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## 52-ANIMAL WAGON HITCH IS LONGEST EVER

# They Used Llamas To Set World Hitch Record

One of the most unusual entries at parades all over the Midwest this summer is a world record setting 52-llama hitch put together by Wisconsinites Floyd and Pat Zopfi.

On August 4th they broke the record for the largest driven hitch, which previously was 48. Although the record was originally set with horses, the Guinness Book of World Records doesn't specify any particular species so the Zopfi's qualified with their llamas. Since setting the record, they've been busy taking the 52-llama hitch to parades, transporting all 52 llamas in a single semi truck. "It's expensive. We're looking

for a corporate sponsor to help foot the bill," says Floyd.

The huge hitch stretches 140 ft. when it's all hooked up. Floyd positions three outriders on each side of the hitch, equipped with walkie talkies so they can communicate with each other. "They look for any problems with the animals such as tangled harness, and keep kids and other bystanders away from the llamas during parades."

The all-leather harness was made by Amish craftsmen. Floyd says it takes 20 workers about 2 hrs. to hitch up the wagon. Animals are hitched in groups of 4. The

llamas were worked into the big hitch gradually, starting in smaller hitches of 12 each. Last year Floyd and Pat took a hitch of 20 llamas to parades.

They sometimes hitch 4 ponies up at the head of the long hitch because they keep things moving along faster. "When we're in a long parade, we use the ponies because they move along at a faster pace and the llamas will follow them," says Floyd.

The Zopfi's bought their first llama in 1978. They just thought it would make an interesting pet but they got hooked and now their herd numbers 75 and they sell animals

all over the country.

In order to get into the Guinness Book, they took lots of pictures and video and sent them, along with local newspaper accounts, to Guinness offices in New York where they were verified and forwarded on to Great Britain.

When asked if he plans to go even bigger than a 52-animal hitch, Floyd Zopfi tells people, "I never say never."

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Floyd & Pat Zopfi, Continental Apartments, 220 Mail, Hilbret, Wis. 54129 (ph 715 687-4234).

## INVENTED IN 1851

# Is This The First-Ever 2-Row Corn Planter?

This might be one of only two models left of the first corn planter ever built, according to a recent report in a newsletter published by the Corn Items Collectors Association. It's housed in a museum at the Illinois State University. The other one is reportedly at Pioneer Village in Nebraska.

The Corn Items Collectors Association (Rt. 1, Box 111, Canton, Mo. 62435) is a group of collectors from around the country who collect anything relating to corn, such as planters, pickers, huskers, and anything made out of corn or with corn logos on them such as lamps, door knobs, dishes, and so on. Here's an excerpt from the association's newsletter concerning the Brown corn planter.

Inventor George W. Brown was born in Saratoga County, N.Y., in 1815. He lived on the farm where he was born until he was 14 when he left to become a carpenter and then to work building railroad. Soon after marrying, in 1936, Brown headed off to Illinois in a covered wagon to seek a better life. After settling in on 80 acres near Tylerville, Brown again started working as a carpenter.

In 1848 he first got the idea of turning a cultivator into a corn planter. He reasoned that he could place the shovels of the cultivator as wide apart as he wanted the rows to be. He could also place boxes of corn on the back of each shovel, so that the center of each box would be over the middle of the furrows made by the shovels. By using an adjustable slide, Brown figured he could control the kernels which dropped through

openings in the bottom of each box. The kernels would then fall into the middle of each furrow behind the shovels.

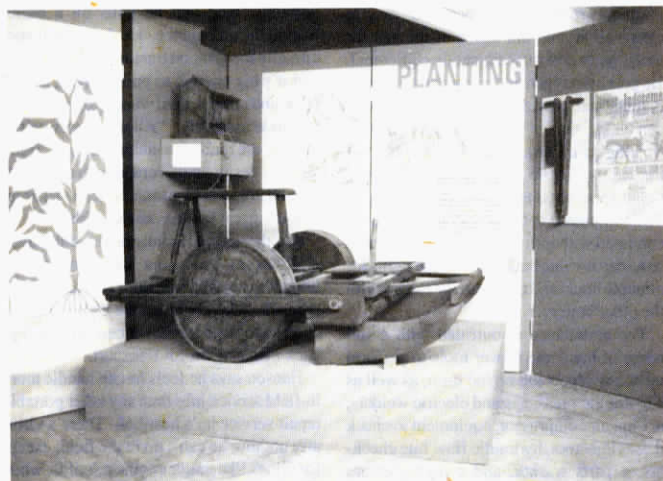
The seed slide was to be operated by a man walking behind the machine. Large wooden wheels were attached to the cultivator in back of the seed boxes to fill in the furrow and level the ground after the corn was dropped.

Brown's planter grew out of these ideas. It required two men to plant 16 to 20 acres of corn a day. In 1852, Brown planted 16 acres of corn with his perfected invention. In that year he planned to manufacture 10 planters but ran out of money. That's when he decided to stake all he had upon his invention. He went into debt and sold his farm to furnish money to secure his patents.

Times were hard and manufacturing facilities were poor. Had it not been for his upright character and good name, Brown would have gotten into serious trouble with his creditors. He began manufacturing at Shanghai, Ill. After 1855, however, he moved to Galesburg. His production rose from 12 machines in 1853 to 6,000 machines in 1875.

After many lawsuits, the Supreme Court of the United States declared in May, 1974, that George W. Brown was the rightful inventor of the corn planter. Soon afterwards many who had manufactured planters using Brown's patent, came forward and paid him a royalty upon the machines they had made.

Brown had magnificent shops in Galesburg with a total of 30,000 sq. ft. of



Planter was pulled by a horse or oxen and carried two passengers. A boy operated the planting mechanism near the front, which dropped seeds into furrows created by the wooden runners. The large drum-type wooden wheels at rear covered seed with soil.

floor space consisting of a foundry, polishing rooms, blacksmith shops, a wheel building, an office and an immense main building. The factory was capable of producing some 20,000 planters per year. Brown actively managed the shops until 1892 under the name George W. Brown & Co. Later the buildings were enlarged to manufacture other types of farm machinery.

Of the two planters still known to exist, one was donated to Illinois State University by Earl and George Hovenden of Trivoli,

Ill., in 1973. They said their family had purchased the planter in 1855. The planter was displayed for many years at the Hudson Agricultural Museum but is now in storage due to remodeling. The other planter was purchased by Nebraska's Pioneer Village from a Williamsfield, Ill., farmer who found the old relic buried under his barn.

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