

Steam Engine Retrieved From River

By C.F. Marley, Contributing Editor

They're having fun in Clay Center, Kansas. And it's all because Corey Stewart retrieved an old steam engine from a river bed where it had been buried for 70 years.

Pulling the steam engine out was half the fun. Speculation about how it got in there in the first place is the other half. We'll get to that.

First the feat. While everyone knew the steam engine was there, and there was always talk that someone needed to go in there some time and pull the machine out, it remained for Corey Stewart, co-owner of a Clay Center welding shop, to do the job.

On Nov. 26, 2005, Corey, his father, and a crew of buddies with long handled shovels dug down and got a chain around the engine. Then, using a combination of a Cat track hoe and a Cat tractor, they lugged the old engine to the surface. This after breaking five chains.

So, how did the steam engine get into this predicament in the first place?

Old timer Wilford Abels, 87, lifelong resident of Clay Center, knows this much: The engine was owned by a man named Eugene Baldwin and was used primarily as a threshing engine. He remembers the engine sinking.

For more information, Jim Unruh, Clay Center, who took photos of the retrieval operation, referred me to Cathy Haney, curator of the Clay County Museum.

Now, Cathy wasn't even born when the

accident happened. She says that what she knows is what can be gleaned from the newspapers.

Apparently the engine was being used to build a bridge over the Republican River. There is disagreement over whether it was being used on the pile driver or driving a riveting machine. There is also disagreement over which of two floods in 1935 pushed the engine and most of the bridge into the river.

Cathy says there is a story in the June 1, 1935, Clay Center Dispatch which says that a dam had broken on the Republican River in Franklin, Neb., and a wall of water 6, 8 or 12 feet high was headed downriver.

As to the actual retrieval, Corey Stewart, who collects antique tractors, and a friend, Ken Shivers, first had to get permission from the Kansas Department of Transportation to dig around the bridge.

The Wichita Eagle reported that the 12-ton engine was down 25 ft. in the river muck. The engine was on its side, covered with some of the slickest mud Stewart says he has ever seen.

A Clay County fire engine sprayed 2,500 gal. of water on the steamer to clean it off. Stewart got enough mud out of the wheels to allow them to turn. Then he went on to tow the steamer to his shop. Stewart says the engine is in surprisingly good shape, and that he hopes to get it going again.



Once it was out of the muck, a fire engine sprayed 2,500 gal. of water on the old steam engine to clean it off. The tractor was being used to build a bridge over the Republican River when it got pushed into the river during a flood in 1935.



Corey, his father and a crew of buddies with long-handled shovels dug down to wrap a chain around the engine. Then, they used a Cat backhoe and tractor to lug it to the surface, breaking 5 chains in the process.



Two 11-ft. uprights spaced 19 ft. apart support a 29-ft. long horizontal bar which the picnic tables lean against. Carrier can haul six 10-ft. tables at once.

Picnic Table Carrier Is A Party On Wheels!

Roger Teske of Alaska, Wis., has a way to easily and conveniently haul picnic tables and a whole lot more to social events in his area. He calls it the (PT) Carrier.

His invention has been used all over a four-county area for weddings, graduations and all kinds of yard parties. Teske says he used to transport picnic tables the hard way, on flat rack wagons, trucks or trailers.

"It was difficult and time consuming," he says. This rig can haul six 10-ft. tables at a time. It can also be used to support a large 30 by 50-ft. tent thanks to a built-in 50 by 30-ft. tarp and a support mast."

Two 11-ft. uprights spaced 19 ft. apart support a 29-ft. long horizontal bar which the picnic tables lean against. When the tables are removed, the bar telescopes up another 3 1/2 ft. and a tarp is draped over the cover to

set up the tent.

Teske installed a couple rows of bus seats down the center of the trailer to provide extra seating when the tables are unloaded and the tent is up.

"The PT Carrier also carries volleyball nets, three sets of horseshoes, a double croquet set, two 10-ft. serving tables, and all of the ropes and stakes to set up the tent. It also sports a five-disc CD player, an amp with microphone and speakers, and a rotating disco ball," Teske proudly points out. "Optional equipment includes a generator, a stainless steel fire pit, and four 10-ft. tables padded with marine fabric."

He tows the PT Carrier at 40 mph with no problem and says three people can unload the tables and set up the tent and music in about 45 minutes. The end result is seating for 75



The PT Carrier has been used for weddings, graduations and all kinds of yard parties. Three people can set up the tent and music in about 45 minutes.

to 90 people, "depending on how friendly they are!"

"I haven't charged for use of the PT Carrier... I call it my gift to humanity. I give any money donated for the use of it to charity," Teske explains.

Teske's brother, Ernie, prepared technical drawings of the PT Carrier, and these are

available to anyone wishing to build their own. If you want them, send Roger a self-addressed 8 by 10-in. envelope with return postage.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roger Teske, E5270 6th Rd., Algoma, Wis. 54201 (ph 920 388-2147).

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