

Wagoneers

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sponsored wagon, the harnesses and horses are hers.

"There's no reason in the world why I shouldn't do it all myself," she draws. "I've done this sort of thing my whole life."

Overall, Hazel is a "catch all" woman who has done "everything you can name" in her lifetime, but she really enjoys ranching the most.

"I put all the crops in last year, honey," she belts out with pride. "Went over every inch of that farm by myself." There are a lot of inches involved in 730 acres.

The history Hazel has made goes further than this "once in a lifetime" Bicentennial event. She made history for her family, also, in Tennessee when she retraced a part of the same path her grandparents had taken 110 years earlier on their way down to Texas in their own covered wagon.

"Oh, my, it was excitin'," she continues with an animated face. "There I was, doing the same thing — the same twelve-mile stretch

— my grandpappy made," she exclaims.

When Hazel made this historic 12-mile trek, publicity brought her another welcome surprise — a previously unknown third cousin brought out to her a family tree which the cousin had been tracing for years.

"My grandpappy was the one who went to Texas on the wagon train and then disappeared — you see, he died down there," she explained. "And, I sewed up the whole kit and kaboodle, and solved the mystery of the vanishing ancestor."

So, altogether, she solved a mystery in the family tree, made history for her family by reliving her granddaddy's travels, and made history for the nation by participating in this Bicentennial event. She's a pretty satisfied woman.

"Oh, yes, I loved it. I loved every minute of it, honey," she emphasizes with a shake of her head.

But, she has a desire to get back home. She says when she left Texas on January 4,



The riders of Loretta Lynn's wagon aren't as enthusiastic as some of the other people in the

wagon train and are ready to see their Tennessee homes again.

Photo by Joanne

1976, she knew where she was going, and so for her, the trip is really over. July 4 will be a big day to remember, but in general, the event has come to a climax already.

Like most people, Hazel has relatives at home who she wants to get back to. Her daughters, who encouraged her to make the trip, are

waiting, as are her children.

"Oh, yes, I've got children waiting," she says. "I

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Hazel Bowen, 68-year-old grandmother from Texas, began the trip on

January 4 and has loved every minute of it.

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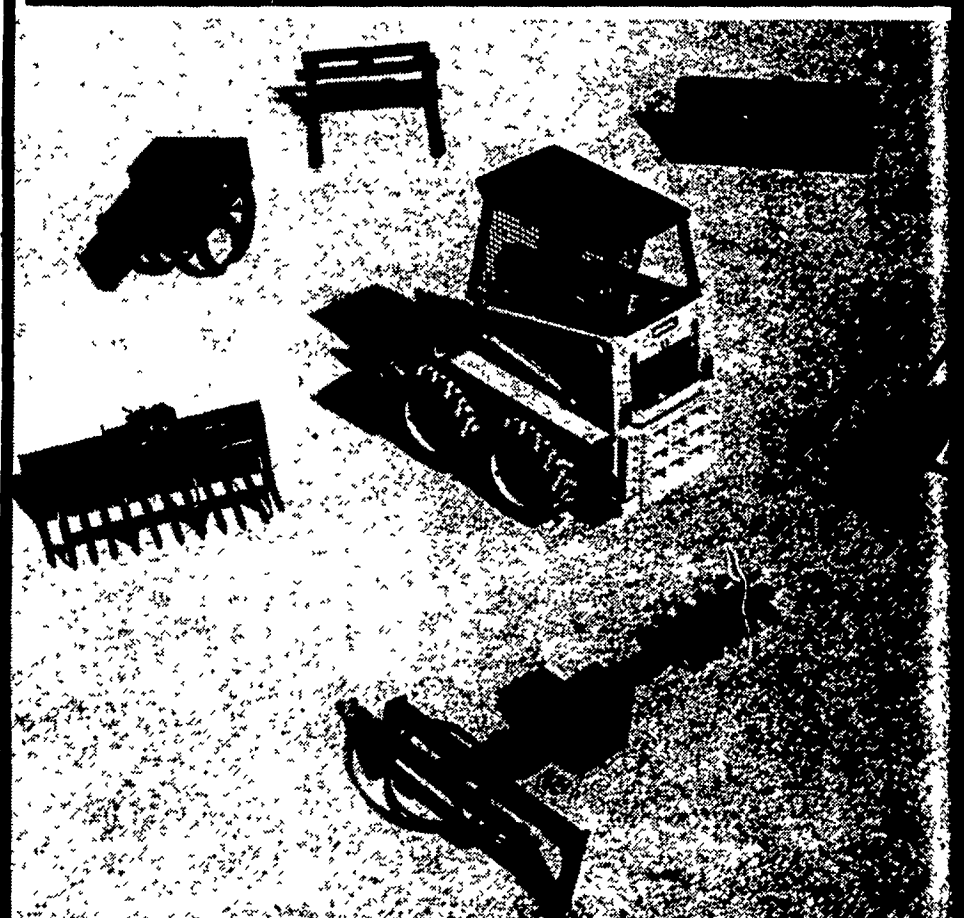
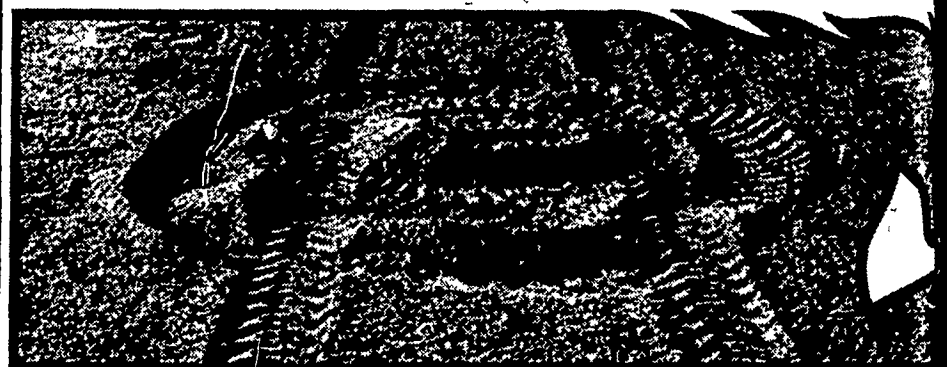
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