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Passion For Gliders Inspired Unique Collection

Ken Cerra had a passion for World War II equipment, starting with Jeeps, which led to gliders and gear designed for glider delivery. His enthusiasm saved two 1941 Willys, made just before the war began. While 25,000 of the flat-grill Jeeps were built, most

were destroyed during the war.

"I found two and had them fully restored and later sold them," says Cerra. "I started looking into the airborne gliders used during D-Day."

Cerra hoped to locate a cockpit. He was

able to find a couple of frames, but not the parts he needed. However, researching gliders introduced him to the equipment they carried into battle.

"I searched around the country, getting to know collectors, until I found several pieces," recalls Cerra. "I found a Case SI tractor in Montana that a farmer got from an Air Force base there. It had the very rare Hough loader with a front bucket on a cable lift mechanism."

The Case SI was a downsized version of a Case SC, featuring different fenders and a distinct front and rear end. Loops on each axle were used to secure the tractor during flight. If it had to be airdropped, a parachute was connected to the loops.

"The Case SI with the front loader is very unique," says Cerra. "Very few were made. Most of the tractors were used to pull a scraper or grader. They were brought in by glider to prepare aircraft runways and do other construction."

Cerra sent the tractor to Dan Peterman, Webster City, Iowa, for restoration. He recalls that the only parts missing were the tub for the back end and some parts for the bucket lift mechanism. When loaded with sand, the tub served as a counterweight for the front bucket. The loader was in tough shape, but Peterson found parts in Kansas.

"I did a lot of research and found a collector in Ohio who had one, as well as the engineering prints for it," says Cerra. "He sent me a copy, and I had an exact replica of the tub made."

Over time, Cerra added a tug tractor found in Indiana and a Clarkair CA-1 bulldozer



Case SI before restoration.

found in Michigan. He also located and restored a scraper built by LaPlant-Choate and a 220S towed grader manufactured by J.D. Adams & Company.

"I had the fun of doing the nationwide search for them, but they were all in horrible condition due to age and use," recalls Cerra. "I did research into each piece, and then we went through the restoration process."

When all were restored, Cerra donated them to the Heartland Acres Agribition Center and Museum, Independence, Iowa.

"I have a farm in Florida where I could have kept them, but who would see them other than myself and a few friends," says Cerra. "I would rather have the public see and enjoy them."

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Algieri with his Oggun G tractor showing its higher floor.

Oggun Tractor Easy To Customize

Jack Algieri, Tarrytown, N.Y., really likes his Oggun tractor. "The Oggun G is a great little tractor. It was designed for people who want to repair their tractors with parts off the shelf."

"We work with a lot of different tractor brands here at Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture. Everything on them, down to the bolts, is customized and has to be purchased from the company."

"We design and build lots of open source (shared design) equipment and tools like our chicken coop wagon train (Vol. 43, No. 5). With the Oggun G, we were able to make lots of changes as needed. We bought the first-generation Oggun G, but the floor was too low. Other changes were needed as well."

"We cut the tractor in half, raised the floor 6 in., modified how the bar came together, put some new steel plates in and bonded it back together," said Algieri. "What was great was that we were just working with steel and paint. We couldn't have made the changes we did on other makes."

"With the changes, we were able to put basket weeders under it. We have made a number of different toolbars for it, with sweeps, V-blades and finger weeders for in-



Front end with custom toolbar.

row cultivation.

"It doesn't have much weight, so we put weights on the front for cultivation. We just added a peg to the front with a cotter pin in the end to hang 25-lb. bench weights. It provided more traction to the front wheels."

"Horace Clements, the founder of Oggun, was very open to the changes we made and what we did with it. He invited us and others to send pictures and testimonials. He makes himself available to his customers to support and learn about new configurations. As a result, they changed a lot of things before introducing the following generations."

He Collects Butter Boxes

Retired Owatonna, Minn., dairyman Scott Krause has no trouble remembering when every small town with a creamery made butter. All he has to do is look at his collection of 1,500 butter boxes.

"I'm into collecting a lot of stuff, from beer cans (also 1,500) to toys to old Owatonna farm equipment and memorabilia," says Krause. "I would see them at swap meets, and one day I bought one. It took off from there."

He learned about the butter box hobby while he was still milking cows himself. One of the field men who called on him collected them.

"He would tell me about finding a new one," says Krause. "At the time, I never thought I'd collect them, but it's addictive. I've been doing it for 20 years."

Krause displays all 1,500 on a big table. About 1,000 of them are unique. He has his favorites, like Holt Butter, which is still made in a small town in his county. The images on other boxes also make them favorites.

"A box from Delva, Wis., has Holsteins grazing by a stream," says Krause. "Moose Lake Special Creamery, Lakeland Creamery and Mountain Lake Creamery each have outdoor scenes with lakes on them."

The Ewald Brothers butter box is a favorite because it has a Guernsey on the side. It was the breed the Krause family originally milked.

"Most of the boxes are from Minnesota and Wisconsin, but I have some from Iowa and North and South Dakota," says Krause. "I don't think of Iowa as a dairy state, but I have quite a few boxes from there."

Krause is always looking for new items to add to his collection. If he comes across a duplicate, he'll trade it with other collectors.

"I stop at antique stores and swap meets



Krause buys, sells and trades butter boxes. He created a Butter Box Group on Facebook with about 185 members. "There are a limited number of collectors," he says.

and watch for online auctions," says Krause. "You never know when you'll find something new. I found eight just last week. They pop up when you least expect it."

He has paid as much as \$70 for a box but admits to getting caught up in bidding at one online auction.

"It reached \$600 before I decided to quit," he recalls. "A few months later, I found the same box for much less."

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"There are a limited number of collectors," he says.

Krause offers advice to other collectors, no matter what they collect.

"I used to stop at a little antique store every summer when we went to a lake to fish, but they never had a butter box," he recalls. "Then one year, they had one. You just have to keep checking."

Krause notes that his collection isn't just from nearby states. He'd like to hear about butter boxes from other places as well.

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