

Farm Philosophy

By
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The Trash Dump

There were two trash heaps on the farm. One was very convenient to the house, just beyond the old woodshed in a grove of brambles and scrub oak, where a deep gully provided sufficient cover and obscurity from the back porch. "Out of sight-out of mind", as Mama used to say. That one was only for the every day refuse that would quickly decompose. The

other one was a sink hole in a remote part of the woodlot, far from the farm buildings. Only the more bulky and less biodegradable trash ended up there. The stuff that, long afterward, we often regret having pitched.

Human progress demands that some items be periodically replaced. It's the natural thing to do, when wear and tear and time makes an item obsolete. Papa

didn't bother to trade in the Jenny Lind when he bought his first Model-T Ford. It was hauled to the "dump", and forgotten. When he bought the second Fliver, the first one sat behind the barn until a junk dealer bought the motor and frame for scrap. The rusted body was loaded on the two-horse wagon and hauled off to join the defunct buggy.

So it was with the gaudy and too-large picture frames, the sauerkraut crocks, the old kerosene lanterns and other "attica obscura". We can also include the once prized leather driving harness, and the old one-hole corn sheller, and hundreds of other outdated, but still useable trivia. They've cluttered the attic and barn floor long enough, - let's load 'em up and haul 'em to the dump! Even their replacements may have already joined them in that deep gully back in the woods. No matter, something better, newer, more modern, is available.

"Planned obsolescence" is a term applied to today's cars, TV's, and routine appliances. Changes in body design, shape, color and

decor have little to do with functional qualities. The old one does everything that a brand new model will do, but we trade-in and update anyway, simply to please ourselves and stay even with Brother Jones.

Unfortunately, most of the stuff that we hauled to the dump will have lost it's value as a collectors item by the time an Archeologist digs it up. Rotting wood, rusting iron, and broken glass are pretty hard to resurrect. But the evidence buried in that old sinkhole could reveal a lot about the people who owned it, and the times in which they lived.

Wooden wheels, banded with hand wrought iron tires worn thin by the gravelly road. The wooden Hounds that broke when Papa turned the six-horse team too short with a heavy load on the hay ladders. The old hand cranked windmill that we used to clean the seed wheat. The double-tub wash machine that was replaced with an electric Maytag. The chopper-box, scalding trough, and cedar tripods and hand-carved gambrels, all were hauled to their final resting

place on the dump.

A few pieces of hand-wrought iron have managed to avoid the dump. A rough-lock, hitch pin, and the strongbox, have survived from the old Conestoga wagon we used long ago. Some fancy hooks, a barn door latch, a beautiful shutter hook, hand-wrought bells, open-links, steelyards, "snell hooks", a pair of brass knobbed hames, and a host of beautiful but utilitarian trivia now grace our basement wall. They survive as memoirs of a useful craft, only now appreciated as works of art.

The dark recesses of attic and cellar are the temporary limbo for things too good for the dump, and too bad for public display. It is often left to the next generation to rescue and love your junk.

Flea Markets, museums, and Antique collectors are our modern trash dumps. Nothing is completely worthless these days. If it is over fifty years old, put a price tag on it and have a yard sale! Meanwhile, I think I'll visit that old dump. It may have some pleasant memories, even if there aren't any treasures to be found.



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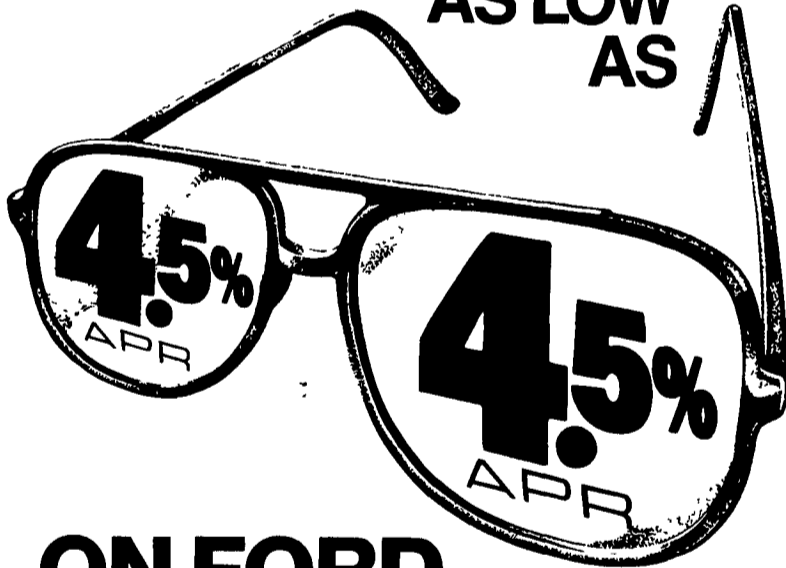
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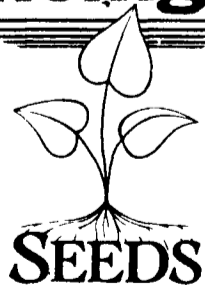
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