

February 2006

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### Recommended Citation

Hauser, Alfred Warren Page (2006) "Tractors are the Artifacts for Me," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 18: Iss. 1, Article 10.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4839>

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# Tractors are the Artifacts for Me

by **Alfred Warren Page Hauser** (Retired Jeweler, Newport News, Virginia) <awphjfh@att.net>

After nearly 40 years, I finally became what I wanted to be in life: a farmer. Originally, I had planned to be a big game hunter, but that fell by the wayside. After WWII, I enrolled at **Virginia Tech** in Blacksburg, Virginia, and in 1949 received a degree in agriculture. Upon graduating, I entered into the family business of watch repair, working with my father and his twin brother who, in turn, had taken over from their father, an immigrant from Alsace-Lorraine. I began my own jewelry store in 1955, branching out from watch repair and was in the business until 1986, when I sold my store.

I had always enjoyed hunting and being outdoors, so in 1988, with the intention of hunting, I purchased 442 acres of land in King William County between the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers. I gradually added other smaller tracts of land until now I own nearly 500 acres, much of it in land use as a tree farm. That much land is too much to hike around comfortably, so I purchased an ATV, which worked very well for getting around the property.

After cutting some timber on the land and replanting with genetically improved loblolly pines, I began my tree farm. Wanting also to continue to use the land for hunting, I had plans to plant food plots for deer and game birds. The ATV proved inadequate for farm work. I could plant small areas, but nothing in the scale I

wanted. I was mowing with a scythe and sowing seeds by hand, an endless and inefficient process. So another piece of machinery was added.

In 2000 I purchased a 1941 Allis-Chalmers tractor for \$1500. It looked like a rusted out pile of junk, but a friend completely restored it, down to the last detail of a new decal on the new red-orange paint job. His labor and another \$1500 really were a big improvement. The tractor had come with a few old implements, some useful, some not. I was able to scrape the roads, and with some jerry-rigging, could sow more easily. It did make me feel like a farmer. However, I discovered that the tractor did not have a three-point hitch. I could not bush hog or plow. It also had only one front wheel, which was very unstable on hilly country. I began to be concerned about safety. I needed a better tractor.

In 2004 I purchased another tractor, a 1951 Ford 2000, faded blue. It does have a three-point hitch and came with an assortment of useful implements, including a bush hog and plow. The Ford is definitely a working tractor, not as good-looking as the Allis-Chalmers, but much more useful. To house this equipment and keep



it out of the elements, I recently installed a metal shelter. The place is beginning to look like a farm!

In terms of why I collect, I'm not even certain I have a "collection" as such. There are a lot of pieces. I really began collecting the tractors and implements out of necessity. I learned by trial and error what I needed to fulfill my goals. At nearly 80 years old now, I no longer plan to collect more farm machinery or other equipment. I can keep up the tree farm and continue to work on the game farm aspect with this equipment as long as it keeps running and I can do the same. My cousin's young son maintains the machinery for me and my wife works on keeping me healthy.

It is only significant to me, as it has enabled me to fulfill my dream of being a farmer. Having a farm and some machines to drive has also brought the male members of my family closer together and has gotten them interested not only in the tree farm aspect, but also in maintaining an environment for the resident turkeys, Canada geese, and coveys of quail. In addition to these game birds, there is a myriad of song birds, hawks, and even eagles. Working on the fields and being close to Nature is a great pleasure for me.

The tractors and the implements will be long gone in 100 years. I can only hope that my love of the land and animals will have passed down through future generations. 🌱

# Wild Rocks — Pretties and Leave-its

by **Marilynn Ford** (Lifelong Student of Current Events, Minnetonka, Minnesota) <m.ford@mchsi.com>

I fear I never collected much except books, and that's far from unusual. The only other thing I've collected, though I guess I hadn't thought of it in quite that way, are rocks. I have found that over the years when we've traveled, both locally and in places far off, I've picked up rocks to take home. I suppose partly that was because I resisted buying traditional "souvenirs" and because some of the rocks really were different from what I was used to seeing here in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. I know there are agates to be found along the North Shore of Lake Superior, but I was never lucky enough to locate any, though I've seen some interesting ones others have found. Mostly I put any bigger rocks in the garden part of the yard wherever we lived, though I still have a few small ones in the house. The latest was a small handful I brought back from an Alaskan cruise where I picked them up among the rocks deposited by the glaciers we visited. (Knowing we would be flying home, I felt restricted and settled for quite small ones.)

Seldom were the rocks taken along when we moved, though we did move one large (and originally stinky) "rock" that turned out to be

particularly unspectacular coral, ending up looking like a large piece of chalk full of holes like a Swiss cheese. As I recall, that tended to disintegrate in our Minnesota winters. But we did haul sample rocks from our adventurous home, The Foundation, located in Houston County, for these were unusual and worked fine for the gardens of friends along our route visiting relatives scattered over the United States. I don't know that the rocks have a name, but they were full of holes, and sometimes had bits of iron ore or other minerals embedded in them. In Decorah, Iowa, a homeowner had built an entire wall around his yard with these characteristic stones, and many another resident in that part of Minnesota and Iowa used them decoratively in their gardens. In our daily walks, I often picked up smaller stones like that, but there were others that were "leave-its," for they were much too big to handle. Rarely, I moved such rocks to a place where I could find them when we drove by, so I could pick them up then.



Another special find is a large, flat, smooth rock brought back from the shore at Eastport, Maine, supposedly the most easterly part of the United States. It serves as an excellent paper weight but since it is a layered rock, what I have left is only part of what I brought back. A fall splintered off a big piece of it.

None of these rocks mean much to anyone else, and none are intrinsically valuable. It's been so long since I had a beginning geology class at the **University of Minnesota** that I no longer can peg many of them except roughly as to origin. Still, when I look at them, I can see the places we visited and have pleasant recollections of long-ago excursions. Besides, they don't really require dusting! Culturally, they're meaningless unless one is inspired to study geology by seeing them, and I know already what will become of them for I've had to leave many behind at various times as we moved. Still, they weren't the investment that my book collection was — in monetary terms,

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