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Wild Rocks -- Pretties and Leave-its

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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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Costumed Rabbits in China

by **Janis F. Hauser** (Retired Elementary School Teacher, Newport News, Virginia) <awphjfh@att.net>

At various times in my life, I have collected whole sets of china, hand-made pottery, English bone china cups and saucers, children's books, fabric, cookbooks, rabbit figurines, family photos and stories.

Having to downsize took care of many of my collections. My daughters received an early inheritance of their great-grandmother's and great-great grandmother's china. My step-granddaughter received another set. They also took the hand-made pottery. After realizing I would never have infant grandchildren, I donated the baby-themed fabric to **Edmarc** (www.edmarc.org), where it would be used for quilts for children suffering from cancer. More fabric went to the **Peninsula Agency on Aging**, to be used for lab robes for nursing home residents. When I had to retire, the children's books went to other teachers. While many of the cookbooks were given away, I kept those I use, have purchased a few more, and created two binders of recipes clipped from magazines and newspapers that I want to try.

Many of my collections have begun by accident, seeing something pretty that I'd like to have in my home, or were given me by family members. The bone china cups and saucers came from my maternal grandmother's visits to Canada. When she died, the collection was split between me and my sister-in-law. I have the cups with pink flowers, she has the blue ones. The miniature cup and saucer collection began with two that my grandmother played housekeeping with as a child. I added one or two from "rummage sales" at my elementary school, purchasing them for 10 or 25 cents. Even at that age I was on the lookout for pretty things!

My father became interested in tracing the family's history and handed down copies of all he'd learned. He even made copies of old photos for us. It makes it more interesting to put a face with a story. Even so, many sto-

ries died with him. This is my most important collection.

I collected things because I never turned down any offers of items by others. I made it easier for others to downsize, never thinking that I'd eventually have to do the same. Most of the items were useful or pretty, all for my home. Many trigger memories of favorite relatives. Even as a young girl I thought about my grandmothers using the items they had given me. That made me feel good, to be a link in the chain of life. The photos and stories help me to preserve those memories.

Once you begin to collect things, it is difficult to stop. I no longer collect bone china cups and saucers, but I still look. There may be a rabbit figurine that jumps out and catches my eye, but I try not to add any. Rabbits do have a way of multiplying. I do still add a cookbook, if I think the recipes are unique and useful. I still collect family photos and stories.

My collections are important only to me. Everything I collect serves as a memory, a bridge between generations. To use a grandmother's favorite cookie recipe and

place the warm, fragrant result on her flowered plate with tea from her flowered bone china cup makes the bridge tangible. I feel her presence. The photos and stories help me to understand what has passed, why I am like I am. Because we all have similar physical traits, I can even see how I will look as I age: shorter, rounder, chubbier chipmunk cheeks. I am beginning to link historical events with my own family's time line. As I read books about the **Civil War**, I think of my great-grandfather, a musician from the North. It helps me feel part of the big picture. I wonder what my ancestors thought and felt at certain periods of time. If I am lucky, they wrote it down. Mostly, they didn't and I'm left to speculate.

In 100 years, I imagine most everything will be gone. The blood line does not continue. It will be as if I, and all my collections, never existed — a sad thought. If by some remote chance the stories were ever published, there might be some continuity, for I (and perhaps others) like to read about others' lives, no matter how mundane. 🐰



Adventures in Librarianship — Encyclopedia Redux

by **Ned Kraft** (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State)
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For those who heard that specialized encyclopedias were dropping out of the market, we beg to differ. Some recent selection slips lead us to believe the business must be quite healthy.

Stanik's Encyclopedia of Cloud Formations. **Stanik Publishing**, 2005. From Al-tocumulus to Stratus, from the highest halos to plain old fog, they're all here. Students and scholars alike will appreciate the succinct definitions and etymologies of difficult technical terms such as wispy, buoyant, and low-lying. \$254.

New World Illustrated Encyclopaedia of New Worlds. **Droopy House**, 2006. The "NWENW" is a continuously updated database of all planets that have been discovered around stars other than the Sun. Customers will swoon for the digitally-enhanced renderings of Pulsar Planets, Gas Giants, and Terrestrials. Should the apocalypse draw near,

how many planets could support human life? How long would it take to get there? Are the beaches crowded? Find out! \$154.

Encyclopedia Faucetica. **Fanway & Slander**, 2005. For your customers interested in faucets, the **Fanway & Slander** covers from prehistoric stone faucets, Mayan antler faucets, to Andy Warhol's Elizabeth Taylor Faucet. If faucet history is not adequately covered by your collection, this one purchase will cover it. \$277.

Online Encyclopedia of Juvenile Slang. **Pungent Publishing**, 2006. The fifteenth edition retains the Micropaedia/Macropaedia/Propaedia structures used to great fanfare in 1974, augmented by the often-scorned Trapezia indexing format. So many library patrons misunderstand the word "sweet." They may use "s'up" improperly. Or they may fall short of the many

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at least. I could have done worse!

Once I expressed a desire to have a sword — I can no longer recall why — and friends humored me by bringing me a fancy brass sword (evidently a ceremonial Masonic piece) which I had forgotten about til recently. Somewhere along the line I must have given it to my son **Jim** to keep (along with a lot of other things) and when he visited an antiques store to see about selling the old rural phone we'd brought from New Richland after they went to more modern phones there, he brought the sword in also. Amazingly, he came out with \$265 for me from the sale of those two items! I'll never understand the lure of antiques! 🐰