

# An Allis Chalmers Collection For The Ages

George Nesbitt “seriously” began collecting Allis Chalmers tractors and equipment in 2012, even though he already owned about 100 of them at that time. By the spring of 2016, his amazing pace of collecting, restoring and maintaining old equipment has grown into a museum, now housed in 3 immaculate hoop buildings, each about 1/2 acre in size. The buildings are home to more than 300 tractors and 100 pieces of farm and construction equipment.

Nesbitt says he was about 7 years old when he started admiring tractors and farm implements. “I looked at lots of pictures in farm magazines and, unknown to my dad, one day filled out a request for literature on Allis equipment. Awhile later the AC dealer, Bill Larwell, showed up and asked my dad where I was, not knowing I was just a kid.” Nesbitt thought his dad would’ve been upset, instead they all just had a good laugh. Larwell gave Nesbitt literature that he practically wore out reading. “That hooked me on Allis right there,” Nesbitt says.

Nesbitt started farming when he was 20 and bought his first AC equipment from Larwell, even though the dealership was 70 miles away in Ottawa. His purchase included a D17 gas tractor, a loader, a 12-ft. disk and a 3-bottom plow. Later he bought other AC tractors and implements, but then a fire on their farm gave his family’s life a completely new direction.

“We lost all our cattle in a barn fire and had very little insurance,” Nesbitt says. “The silver lining was that when we buried the cattle, we found high quality gravel. That developed into a specialty aggregate business, and soon we were selling decorative stone all over Eastern North America.” The aggregate business continues today.

Nesbitt bought industrial AC equipment for his business and in 1995 he started farming again, growing 1,000 acres of hay. His equipment lineup grew slowly until 2012 when he quit farming, sold some of his land and started what he terms “really serious collecting.” By then his former hay shed was filled to overflowing. Eventually he built the hoop buildings to store his ever-expanding collection. He’s purchased tractors and implements from practically every state in the U.S. and several Canadian provinces. Employees from his aggregate business



Photo shows one of 3 large 1/2-acre hoop buildings that holds George Nesbitt’s collection of Allis Chalmers equipment.



One of the implements in Nesbitt’s collection is this 1949 Allis Chalmers small round rotobaler (left). His Sheppard diesel was the first diesel tractor made in the U.S.



repair, restore and refurbish Nesbitt’s collection. His oldest tractor is a 6-12 and nearly every AC built up to the 7000 series in 1985 is represented in the collection.

Nesbitt says people around the country have heard about his museum and during the summer months the farm holds private bus tours. He doesn’t charge for admission, but free-will offering over the years has provided thousands of dollars for a local hospice. “I’m not in this to make money,” he says, “I do this because I enjoy it and I’m glad to see the dollars benefit an important charity.”

Nesbitt’s collection includes AC models from 1918 to 1985, with several rare production units and prototypes. Wide front, narrow front, single wheel, gas, diesel, LP models, open station models and several with cabs and 4-WD are shown. “Most of the tractors in the collection have been taken apart, refurbished and put back together in “like new” condition. We have a sign in front

of every one with its production year, model number, engine, where it was obtained and other information.” He also has Ford, Minneapolis Moline, Earthmaster, Oliver, Cockshutt, Farmall, Case, Deere and other model tractors.

Nesbitt says he attends many Allis shows and always enjoys meeting great people with whom he shares a common interest. He’s not sure how long he’ll keep adding to his collection, but says there’s still tractors and machinery available that he doesn’t have. “We have a wide range of age, power and design in our tractors and machinery that really gives quite a story of how Allis served the agriculture and commercial equipment industry. It’s been fun doing this and I hope to keep at it,” says Nesbitt, who’s now in his early 70s.

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