



The first Steiger ever sold to the public sat idle in a shed from 1967 to 1998.

First Steiger Auctioned For \$140,000

An anonymous buyer paid \$140,000 at an auction in June to become part of tractor history. He placed the highest bid of 17 bidders on the first Steiger ever sold to the public.

"This is such an extraordinary piece of history," auctioneer Kurt Aumann of Aumann Auctions said. "For collectors who really like to know the story behind a tractor, this is the one for them."

Douglas and Maurice Steiger of Thief River Falls, Minn., built the tractor for sale after first building a tractor for themselves with truck components and a 238 hp Detroit diesel engine. The Steigers sold their second tractor to their neighbor, Lloyd Pierce, for \$5,000 in 1963.

The 4-WD tractor remained in the Pierce family and was upgraded by the Steiger brothers over the years. In 1967, Pierce bought a new Steiger tractor and parked the '63 model in the shed. The family restored it in 1998 and took it to shows and parades.

A tractor-collecting group from Europe once stopped in at the Pierce farm and "played with the Steiger for over two hours," recalled Lloyd's son, Jeff.

After Lloyd died five years ago, the family decided it was time to let it go and chose to sell it via an online auction.

"Although online auctions are new, they're convenient, easy and efficient for both the buyer and seller," says Jane Aumann, marketing manager for Aumann Auctions, Inc.

Aumann Auctions was the first to offer live internet bidding for farm toys in 1999. Since then they've added absentee bidding to sell antique tractors, farm literature, memorabilia and real estate, including agricultural businesses.

"Internet bidding has allowed us to reach more and more collectors in more and more places," Aumann says. "Recently we were able to sell Deere tractors to a bidder in Australia from an auction held in a small, rural town in Wisconsin."

There was speculation the Steiger might end up overseas, but someone in the U.S. purchased it.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Aumann Auctions, Inc., 20114 IL Rt. 16, Nokomis, Ill. 62075 (ph 888 282-8648; www.aumannauctions.com).

Paul Ezra converted an old Snapper riding mower into this "snapper-grader", painting it Caterpillar yellow. Add-on "idler wheels" on back make the rig look like it has tandem axles.



Mower Converted To "Snapper-Grader"

"It's not an industrial strength machine but it's a fun play toy," says Paul Ezra, Winamac, Ind., who converted an old Snapper riding mower into a scale model road grader.

"It's painted Caterpillar yellow. I call it my Snapper-Grader," he says.

He removed the 30-in. mower deck and replaced it with a 32-in. grader blade that he made from scratch. He lengthened the frame and mounted a pair of add-on "idler wheels" off another mower on back to make the rig look like it has tandem axles. He also used sheet metal to make a hood over the mower engine and replaced the mower's tricycle handle with a steering wheel.

"I plan to drive it around at antique tractor shows. When I do I'm sure it'll get a lot of looks," says Ezra, who finished building the unit late last summer. "The add-on idler

wheels on back don't do anything, but they make it look like the rig has 4-WD. The wheels mount on individual hangers so they can float with the ground. The machine still has its original shift lever.

"To make the blade, I started with a single sheet of 3/16-in. thick steel and used a hydraulic press brake to bend it. The blade manually rotates on a center pin that mounts inside a pair of 1/4-in. thick steel plates placed back to back. I drilled a series of holes on the perimeter of the plates which I use to change the angle of the blade. The deck was originally raised and lowered by a pair of chains, which I replaced with turnbuckles."

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FARM SHOW



Dirt Collection Housed At Local Museum

When Evelyn Birkby was offered a collection of dirt for the historical museum in Sidney, Iowa, she thought it was a joke. The museum board member soon found out there was a lot of interest in those bottles of dirt.

"The collection has since been written up all over," says Birkby. "To my amazement, those little jars of various types of dirt have attracted more attention than anything else in our museum. People hear about it and want to know more."

The samples are housed in neatly labeled, small glass jars. They come from every state in the U.S., many Canadian provinces, Greenland, France, England and some African countries as well.

"There are samples from Buckingham Palace, the White House, Iwo Jima, Guam and elsewhere," says Birkby.

The collection was started by Uva Turnbull, a Farragut, Iowa woman. It started with a trip she and her husband took to Texas in the mid 1900's. A low cost alternative to souvenirs, the dirt samples gathered along the way became something special as others heard about it.

"While she and her husband gathered many of the samples, friends and relatives began sending her samples as they traveled," relates Birkby. "Uva recorded the location with the sample and enjoyed looking at and touching the jars from so many exotic or distant places."

Collecting the dirt became part of the fun as she and her husband attracted attention and questions from locals. Birkby quotes



Jars of various types of dirt in Iowa historical museum attract a lot of attention.

Turnbull as relating, "People think something big is afoot when they observe you painstakingly collecting dirt from their roadside or field."

The jars themselves are practically artifacts themselves. Originally, they were used as sample jars for the testing of butterfat content of cream.

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Contraption Makes Cracking Nuts Fun

With odds and ends parts, Art Freymiller built a nutcracker that means business. It's a tasty source of entertainment at his Woodman, Wis., home where guests marvel at how easy his contraption works.

"It started out from a box of junk," Freymiller laughs. The base is 3-in. scrap iron, supported on 2 by 4-in. basswood legs. He rigged 1/2-in. sq. tubing, a grain binder bundle carrier tooth and a piece of a side rake axle to crack a nut against a 1 by 2-in. fine thread bolt.

"It's cam action. The handle moves 200 degrees," Freymiller says. "When you're cracking the nut it's not quite perpendicular. You turn the bolt to adjust it to just touch the nut. It doesn't take much movement to crack a nut."

Because it's adjustable, it cracks everything from peanuts to black walnuts and Brazil nuts, without mashing the nutmeats inside.

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Pushing down on handle cracks nut against a 2-in. bolt.