

; in memory of another age



18-ton Frick steam tractor was rated at only 18 horsepower. But he said this figure was just a rating of its day and misleading by today's standards.

"Isn't this fascinating," one middle-aged man in the crowd said. "Yes," said the other, but it's not just that for me — it brings back a lot of fond memories."

Likewise for me. Although I do not recall the days of steam tractors, the old time threshing machines were still in use for several years after I was born, and nothing thrilled me more during the summer than to see those fascinating machines in action. I watched them until the dust and chaff had covered me completely and left only when threatened with a spanking. After that I lay awake for part of the night, listening to the lively sounds of threshing mixed with that of frogs and crickets.

Those were summer evenings I won't forget . . . the hum and muffled roar of the threshing machines, the chirping of crickets, the croaking of frogs . . . while the light of the full moon came through my bedroom window.

Here at the Port Royal show, the smell of oats, steam, and burning wood was strong as men prepared for threshing, with directions from Sheaffer. The horse-drawn wagon pulled into position. The steam tractor crept to its destination at a snail's pace, surprising onlookers by its silence during the entire operation.

With belt in place, the "engineer" tugged at the whistle, released the clutch, and opened the throttle. The cylinder pulsed and thumped, picking up speed rapidly. The flywheel spun and the belt slapped up and down for a moment until it built up momentum. From then on it was excitement for everyone and nostalgia for those who could remember the days when such activities didn't have to be staged.

The chaff blew around vigorously near the

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"Americana" made its debut at Port Royal with hundreds of people visiting the five-day show on over 45 acres. The show is a dream come true for Sheaffer, upper left. The nostalgia-oriented show, who owns 1,000 agricultural antiques, drew the show to attract national attention. The show was of special interest to onlookers, (above right) delighted in being buried by the chaff of the thresher.

proud to have milked the first 1,000-pound butterfat cow in that area. He left the farm in 1960 to go to school; spent some time in the service; and is currently working on his masters degrees in biology and industrial arts.

When I met Sheaffer, he was busy cutting wood for one of the steam tractors which participated in the agricultural exhibition he is pioneering. Wiping sweat from his brow, he took a few

minutes of his time between "chores" to discuss his plans and explain items of interest.

The large, steam-powered "iron horse" caught my attention right from the start — as did the team of horses and the wagons they were pulling and the threshing machines.

"One of these steam tractors can easily pull a 12-bottom plow, and uproot trees with trunks measuring 10 inches in diameter," he explained. Surprisingly, his

Lancaster Farming Photos by Dieter Krieg

