

# Restored Versatile Becomes Showroom Centerpiece



som, purchased the tractor and used it on his farm for years. Five years ago, it was sold to a nearby farmer who traded it to LMS.

"One day, our salesman came to me and asked if I wanted a 145 Versatile," says LMS co-owner Abe Penner. "At first, I wasn't sure, but since our operation has a long history with Versatile, I thought if we could have an old 145 in our showroom with the legacy it brought to our business, it would be pretty cool."

Upon arrival, it was clear the tractor needed restoration to bring it up to showroom standards. Local farmer and restorer Dennis Friesen was tasked with reestablishing the tractor's previous state of glory.

Although it was built new without a cab, an aftermarket cab had been added later. When this was destroyed in an accident, a second was bought from a wrecker and installed.

Friesen upgraded all the upholstery and removed a bi-cooler air conditioning unit. He sandblasted out the rusted areas, welded in sheet metal replacements, and removed the tires from the rims. Surprisingly, the original drivetrain, engine and transmission were in good shape. About 190 hrs. were spent on the restoration project.

"They did a fantastic job," Penner says. "It draws a lot of attention when people see it parked in our showroom, and it's become a real conversation starter. People come from quite a way, especially to see it."

The Versatile 145 spends its time at LMS, but Penner plans to enter it in local parades this summer. The Versatile company is also celebrating an anniversary in 2026, so LMS will be doing something special for the occasion with the rare tractor.

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Fifty-six-year-old tractors typically occupy a stall at a salvage yard or are hidden from view at the rear of farmyards. However, the Little Morden Service (LMS) in Steinbach, Manitoba, is a notable exception, as its showroom features a 1967 Versatile 145 tractor for all to see.

Original owner and local farmer, Bill Ran-

Marvin Huber (left) and Don McKinley (right) with their 1936 John Deere B tractor.



## Museum Displays 1930s Farm Life

Take a step back in time at the 1930's Ag Museum in Quincy, Ill. The centerpiece of the museum is a 1936 John Deere B tractor, along with about 50 items that it could have pulled or powered. Included with tillage tools, drills and planters are less common items, such as a stationary baler and a John Deere belt-drive mixer. The Handy Farm Mixer was promoted for use with concrete, feeds, mashes and slops, as well as for washing beets and other root crops.

The museum was created by Don "Mac" McKinley, a former educator, after over-hearing a chance remark at a tractor show. McKinley (now 97), his wife, daughter and son-in-law, Marv Huber, operate the museum.

"We had restored a B John Deere and had it on display at the Mount Pleasant, Iowa, show," recalls Huber. "A father pointed it out to his son, who said, 'It looks pretty, but what would it have been used for?' The dad replied, 'They farmed with it.' That wasn't good enough for Don."

Huber notes that McKinley became determined to show people what farm life was like when he was young, and the B was used. He began collecting, a passion that hasn't stopped, according to Huber.

"We have 4,200 total items documented in our 48 by 120-ft. Morton building," says Huber. "We have a lot of things older than 1930 that would've been in use then."

Items include hand tools, as well as household items on display in the mezzanine. It includes a summer kitchen and everything that would have been found in it, notes Huber.

One of the things that sets the McKinley collection apart from many museums is the documentation. True to his educational roots, McKinley researched each item and documented who made it and how it was used.

In the case of a tractor-drawn 1931 John

Deere Model #10 corn picker, he included its picking capability of 42 bushels per hour. He compared that with the 1931 National Champion hand husking corn picker rate of 23 bushels per hour and a modern Deere 9860 combine's rate of 4,200 bushels per hour.

"It's a private collection, but it was done to educate others," says Huber. "Just call for an appointment. We hosted three local FFA chapters in a day this spring. Our local convention center has promoted us a great deal, and as a result, we've had visitors from around the world. They come as individuals and by the busload."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, 1930's Ag Museum, 1435 Boy Scout Rd., Quincy, Ill. 62305 (ph 217-430-3036).

## Museum Features Old Hay Equipment

Joseph Dain took a lot of the work out of making hay. His company was so successful with their rakes, hay loaders and bale press that John Deere bought it. However, very few original Dain products still exist.

Dave McEachren is a Dain Company historian and collects Dain sales literature. He does so in part because of the connection with Deere. Mainly, it's because Dain grew up near McEachren's on-farm museum with its 15,000 items related to Deere.

"In the late 1800s, John Deere was essentially a tillage company and turned to outside entities to round out their line," explains McEachren. "They looked at who had the best equipment lines and partnered with them. That was true of Van Brunt in drills and Dain with hay equipment. John Deere bought Dain in 1911."

McEachren has a few pieces of Dain equipment in his collection. A select few can be seen at the 1930's Ag Museum in Quincy, Ill. The bulk of that collection consists of implements used with a 1936 Deere B. A few older pieces have slipped in over the years, according to Marvin Huber, son-in-law of museum founder Don McKinley.

"We came across a 1902 wooden frame hay rake and sickle bar mower that were made by Dain, and also a couple of Dain corn cutters," says Huber. "A friend of ours in Ottumwa, Iowa, has a Dain hay loader."

Other items made by Dain included sweep and power lift rakes, combination rakes and tedders, hay stackers and pump jacks, as well as the Handy Farm Mixer and hay presses later promoted under the John Deere name.

One reason few implements survived was Dain's use of wood, as in the hay rake frame. In his documentation of the hay rake, McKinley was impressed with the engineering.

"The amount of wood is interesting, but the gearing is simply astounding," says



One reason few implements survived was Dain's use of wood, as in the hay rake frame.

McKinley. "I'm sure that this 3-bar rake could go into the field today and throw up a windrow with the best rakes of today."

Dain didn't stop with implements. After selling his company to Deere, he invented a 4-cyl., all-wheel, chain-drive tractor. In 1918, he manufactured 100 machines and sold them to Deere. The tractor had two forward speeds and two reverse speeds and could be shifted on the go. Although the East Moline factory where he built them later became John Deere Harvester Works, the company ultimately chose to move forward with the 2-cyl. Waterloo Boy.

Like the rare Dain hay equipment, only two John Deere "Joe Dain" tractors are known to exist. One is owned and displayed by the Northern Illinois Steam Power Club in Sycamore, Ill.

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