



Claude Bradley, now retired, stands beside his shop remembering the challenges of time past.

## Bradley is "cracker-jack" inventor

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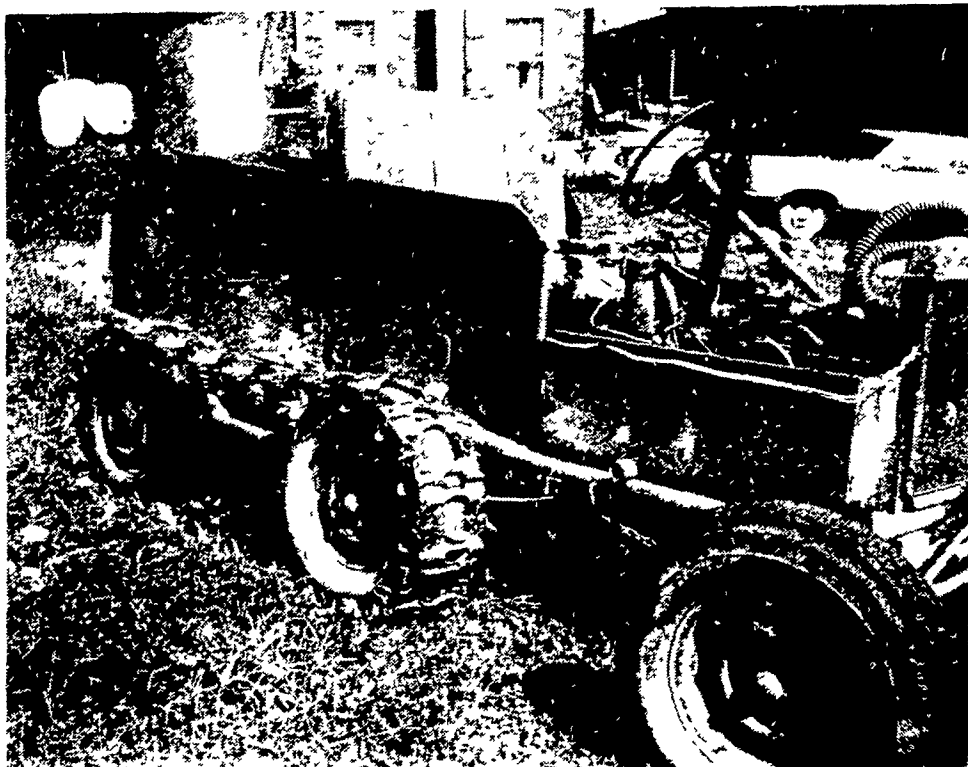
The art of 'make-do' or to make something useful out of odds and ends has almost been forgotten in this age of affluence. Throw it away and buy new" has been the cry for the past few years.

But not Claude Bradley of Bumpville. He is a prime example of one who has a passion to make-do or fix something over to make it work rather than to buy new.

Now retired at the age of 76, Claude's reputation as a cracker-jack welder, carpenter, and inventor, is kept alive by his son Karl who has taken up his father's trade. "Don't write about me," Karl told me emphatically, "write about Pa. He's the one who has done it all."

"I've always lived around here, (in the north central part of Bradford County not far from Rome) Claude told me when I went to see him. "I worked on the road for the state for a few years when I was young, and then one day I was going by this place and Harvey Smith came out and wanted to sell me the farm. I bought it and moved here in 1938."

## Homestead Notes

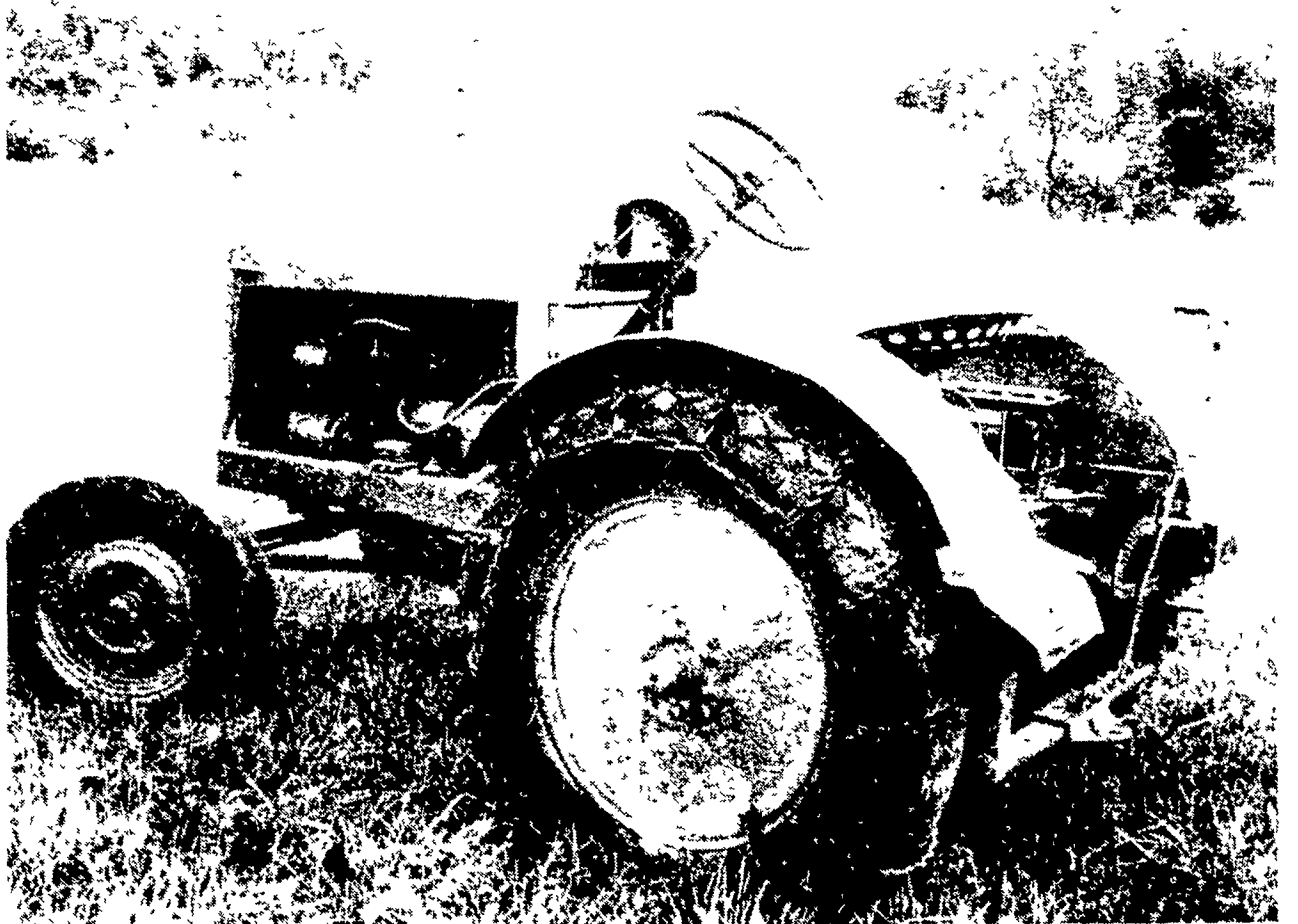


This mud-mobile was made by Karl, Claude's son, years ago. The front is a '62 Ford Falcon. Equipped with two transmissions and a cat track the vehicle is still used today to haul wood. It will go anywhere, no mud can stop it!



The Big V Snow Plow was one of the first in northeastern Pennsylvania and was made by Claude Bradley of Bradford County in the early

40's. It was first driven in Rome Township by Claude Arnold. The three passenger cab was also fashioned by Bradley.



Bradley built this "Doodlebug" around 1944. Still operable, it was made from a 1928 Chevrolet

car engine. Note the fancy homemade hood and fenders and the side-hill hitch on the drawbar.

"We had only eight cows then and I sold them to buy groceries. I built myself a welder and learned how to use it. Later I bought a new one. It came in at the railroad depot in Athens on July 5, 1945. That was quite a day. I hooked it behind my '33 Ford and drove around the country with it for 30 years fixing up machinery for folks who called me."

"My first shop was that little barn you see standing up beside the house," Claude explained. "I never had any stove in the barn and I worked in it all winter. It wasn't too bad once I got bundled up and the welder started."

In 1946 Claude built the cinder block shop where we

were visiting, and later Karl added onto it. In the last few years he has equipped it with machinery such as an electric lathe which he built himself.

Betty, Karl's wife, had brought several picture albums down to the garage to show me. As we looked through them, Claude chuckled as he recognized the picture of his first garden tractor. "I made it out of a Maytag washer motor fastened onto wheel-barrow wheels with bars welded on for reinforcement. It ran good, better than the ones they make today. I made several to sell, but it got hard to find motors with a worm drive like the old Maytag washers used to have."

One of the biggest jobs Claude tackled in the early 40's was making a big V snow plow. The Rome township supervisors decided they needed a V snow-plow, Claude's story goes. (This was in the days before such a machine had been seen on roads anywhere). Our neighbor, Claude Arnold came over, and we made it together. We welded two 4 by 8 feet 18 gauge plates together and bent them into a curve with a maul. They rung just like a bell when they were pounded," Bradley remembered.

The big V was fastened on the front of a regular farm cat (tractor) and for the size of it, it did pretty good."

We also made a three passenger cab for the cat, Claude, said. Later the state got hold of the plow somehow and they went all over with it plowing snow, in Ulster, Camptown, and everywhere."

One of the regular jobs Claude did during the war years was to make the cabs for the jeeps of the local veterinarian. The jeeps came new without cabs, and Claude riveted on galvanized iron for the body. Then he lined it with plywood so it wouldn't sound tinny. "I had the windows cut up at Cohen's junk yard in East Athens, he told me, and I set them in rubber something like they're done today. Doc Stoll ran those jeeps hard until finally he bought Wagoneers already enclosed."

Claude was a crack mechanic, too, and with his welding ability made untold numbers of "doodle-bugs" or "Puddle-jumpers" during the war. His inventions looked like tractors, but the front end was made from an old car, and the rear from something else. Some had two tran-

(Turn to Page C4)