

# Classic Tractor Collection

(Continued from page one)

## 53 MODELS RESTORED "LIKE THEY JUST CAME OFF THE SHOWROOM FLOOR"

### "Like-New" Collection Of Deere 2-Cyl. Tractors

In 1964, after his father died, Mel Kopf decided to keep the family's Deere 1935 D and 630 tractors rather than auction them off. Shortly afterward he began restoring them to their original condition and started buying more old Deere 2-cyl. tractors to restore them. He now has one of the country's most complete "mint" collections of Deere 2-cyl. tractors.

"Some people have more 2-cyl. tractors, but most of mine are completely restored to original operating condition. They look like they just came off the showroom floor," says Kopf, who has reconditioned a total of 53 models, including one of nearly every model built between 1935 and 1960. "My goal is to finish restoring the complete 30 series. I have all the 30 series models, but not all the variations of each model. For example, the 430 was made in crawler, CP, high crop, utility, standard, and row crop variations. I have several of those variations, but not all of them."

Deere 2-cyl. tractors are getting harder to find and more expensive. However, Kopf says a lot of his tractors aren't that rare. "Mostly I collect the ones I know about and

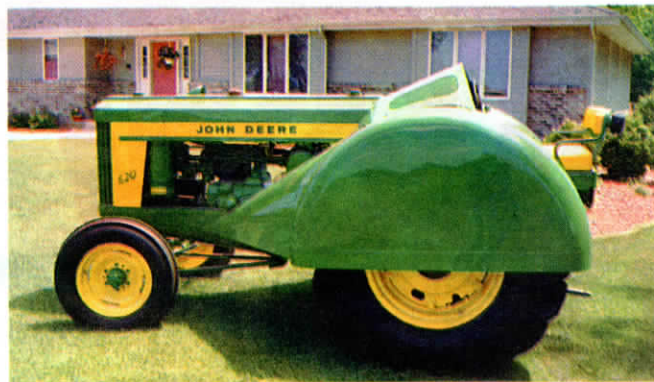
grew up with. Of course, if I find a rare one I won't pass it up, but I don't try to collect only rare tractors. I collect and restore tractors because I enjoy it. I'm not in it to make money."

He keeps his tractors in a 230-ft. long, 42-ft. wide insulated building equipped with a concrete floor and a shop on one end.

Kopf's 1941 HWH is a rare model. "It was a Deere H with a wide front end and it sits higher than an H. Only 125 were made. My 330 utility tractor is also rare. Only 247 were made. Some have sold for up to \$15,000." Kopf is also proud of his 730 standard gas model. "Most 730's were diesel. Only 296 gas models were made."

He pays a lot of attention to small details when he restores the tractors. For example, the cigarette lighter has to have a certain number of white rings around it - a Deere trademark. "I want to restore my tractors so that when I'm done with them they could go to the field. I want them to run as good as they look."

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This model 620 is one of 50 Deere 2-cyl. "numbered" tractors owned by Wileman and his family.

## "NUMBERED SERIES" MODELS BUILT FROM 1952 TO 1960

### He Collects "Numbered" Deere 2-Cyl. Tractors

Kraig Wileman, Edgerton, Wis., and his family own 50 Deere 2-cyl. "numbered series" tractors built from 1952 to 1960. (Before 1952, Deere 2-cyl. tractors were designated by letter "A", "D", "G", etc.)

"About half of them are restored to their original condition and look like new," says Wileman, who uses some of the tractors to grow tobacco on their farm. "They're easy to operate and come in handy because almost anyone can drive them. All my numbered series tractors are electric start."

Wileman keeps the restored tractors in sheds. However, most of them are displayed on Labor Day and Memorial Day weekends.

Some of the tractors are quite rare. They include a 1958 730 Hi-Cropper designed for

working in rice and sugar cane. Only 78 were ever built. "They have been sold for as much as \$20,000 in restored condition," says Wileman. His 1958 620 orchard model has sheet metal over the rear tires and steering wheel to keep the tractor from knocking apples off trees. Only 400 were ever built. "It's worth up to \$25,000 in restored condition". He also owns a 1960 330, a small model that was often equipped with a belly mower and used by counties to mow township roads. Only 1,000 were ever built. Restored models are worth \$10,000 to \$15,000 apiece.

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## ALL ARE RESTORED AND OPERATIONAL

### "D" Collector Has One From Every Year

Canadian tractor collector Brent Campbell has a Deere tractor collection that includes at least one Model D for each of the years they were built, 1924-'53, plus what may be one of the rarest Ds ever built. All the tractors are fully restored and operational.

"The D was the model produced the longest and it was very popular up here," says Campbell, Brandon, Manitoba, explaining why he started his collection.

Campbell and his father, Allen, started their collection in the early '80s with his grandfather's D bought new in 1946 for \$1,864. They began collecting seriously in 1988, and had completed their 30-year D collection in 1992. By then, they had acquired and restored Ds from the last three model years - 1951, '52 and '53.

"The '52 and '53 D's are pretty rare tractors because there were so few produced. The company had switched to the diesel Model R by that time," Campbell notes. "There were approximately 230 '53's built and around 260 '52's."

Campbell wishes he knew how many 1937 D's like the one he stumbled on a few years ago were built. But answers about that won't be available for a while.

"I was baffled," says Campbell of photographs of the rare 1937 model. "I thought maybe the negatives had been turned

around, or that the owner had modified it somehow."

What was so intriguing about the 1937 Model D in the photographs was that its intake and exhaust pipes were on the tractor's right side. On any Model D Campbell had ever seen before, they were on the left side. Nevertheless, the Campbells purchased the tractor in 1991.

In checking the tractor's serial number, 133460, the Campbells would eventually learn they'd added one of the rarest of all Deere Ds ever made to their collection.

"We didn't know how unique it was until after we got it home on the yard," he says.

Deere manufactured 3,000 Model D's in 1937, but may possibly have produced as few as 13 with the right hand exhaust system. The majority of those were exported, most to South America.

The exhaust system on the right side accommodates a "hot manifold." It permitted burning less refined fuels, such as No. 2 diesel or kerosene.

"The hot manifold was designed to improve combustion in areas with particularly low grade or high viscosity fuels," according to a 1992 article in Two-Cylinder, an antique tractor collectors' magazine. "The hot manifold also provided improvement in some cold climate applications."

Campbell won't say how much he and his father paid for the tractor or what they believe it's worth. (Even a ballpark figure won't be estimated until the Two-Cylinder Club, Grundy Center, Iowa, completes its research on the Deere D's with hot manifolds sometime within the next year.)

However, how the Campbells acquired the tractor is almost as unique a story as the tractor itself.

The Campbells were featured in an article in Country Guide, a Canadian farm paper, in the summer of 1990. They had only been collecting Deere tractors seriously for about two years.

A year and a half after its publication, the Campbells received a letter, pictures of the tractor, and a phone number from a woman who'd seen the Country Guide article. Her father was the original owner of the tractor, and she wanted to know if the Campbells were interested in restoring the tractor and adding it to their collection.

"We bought it over the telephone" in late fall '91, Campbell says.

Restoration, which typically takes two weeks, was complete by the spring of 1992.

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