

## Hay Carrier Collecting Catches On

Emil Hecksel has collected more than 70 historic hay carriers over the past 10 years. He began with a few spare parts and a functional but thoroughly burned Loudon Junior salvaged from a cousin's barn fire in 2008. Hecksel says he started collecting carriers because he's always been interested in farm memorabilia, though not necessarily for a monetary investment.

"They're beautiful pieces of workmanship when they're all restored and painted to their original colors. They're devices from our past that should be preserved."

One of his prized possessions is the carrier from the barn on the farm where he grew up. Even though that yard site had been sold 30 years earlier, Hecksel was able to convince the owners to let him rescue the old Hudson trolley from the barn. He and his son-in-law worked 7 hrs. to remove it, and when they were finished he had the carrier, a piece of track, and some of the original rope that his dad had used to operate it. The Hudson is especially nostalgic for him because Hecksel remembers as a youth driving an old Farmall tractor pulling slings of hay into the barn with the carrier.

He's restored several trolley brands including King, Clover Leaf, Eagle, Porter, Starline, Ney, a Myers Cross-Draft, a Myers Sure Grip, a Boomer and two Leaders. He has sling and fork trolleys, pull hooks, sling pullers, new and used pulleys from several brands of carriers and a point-of-purchase display for Starline, which years ago built several types of livestock and farm equipment. Some of his carriers ride on short metal tracks attached to sturdily built racks he's made to display them. One of his trolleys rests on a wood support similar to the greased wood beam where it used to glide with a sling of hay.

Hecksel shares his joy of trolleys with others who are members of the National Hay Tool Collectors Association, which meets annually ([www.haytrolleyheaven.com](http://www.haytrolleyheaven.com)). "Those events are a great place to meet other collectors, see what they have, and look for items I might want to add to my collection," Hecksel says. He also finds carriers at auctions, estate sales, flea markets



Emil Hecksel's collection of old hay carriers and related memorabilia includes trolleys of all kinds as well as pulleys, hooks, slings, and more.

and swap meets.

All the items in his collection are carefully cleaned, restored and painted. He says most of the time a good soaking in a special solution gets parts moving again, though sometimes he needs to heat the wheels and pulleys. He's constantly on the lookout for missing parts such as trips, pulleys, catches and pulling hooks. Sometimes he makes wood pulleys to replace those that are broken, worn or missing. He says his hobby is a time-consuming but satisfying endeavor, especially when he can get a prized trolley back into working condition.

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## Collector Restores Old Sewing Machines

"What's sad is that people look at old sewing machines as worthless and throw them in the dump. But they can still sew so well," says Carol Leach. The old machines, such as her 1910 Singer Model 23 Red Eye, easily sew through thick denim seams that her modern sewing machines can't handle. She has restored more than 30 sewing machines that fill a room in her Statesville, N.C., home.

"I like the older ones, from the 1950's and older. I have one hand-crank (Sheeba from Pakistan) and my grandmother's treadle - the only one she sewed on - so that's my pride and joy," Leach adds.

Other machines were purchased at auctions and eBay or found on Craigslist or Facebook groups of people interested in collecting.

Often the main work to restore them is to remove rust. To preserve the finish and beautiful decals, Leach doesn't use harsh chemicals. Sometimes just soaking the machine in sewing machine oil followed by rubbing is enough. Non-pumice GoJo cleaner is also safe for sewing machines. Metal parts (not parts with a finish) can be cleaned with 000 steel wool or Evapo-Rust.

"Some machines are locked up. With a lot of oil and wiggling, you can usually get them running again. You can kerosene soak some of them. It releases rust and frees up stuck machines," she adds.

When there are problems with the motor, Leach can fix some electrical issues but when she can't, her retired electrical engineer husband steps in. If he can't do it, she can contact Matthew E. D'Azzo, a Florida resident well known for motor repair ([mr.sewmachine@gmail.com](mailto:mr.sewmachine@gmail.com)).

Many of Leach's machines are Singers with a variety of models with different designs and decals. Some of them, called Royal or Deluxe, are Japanese versions based on the Singer design given to that country after WWII.

Leach is also a big fan of Singer featherweights, which were made into the 1960's. The small workhorse machines are finding a resurgence with quilters because they are lighter to take to retreats and workshops. Mostly black, a few models were made in colors, and Leach has a white one with a greenish tint. Prices for the featherweights are coming down, and they are easier to find, unless they are rare models.

"My top dream machine is a Featherweight 222 with a free arm. They are very rare and sell for over \$1,000," she says. "I'd also like to have the Singer Lotus."

She also has two toy sewing machines, a Ruby (a Japanese clone) and other models from Domestic by Kenmore and The Free Sewing Company.



Marvin Rickert recently finished restoring this 100-year-old Baker windmill for his mother-in-law. It was on display at the recent Husker Harvest show in Nebraska.

## Restored Windmill Big Hit At Show

We noticed an old-style windmill setting on a trailer in the antique tractor display area of the recent Husker Harvest show near Grand Island, Neb. Marvin Rickert, who lives on a farm nearby, was on hand to help visitors learn more about what he calls the "Rauert Windmill."

"This is a Baker windmill that was patented in 1918," says Rickert. "My wife Jane's father, Art Rauert, acquired the windmill in the 1960's from a friend and I helped him get it home. He had the windmill restored and put it up on his farm south of Grand Island. He was very proud of the windmill, and it stayed on his farm until his death in 1978. His wife, Esther, wanted the windmill put up on our farm after she sold their farm. However, years

of adverse weather had almost destroyed the windmill. What was left of it was taken down and put in our hog shed, where it sat forgotten for 30 years.

"Jane's mom moved to our area several years ago and asked if I would restore the old windmill. At that time she was nearing 102 years old. She is now 103 years old and we recently finished restoring it. When I got overwhelmed by the restoration project, my son Ron supported me and we got it done. We plan on keeping the windmill inside most of the time and will take it out only on special occasions."

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Carol Leach has restored more than 30 old sewing machines, including this hand-cranked Sheeba model made in Pakistan.

Though Leach keeps most of her machines, she plans to sell some after they are restored. For people interested in learning more or finding older machines, she suggests joining Facebook groups for collectors and specific machines such as Featherweights.

As a new collector, she says she learns a

lot from others who share her passion for saving old sewing machines that still get the job done.

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