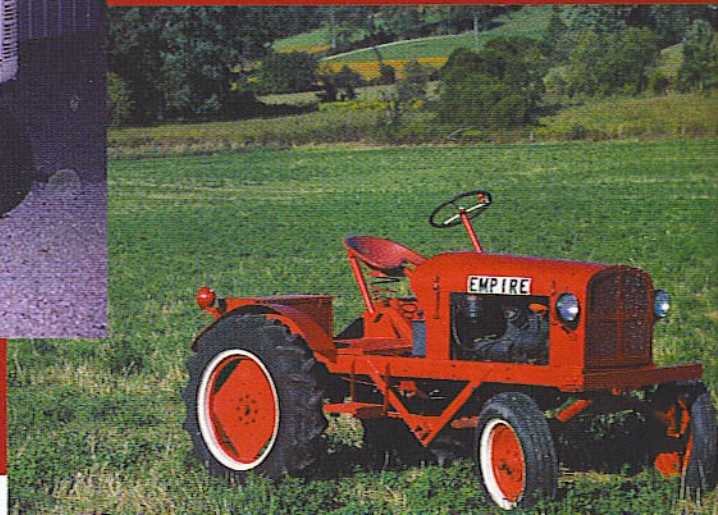
"My interest in tractors came about because our neighbor had a Farmall Super M that had always intrigued me. That led me to buy an M somewhere back in the 1980s. From there, I got a John Deere A. Dad and I went to a museum one of our relatives had and that really got us going. We built a building and began accumulating tractors. In 1997, we had an auction, pairing up our duplicate tractors and letting the bidder take his choice. That got us down to a manageable number of tractors and culled some of the more common ones.

"We get a lot of help from Lynn Klingaman, who started the Sheppard Diesel club. He has one of our American tractors at his place restor-



LEFT: A pair of Farmall C demonstrators have consecutive serial numbers.

BELOW: The Empire tractor was built with Jeep components.





ing it now. This hobby is very lucky to have someone like him. Lynn is very knowledgeable about the mechanical aspects of the tractors, and Dad knows all about their history.”

“I like to know the tractor’s background,” says Marvin. “I try to find out who its owners were and what kind of life it had. The American tractor is very interesting to me because it was made just a few miles north of here in Canton, Ohio.

“We find tractors all over the country. Our Earthmaster hi-crop came from California. We have a pair of white Farmall C demonstrators with consecutive serial numbers, and an Empire that came from North Dakota. We bought a Texas estate’s entire tractor collection—six tractors—to get the one we wanted. Our Americans



came from Ed Spiess’ auction. One sad aspect of this is that it seems like you have to go to an estate sale to get some of these tractors.

“We get the most visitors in the spring, summer, and fall. Most of our visitors stop by as they are traveling to shows. We aren’t far from the major highways that cross northern Ohio, or from I-77 and I-71 that run north and

south, so it’s easy for them to add a stop at the Cook Tractor Museum.”

The Cooks are still searching for some tractors for the museum: a Corbitt, Mayrath, and Minneapolis-Moline UDLX; and Marvin wants a Ferguson 40. The Cook Tractor Museum is located just south of Canton, Ohio. Call 330-484-0331 to arrange a visit. 📞

484-3058



ABOVE: This little Earthmaster hi-crop came from California.

RIGHT: A Michigan company built this Friday orchard tractor.

ABOVE LEFT: Marvin Cook sits behind the wheel of the Allis-Chalmers WC he has owned for more than 40 years.

ABOVE RIGHT: The Cook Museum is the only place you will see an American tractor.

