



JR Pearson collects antique horse-drawn equipment, such as this water wagon on display at The Barns Museum in Marcus, Iowa.



Photos by Loretta Sorensen (www.ourdakotahorsetales.com)

Some pieces of equipment required extensive restoration, like this corn sheller he found in a South Dakota pasture.

## Farmer's Museum Features Horse-Drawn Equipment

If you appreciate history, horses and horse-drawn equipment, you may want to plan a visit to The Barns Museum in Marcus, Iowa.

"There are about 250 pieces, and I research everything and give a written history so people can take a self-guided tour and read about everything," says owner JR Pearson.

At 78, the retired farmer still keeps a few Belgian horses on his farm nearby. He's owned horses since he was 12 and built wagons and buggies for his own quarter horses and draft horses.

"Back in the 80s I picked up (antique) pieces with no plans of making a museum," Pearson says, but his collection keeps growing. Currently The Barns encompasses about 9,000 square ft. in four buildings next to the town's horse arena.

Everything is under cover and in working order, though he tries to keep pieces as original as possible. His oldest piece is an

1822 Conestoga wagon jack. A horse-drawn grain drill with original paint and parts was built 137 years ago.

Other pieces include an 1878 McCormick mower, a British plow, Louisville and Leidy stalk cutters, and a 1905 wooden manure spreader that has steel embedded in the wood beaters.

One of his favorite pieces is an International Harvester breaking plow with original paint. With a 20-in. cut it took four horses to pull.

Some equipment required extensive restoration such as a corn sheller he found in a South Dakota pasture. It was all in pieces and he managed to find about 98 percent of the parts and fabricated the rest. Many accessories like shellers, grinders and threshers were powered by "horse power".

Pearson reads ads and follows up on leads to find the one-of-a-kind pieces he wants to add to his museum. He's collected equipment

throughout the Midwest and other states.

"Sometimes I find 3 or 4 items at one place. Many guys kept everything," Pearson says.

Much of the equipment in his collection was built in the 1800's when there were many manufacturers. Most businesses were bought up by big companies such as John Deere, IH and Case. With the invention of tractors, horse-drawn equipment production ended about 1926, though John Deere continued to make horse-drawn wagons until about 1950.

Pearson welcomes small and large groups to call for an appointment to tour The Barns museum from Memorial Day through fall. Cost is \$10/person.

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Photo courtesy Farm Collector Magazine

Pearson tries to keep equipment looking as original as possible.

## He Turned A Grinder Into A Lathe

Who needs an expensive lathe when you have spare grinders on hand? That was James White's thinking when he decided to try his hand at turning osage orange wood - or horse apple wood, as they call it in Texas.

"I had some wood that I had sawed 20 years ago, so it was well-cured. I was trying to use it up," White explains.

He made his own lathe after purchasing a 4-in. faceplate with a center opening, like those often used as a bracket to hold a closet dowel rod or for furniture legs.

"I welded on a nut that fit the grinder shaft, so I can just screw the faceplate on to use it," White explains.

He glues blocks of wood onto the plate with super glue that dries almost instantly. Using carving tools he made from old files and rasps, he steadies his hand and the tool on a piece of railroad iron in front of the spinning wood on the faceplate. It evenly cuts away wood as he creates bracelets, coasters and small saucers.

When he has the shape he wants, White smooths it with varying grits of sandpaper that he holds while the grinder spins the wood. With a chisel and hammer he knocks the wood off the faceplate, finishes up the project and sands the glue residue off the faceplate so he's ready for the next project.

White says he has plenty of girls in his family who love the jewelry he makes. At their suggestion he also makes matching earrings and pendants out of osage orange wood scraps.

"Before this, I worked on heavier stuff. I restored tractors for years," says the 85-year-



James White turned a grinder into a lathe by welding a nut onto the grinder shaft, and then screwing a 4-in. faceplate onto it.

old. It's important for him to stay busy and work with his hands, he adds.

With his homemade lathe and enthusiastic recipients of his work, his goal is to turn as much of his stash of dried lumber as he can into pieces that accent the beauty of the wood.

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## Handmade Mini Combine

A hand-fabricated large model combine residing on a sturdy shelf of a Washington handyman is a nearly exact replica of Deere's 95 Hillside combine built in the 1960's. James Baune, now retired from a local grain elevator, enjoyed driving the 95 combine while farming with his dad years ago, and decided to build a model.

Says Baune, "It took most of one winter working on and off to complete it. I can't say exactly how much time it took, but I enjoyed every minute of the work."

The frame and outside body of the 100+ lb. model was made using 16-gauge sheet metal. Baune repurposed a riding lawn mower axle, "cut in half," he says, for the front combine axle, and used the lawn mower's existing tires for the rear ones on the combine. Baune says, "I just repurposed bits and pieces here and there, and it turned out pretty darn nice."

The header is also made of 16-gauge sheet metal. Baune rolled and shaped the metal for the snouts and added a reel to the header. The machine has a discharge auger that looks like it could unload grain.

Baune says, "for the auger I used a strip of 1/2 by 1/8-in. metal. I heated it and put it around a 1 1/2-in. pipe, then molded it onto the pipe to make the auger. It looks like the real thing."

Other realistic looking parts include a miniature muffler, air cleaner, grated steps with yellow handlebars, the formed and fashioned grain tank, an authentic looking discharge auger spout, and a specially fabricated tail section that closely matches a full size combine's discharge chopper and chaff spreader fins.



Baune's realistic replica of a Deere 95 Hillside combine has working parts, including pulleys to operate and tilt header.

The cab is enclosed, with a realistic looking air conditioning unit on top. Baune used plexiglass for the cab windows, metal for the seat and fabricated the control levers using small pieces of 1/8-in. rods. The steering column and the steering wheel are also fabricated using 1/8-in. rod.

To further its likeness to the real machine, Baune installed pulleys to operate the header. "All of the guards are on and most of them are hidden," he says. "The wheels and header can be leveled left to right using the levers. The reel and augers are also functional."

The 2-ft. tall by 4-ft. 3-in. long combine was finished off with authentic Deere green and yellow paint and all the appropriate decals.

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