

Old Crawler Collection Is Gradually Being Restored

Collecting old crawler tractors is a relaxing, enjoyable hobby, says George Shinnors, owner of Antigo Construction Inc., Antigo, Wisconsin, one of the largest concrete demolition companies in the country.

Over the years, Shinnors accumulated a handful of vintage gasoline-powered steel-tracked crawler tractors. About five years ago, he began collecting crawler tractors in earnest.

He now has nearly 100 tractors and related pieces of equipment in all. Some of them ran when he bought them, but many were in pretty tough shape. However, he says the majority of them can and will be restored. The rest are parts machines. In addition to crawlers, he's also added self-propelled and pull-type graders, rollers, rippers, logging arches and a rock crusher.

To put as many in working order as possible, he hired George Wells, a local mechanic who at 86 years old, has spent most of his life maintaining, overhauling and rebuilding construction machinery.

Engines are usually the first priority. Once Wells gets the engine freed up and running, he moves ahead with the rest of the restoration. After nearly two years of working on Shinnors' collection, Wells has managed to get 20 of the old crawlers running and has completely restored 12 of them.

To date, most of the machines in Shinnors' collection carry Holt and Caterpillar nameplates. But he also has a few made by Cletrac, International Harvester and others.

One of his most prized tractors is a 1925 Caterpillar "Two-Ton" that is on display out-

side the Langlade County Historical Society museum in Antigo, where it's hitched to a logging sled loaded with some impressive Hemlock logs.

The tractor was driven into place, but Wells disabled it to make sure no one would "borrow" the powerful display piece.

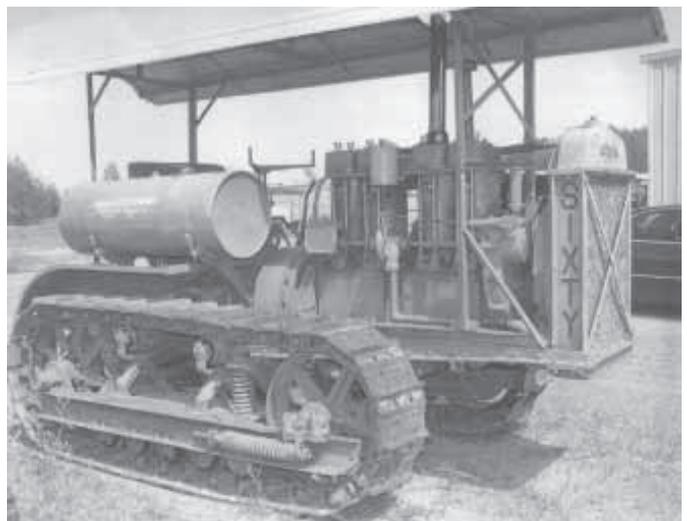
Also included in Shinnors' collection are a rare Caterpillar R2, a military R4 and a four-clutch R5.

While his collection has gotten bigger than he ever anticipated, Shinnors continues to get calls from people who have old crawlers they'd like to sell or even donate if he promises to restore them.

"Most of my crawlers were used in northern Wisconsin, but I've bought machines from Minnesota, Michigan, and across the northern plains, and some from as far away as Utah, Nevada and California," he says. He often extends business trips to go out of his way to look at a tracked tractor somebody has told him about.

Eventually, he hopes to put the collection on permanent display in a new 8,000-sq. ft. building he completed this past fall. He's also developing an outdoor demonstration area to give his "old iron" a place to run one more time. In the meantime, though, if you're interested in taking a look, call or write to Antigo Construction and, he promises, they'll do their best to accommodate you.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, George Shinnors, Antigo Construction, Inc., 2520 N. Clermont St., Box 12, Antigo, Wis. 54409 (ph 715 627-2222; email: info@antigoconstruction.com).



About five years ago, George Shinnors began collecting steel-tracked crawler tractors in earnest. He now has nearly 100 tractors and related pieces of equipment in all.



About 20 of the old tractors are in running condition, with 12 completely restored.

Triple Farmall Runs On One, Two, Or Three Engines

Antique tractor lovers can't get enough of this triple tractor hookup put together by Dewitt Stewart of Bogalusa, La. He mounted three Farmall A's together on a frame with a single front axle and a single set of rear dual wheels. The tractor runs on one, two or three engines in any order. There are two steering wheels and two sets of clutch and brake pedals so Stewart can drive the tractor from either side.

The tractors used range from 1939 to 1946, all of which were completely restored. The triple tractor measures 9 ft. 2 in. wide.

Stewart built the tractor six years ago and has been wowing crowds at parades and shows ever since. He contracted to build the tractor for Rawlin Williams of America's Old Iron Museum in Bush, La., where the tractor is on permanent display.

Stewart made an axle to tie the three differentials together. He turned the ring gear upside down on the center tractor to make it work with the rest of the tractors. He also extended the front axle 20 in. Each transmission is bolted together with the original spacer housing. All pto's operate. All three clutches are tied together with one clutch pedal. One throttle operates all three engines.

"It was a lot of fun to build and always draws a lot of attention wherever it goes. My son Casey helped me build it," says Stewart.

"It makes a great parade tractor, and we really enjoy taking it to tractor shows and listening to people try to figure it out. It's surprising how many people ask me what year Farmall made this type of tractor. At shows I often crank one engine up, then put the other two engines in gear and let off on the clutch and drive forward to start the other two engines up.

"I know of only one other triple tractor hookup, which was put together by Harry Lee (Vol. 17, No. 4). There's nothing missing on my center tractor except for the drop housing axle and wheels. There are three differentials, three clutches, three throttles, three transmission shift levers, and three governors. It's a continuous job to keep the governors adjusted and the throttles all set.

"At first I mounted the steering system on the center tractor. However, it was awkward to drive with the shift lever between the operator's legs and the clutch lever on his left and the brakes on his right, so I remounted the steering system on the left side and added another steering wheel on the right side."

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Dewitt Stewart of Bogalusa, La., mounted three Farmall A's together on a frame with a single front axle and a single set of rear dual tires.



Tractor runs on one, two or three engines in any order. It has two steering wheels and two sets of clutch and brake pedals so Stewart can drive the tractor from either side.



Stewart also made a side-by-side version with two Farmalls.