

orks...

...at the biggest auction of its kind

any more of the old carriages being uncovered under a pile of hay in the barn," Martin said.

"Ten years ago, there was more of the farm-to-farm searching, but now there are so many dealers and collectors involved, that they do much of the leg-work."

But Martin recalls how only a few years ago he came across a stagecoach in the basement of a home in Massachusetts. The top had been cut off to get it in and the same was done to remove it.

And the prices of top horse-drawn vehicles are rivaling those of their antique counterparts which feature the horses under the hood.

Last fall in Albany, N.Y., a fully-restored English Tally-Ho Coach brought \$52,000. Another similar coach sold for \$32,000.

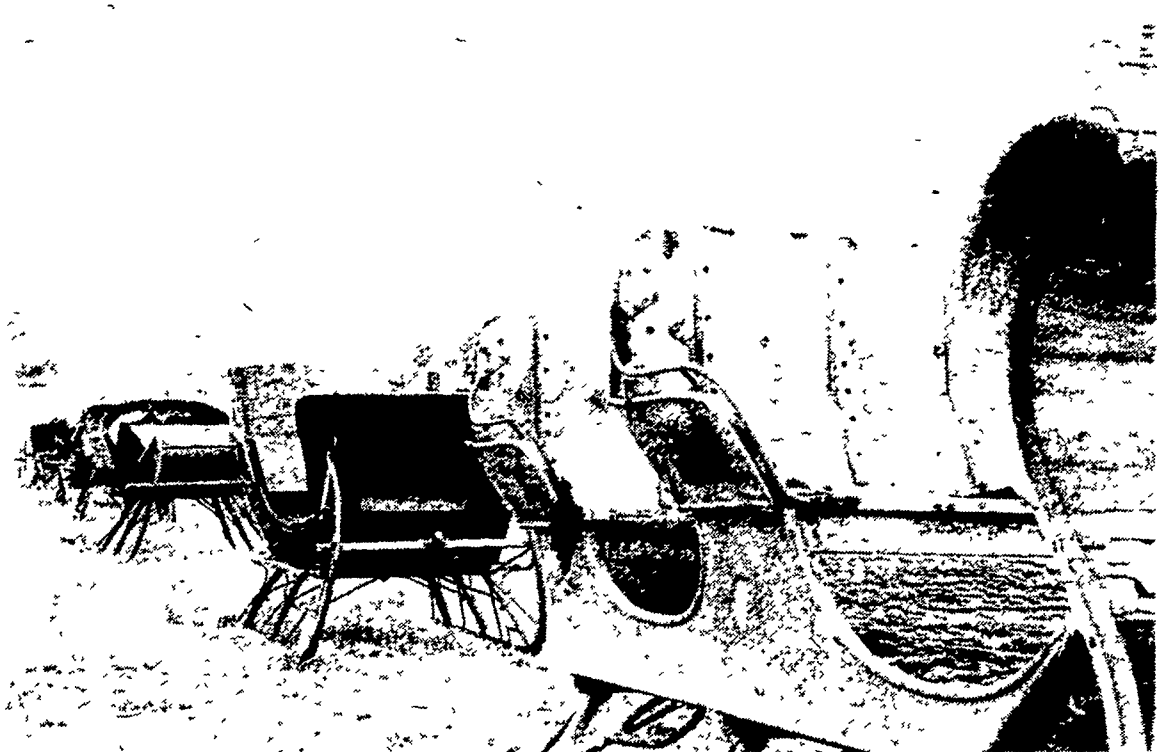
The Martins hold three auctions a year on the large site east of Intercourse in May, August and October and are involved in a number of museum liquidation sales throughout the country.

Martin Auctioneers is now in its third generation of operation, beginning with horses and mules with grandfather William Z. Martin early in the century in New Holland.

Paul Z. Martin Sr. and his wife, Rachel, still joke about coming out



Paul Z. Martin Sr. and wife, Rachel, explain they come out of retirement a few times a year to help out with carriage auctions. Here, the couple is tagging smaller antique items.



Sleighs and cutters in all stages of condition stretch as far as the eye can see at the annual Martin Auction held the past three days near Intercourse. Sleighs and runabouts are still fairly easy to find, but good quality carriages

are becoming increasingly rare as the mania for collecting and restoring horse-drawn vehicles literally stretches from coast to coast and beyond.

of retirement three times a year to help with the local auctions.

This past weekend, Paul Jr. was in New England, which he describes as the heartland of good horse-drawn vehicles, along with other parts of the Northeast.

"I was in Connecticut and picked up three vehicles," Martin said.

"Someone stopped me as I was driving along and said he had a neighbor with some vehicles."

"So, I spent another day looking at carriages and wagons I didn't even know were there."

"But it's getting harder and harder to find the good quality vehicles."


The current sale has consignments from about 20 states and abroad, while prospective buyers are here from about 35 states. Often, they overlap. Someone will bring one type of vehicle to sell and

seek another which will upgrade their collection.

But what about the "stories" the vehicles themselves might tell. Well, that takes a little imagination and the opportunity to wander among them without the crowds.


-The milk delivery wagon that clop, clopped through the early morning stillness of a city street a

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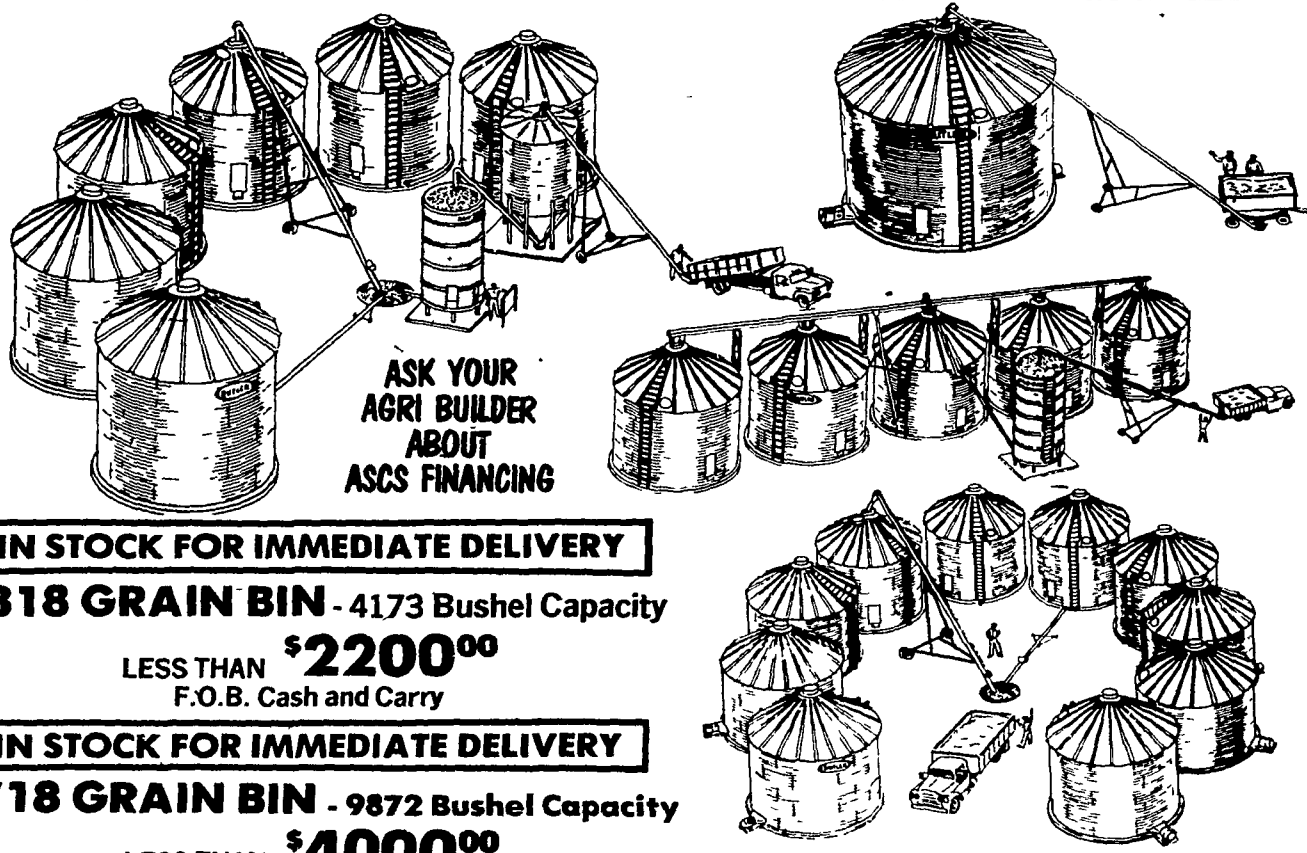
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