



Herb Gindulis is shown here wearing a replica of an 1863 U.S. Cavalry officer's uniform and hat. Note bound edge on brim of hat. He made it using original hat-making equipment from the 1860s.

NEBRASKA COUPLE OWNS BIG COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL HAT-MAKING EQUIPMENT

They Make Hats The Old-Fashioned Way

Herb and Vicki Gindulis make hats the way they were made 100 years ago, thanks to their huge collection of historical hat-making equipment.

The owners of the Great Plains Hat Company of Omaha, Neb., spent many years collecting equipment from old hat makers' shops that used to be common in towns throughout the Great Plains.

The couple now runs their own hat-making business and they also put on hat-making demonstrations at historical conventions. They also make and restore hats for museums and historical societies.

"We custom make the hats in a variety of colors, styles, and sizes and often include accessories such as personalized signature pieces from that era. People are impressed with their quality," says Herb.

"We tracked down relatives of deceased hat makers or people who had purchased old equipment but weren't using it," Herb says. "A lot of the equipment was in storage. One collection of hat works from the 1890's had been in a semi-trailer for more than 20 years. Our oldest equipment dates back to the 1840s."

Ratchet-Drive Pedal Go-Cart

Marshall Litchfield's grandson, Ryan, wanted a pedal-powered go-cart in the worst way. The problem was that the little guy couldn't operate a conventional pedal-type model.

So the Macomb, Ill., farmer built a ratchet-drive go-cart the youngster can easily drive around his grandpa's shop and farmyard.

The go-cart is built around a piece of 2-in. sq., 1/8-in. thick wall pipe. Rear drive wheels are 12-in. high and front wheels are 8-in. high. He ordered them out of a parts catalog. He machined the steering wheel from scratch.

"I designed a ratchet-gear drive so every time you take your foot off the pedal, the teeth take a new bite and keep you going," says Litchfield.

The 4-in. dia. gear mounts in the center of the back axle under the seat and engages every time the pedals are pushed.

According to Herb, there are fewer than 3 dozen private companies that still make hats by hand.

All their hats are made from rabbit or beaver fur felt. They can duplicate a hat using a photo as a guide, so if you have a photo of your great grandfather wearing a hat they can probably make it. You can also bring in an old hat for restoration or to have a duplicate made. "We know enough about hat-making shops that we can often tell where a particular hat came from, when it was made, etc. It allows us to design and create a hat that would have been worn in a certain area, at a certain time."

Gindulis made historic hats as a hobby for 18 years before his wife Vicki convinced him to go into business four years ago. He was taught by master hat maker Art Henderson.

Vicki's specialty is the hat band, an art form of itself. "I sew ribbons and different kinds of bows right onto the hat," she says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Great Plains Hat Co., In The Old Market, 516 S. 10th St., Omaha, Neb. 68102 (ph 402 341-1948).



Teeth on ratchet gear take a new bite every time driver takes his foot off pedal.

"The steering sector is built from an old hand-held angle grinder which had a burned out motor with a bevel gear," he says. "A U-joint out of a 3/8-in. socket set was used to connect the steering wheel into the steering sector."

The seat, like the pedals, is adjustable three ways, backward and forward.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Marshall Litchfield, 15340 N. 700 Rd., Macomb, Ill. 61455 (ph 309 254-3481).



Some of the nearly 200 tractors that make up Von Hollen's unique fence.

CARRYING ON PROJECT GRANDFATHER STARTED 50 YEARS AGO

1/4 Mile "Fence" Made Out Of Antique Tractors

Gerald Von Hollen built a fence so unique it's the talk of all his neighbors and passersby.

The Leslieville, Alberta, farmer used nearly 200 antique tractors to make the 1/4-mile barrier, including Deeres, McCormicks, Massey Harris's, Hart Pars, Wallaces, Allis Chalmers and Farmalls. His grandfather

Edwin started the fence 50 years ago. The tractors have been gathered from all over, Von Hollen says, and many have been driven to

the fence line under their own power. Some still turn over, he adds.

In addition to the "tractor fence" on the south side of his farm, Von Hollen also recently began constructing a fence out of old threshing machines on the west side of his place.

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Tractors have been gathered from all over, and many have been driven to the fence line under their own power.



Von Hollen recently began work on a second fence line made out of old threshing machines.