

Cross Country Tour Beefed Up Extensive Antique Collection

An Oregon couple recently turned a winter-long internet buying spree into a memory-making tour across the country to collect their purchases.

As draft horse enthusiasts, John and Jan Phillips wanted to buy a full line of antique horse-drawn equipment. They started shopping on eBay last year and continued for several months.

Each time they were the high bidder, they arranged for the seller to hold the equipment until they could come pick it up.

"We recently spent two weeks gathering up all of our purchases which were spread out around the country," John explains. "It was an extremely enjoyable and interesting adventure. We drove over 7,200 miles through 26 states, pulling a 33-ft. double-decker gooseneck flatbed trailer. We were often invited to stay overnight at the homes that we visited, and we truly enjoyed all of the people we met."

The couple traveled first to Tennessee where they picked up an antique horse-drawn plow. In Kentucky, they picked up a New Idea steel-wheeled, wooden-sided manure spreader with a horse-drawn draw bar. In Maryland they purchased a cultivator and corn seeder.

Next, it was on to Ohio, where they bought

two draft horse-shoeing stocks (one assembled and one not) from an Amish couple. "They invited us to stay the night with them, and we got a glimpse into the Amish lifestyle. It was the most interesting part of our trip," Jan says.

They picked up a restored Deere single bottom plow in Wisconsin, before heading to Michigan and loading up an antique Van Brundt grain drill, complete with owner's manual.

The couple traveled next to Nebraska and took possession of an antique road grader, which was the last piece of equipment on their list.

"We had the trailer tied down so tight it wouldn't even wiggle. We were so heavy coming out of Nebraska through the Rocky Mountains that we could only go 45 mph," says John.

They made it home in one piece and are now enjoying their new-old equipment, adding it to a lot of other horse-powered equipment they already owned.

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John and Jan Phillips recently spent two weeks gathering up antique horse-drawn equipment across the country. They drove over 7,200 miles through 26 states, pulling a 33-ft. gooseneck flatbed trailer.



Their "finds" included an antique grain drill (left) and a hay rake.

Low Cost European-Style Antler Mounts

Costs to mount a nice rack of antlers with an intact deer head can quickly run into the hundreds of dollars. Dennis Clay, who with his wife Garnet Wilson writes outdoors articles for the Capital Press, Salem, Ore., has come up with a low cost way to make European-style mounts with bleached skulls.

"The top half of the skull is cleaned, bleached and mounted on a wooden display board with the antlers attached."

Clay had a couple of trophies done professionally before deciding to learn how to do it himself.

In a recent issue of the Capital Press, Clay outlined the process, beginning with removing the skin and as much meat as possible from the skull. The skull (but not the antlers) is then submerged in water that is brought to a boil. After several hours of boiling, most meat and non-bone material can be easily removed. Care must be taken not to over boil to the point the bone softens.

"The goal is to keep the antlers their normal color," Clay told FARM SHOW. "If they get in the boiling water, they sometimes come out a little lighter."

The tough part is digging out the brains and other material inside the skull. "You can use a hook to remove the brains, but a pressure washer makes fast work of it," he says. "You have to be careful, though, as the nose can easily break off."

Once the skull is cleaned, he soaks it in a 50/50 mix of bleach and water for an hour or two. Again, make sure the antlers do not touch the water, warns Clay.

As the skull dries, a light coat of powder forms on it. In the future he plans to try spraying skulls with shellac or perhaps painting with white paint.

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Photos courtesy Dennis L. Clay

Top half of deer's skull is cleaned, bleached and mounted on a wooden display board with antlers attached.



Skull is submerged in water that's brought to a boil.

Tool Collection Makes Creative Displays

"I started to collect old tools about four years ago so that I'd have something to do when I retired. I haven't completely retired yet, but I already have so many tools that I ran out of room to display them," says Eugene McMillan of Huron, S. Dak.

McMillan says he gets most of his tools at farm and rummage sales and from other collectors and friends. He mounts the tools on 20-in. sq. peg boards that he can move around easily. "I have about 70 squares so far," he says.

He estimates he has more than 1,000 tools in his collection. Some of them go all the way back to the 1920's. One panel contains crescent wrenches ranging from 6 to 18 in. long. "They make a 24-in. long crescent wrench but I haven't been able to find one yet," says McMillan.

One of the most unusual tools he has made in Sweden and is a left and right hand crescent wrench. The left crescent wrench threads go the opposite way as the threads on a right hand crescent wrench. "I know of only two others like it," says McMillan.

He says interest in collecting old tools has grown over the years. "I'm getting a lot more competition than when I first started my collection. Four years ago you could buy a 5-gal. bucket of old tools for \$5. Now everyone wants them so the price has gone up."

He also built what he calls a "wrench tree" - a 12-ft. high, 4-legged TV antenna base with old, rusted and broken wrenches welded onto all sides of it. It's painted red, white and blue and has a base that measures 3 ft. square. An axle and wheels clamp onto one side of the base, allowing McMillan to tip the tool tree down and roll it onto a trailer. "It's pretty heavy. I imagine it weighs about 400 lbs.," he says.

The wheels are off a riding mower and are connected by a metal shaft.

"People get a kick out of it when they first see it," says McMillan. "One insurance company wanted to buy it so they could display it in front of their building, but I wouldn't sell it. I take it to county fairs and antique tractor shows. If I want I can stick an American flag into a pipe on top."



McMillan collects old farm tools and mounts them on 20-in. sq. peg boards that he can easily move around. Photo shows some of the boards mounted on his garage wall.



McMillan welded together old, rusted and broken wrenches on a 12-ft. high TV antenna base. It's painted red, white and blue.

"I built it one winter when I had nothing to do and had pails full of old wrenches laying around. I used old box end, open end, and crescent wrenches, and even Model T car wrenches to build it. They're all welded to each other," says McMillan.

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