



Clark Mountain Drafts of Nallen, WV, commissioned this beautiful Weaver Hitch Wagon. Details abound in this unit to showcase their stylish hitch wagon, including the automotive finish, innovative steel fifth-wheel, hydraulic brakes, pinstriping and many custom accents.

WEAVER WAGONS

SUPERB CRAFTSMANSHIP FROM CUSTOM DESIGNS

by Fred Hendricks

Weaver Wagons are touted for their versatility by farmers toiling in the field, to trail bosses working the mountains or as a featured parade entry. The wagon's usefulness spans the gamut from hauling firewood to sharing a joy ride with a few friends. Ervin Weaver could not have envisioned the success of this venture when he built the first wagon in 1994; a simple, but quality flatbed to haul hay.

Ervin and his family operated a medium-sized dairy and mixed livestock farm near Dalton, Ohio. The proximity of their farm to Pioneer Equipment allowed Ervin to work at Pioneer until his oldest sons were able to be employed. Soon after building the first wagon bed, Ervin struck a business relationship with Pioneer. Through this arrangement, Pioneer began

selling Weaver Farm Wagons on Pioneer manufactured gears. This worked well as Pioneer customers were eager to buy a nice wagon instead of building their own.

The Weaver Farm Wagon market matured as a result of Pioneer's expanded growth. This increased business provided the opportunity for Ervin's sons to assist in the new venture. The product line increased to include hitch wagons, parade and

trail wagons, farm wagons, people haulers and more. They also built church benches and bench wagons for the greater plain community.

On January 1, 2014, Ervin passed the business onto his sons, Emery and Vernon. "We were excited when dad offered the business to Vernon and me. With this transition, we changed the name from Weaver Farm Wagons to Weaver Wagons & Custom Designs, LLC," Emery stated. Under the new ownership, manufacturing facilities and capabilities have expanded. In addition, new products along with complimentary services were added.



Quality Craftsmanship

Craftsmanship is a Weaver family trademark. "Dad was in construction for 15 years before he purchased the dairy farm,"



This Weaver Farm Wagon dates back to their original model. Its simplistic design is versatile for many applications. The 16' flatbed with a generous 7' 6" width has optional uprights to support a load of hay or straw. The flatbed is constructed on the heavy-duty six-ton Pioneer gear with treated lumber floors and mechanical brakes.



A new addition is this Weaver Buckboard Trail Wagon. Construction is designed for a single horse or a small team. It is perfect for wagon trains, parades or relaxing pleasure driving. In addition, it can be outfitted with a modernized Pioneer gear or a traditional buggy gear.

explained Emery. "And then, he worked at Pioneer Equipment for several years before taking over the farm full-time. Dad's experience in construction helped in building the first hay wagon. More importantly, he had a knack for building things durable and with great detail.

"I was ten years old when dad started the business as a sideline to farming. I grew up building wagons and it was something I always enjoyed. Working for dad was the only full-time job I ever had. Vernon was employed full-time at Pioneer Equipment for 15 years. He then came home to help in the shop and on the farm. Vernon and I were fortunate to work alongside Dad and learn

from his skillset," Emery indicated.

The Weaver brothers have divided responsibilities in critical aspects of the business. However, they start each day with a brief meeting to be sure everything is coordinated while maintaining the work schedule.

Emery oversees the wood department, final assembly of the wagons along with the paint department. He also handles all aspects of marketing, sales and business administration.

Vernon is the master metal machinist. His work and oversight includes manufacturing fifth-wheel gears and wagon parts. Stainless steel has become an integral metal component that Vernon also supervises. Equipment to polish the stain-

less steel was recently installed as an alternative to chrome-plated metal. "Stainless steel eliminates rust and corrosion associated with chrome. And, it looks every bit as good," Vernon said

The distinctive look of Weaver Wagons is accomplished through the use of poplar wood on the natural finished wagons. PVC material is used on the sides of the painted wagons to reduce cracking. "Our employee, John Zook, adds a complex eight-step paint process. An option is then offered for vinyl graphics that are done in-house. Or, Wayne Troyer, a freelance artist, hand-paints the pin-striping to complete the fin-

continued on next page



Weaver Wagons restored this hitch wagon for Wright's Haffingers of Wellington, OH. Note the transformation from the original condition to the exquisite finished wagon. No stones were left unturned in accomplishing the final details.



after

The most unusual horse-drawn wagon ever restored by Weaver Wagons is this early 1900s aerial ladder wagon. The Little Wiz Fire and Historic Medina Museum in Medina, OH, delivered the wagon in very bad shape. Emery reflected, "We first had to envision how the aerial ladder looked when it was new. We then set about making updates that included all new wood and sandblasting everything that was not replaced. Next, our eight-step painting process was applied. And finally, Wayne Troyer spent three weeks hand-painting the pin-stripping."

Weaver Wagons continued

ishing touch," Emery commented. With the expert paint process, Weaver Wagons appear to be made from metal. These thorough applications and finishing details provide the distinguishing qualities of Weaver Wagons.

The company has maintained a working relationship with Pioneer Equipment, as Emery recounted: "We provide numerous services for Pioneer Equipment. These services include manufacture of their buckboard, paint



An employee in the Weaver Wagons manufacturing facility as he adjusts a saw to cut a side board.



before

and assembling hundreds of wood shafts for their buggy gear along with painting their wood wheels. We also make the poly bench seat and the wood neck yokes that Pioneer sells."

Restoration Services

While horse-drawn wagons may be built to last, deterioration of both wood and metal will result with age and usage. Acquiring a quality replacement wagon can be prohibitive in cost. Weaver Wagons has achieved an enviable reputation for their expert restoration services while keeping the costs in line.

The quality of craftsmanship along with a reputation for a clean and organized shop attracts customers to their place of business. Emery explained, "We strive to provide a short turnaround time when we agree to a restoration project. We've had jobs come to us because other shops required a year and up to two years. Our dedicated team of employees can complete a job in a few months, depending on the difficulty."

The qualified team at Weaver Wagons has restored numerous hitch wagons. The most recent assignment was expertly completed for Fred Kiger of Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. "As with many of our restored hitch wagons, we updated it by adding stainless steel hardware. The wagon received the expert hand-painted pin-stripping treatment. We have restored a variety of horse-drawn units including, show carts, sleighs, Vis-à-vis and others," Emery related.

When queried as to their most unique restoration



Carrs Belgians of Casstown, OH, required a complete overhaul with an up-to-date parade finish for their Vis-à-vis limousine. Weavers applied their professional craft and exceeded the owner's expectations.

challenge, Emery remarked; "The most unusual thing we ever restored was a horse-drawn aerial ladder wagon used in the early 1900s to fight fires. Tom Doyle, owner of The Little Wiz Fire and Historic Medina Museum in Medina, Ohio, delivered the wagon in very bad shape. Tom asked that it be restored to original condition, if possible."

Emery reflected, "We first had to envision how the aerial ladder looked when it was new. We then set about making updates that included all new wood and sandblasting everything that was not replaced. Next, our eight-step painting process was applied. And finally, Wayne Troyer spent three weeks hand-painting the pin-striping. Once the job

was completed, we had exceeded the owner's expectations."

Family Heritage & More

The Weaver Wagons business is situated in the heart of Ohio's most heavily populated Amish community. As with all Amish, their ancestors migrated from Switzerland. Although the Weaver family has lived in Wayne County, Ohio, for several generations, they do not have record as to whether their ancestors were part of the first Amish settlement in Pennsylvania or members of a group that settled directly in Ohio.

During the early years, the manufacturing facilities were located on the farm that Ervin Weaver first acquired. Due to restricted space,

painting was limited to a nice day when they could paint outdoors. They would roll out a large tarp in the front lawn where the painting was done. In 2016, an 11,000-square foot shop was built off the farm along the main highway. Although this additional space has resulted in more efficient production, further expansion is being contemplated.

New products are always under consideration at Weaver Wagons. "When we receive repeated requests for a particular product, we'll do some market research to determine if it will be added. Sometimes we simply brainstorm an idea on what we think people could use and don't know it until they actually see it.

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Weaver Wagons continued

Once the new design is built, they are hitched and field tested. We want to make sure everything works properly before it's made available for marketing. A new product in the works is a Conestoga Camping Wagon. This wagon is suitable at campgrounds and private lakes to rent like a cabin. Or simply used as a personal wagon," Emery conveyed.

Emery expressed gratitude for their relationship with Pioneer Equipment. "We are thankful for our connections with Pioneer through the years. Pioneer continues to acquire parts that we produce. In turn, we buy our gears from Pioneer. They also handle our foreign shipments which have now gone to six different countries. Manufacturing and marketing our respective products has been beneficial for both of our companies," Emery shared.

Weaver Wagons continues to experience steady growth. They credit many facets in realizing their success. "Our goal is to build relationships with each of our customers by delivering quality products and services. It is very satisfying to see a customer express pleasure in seeing their old piece restored to a condition that is better than when it was new," Emery shared.

He concluded, by saying; "We are thankful for the talents that we've been blessed with ... and, the wonderful guidance we received from our family and friends along the way has been very helpful."

If you would like to learn more about Weaver Wagons, you may contact them; Phone: 330-857-7811 or E-mail: weaver-wagons@gmail.com. Also, a Weaver Wagons web site is scheduled for completion by the time this story is published, where you can learn about their extensive wagon offerings, parts and services.

About the author: Fred Hendricks of Bucyrus, Ohio, has a wealth of knowledge in agriculture. His freelance writing covers a vast array of subjects relating to agriculture. He may be contacted at email: fuhendricks@gmail.com

Did you know?

In 1900, around 130,000 horses worked in Manhattan—more than ten times the number of yellow cabs on the streets of New York City today. A typical city horse produced up to 20 kilograms (45 pounds) of manure and 7.5 liters (2 gallons) of urine a day.