

Harness Makers

(Continued from Page E6)

harnesses were pretty much lost."

Toward the end of this era, Smucker's father began a shop on the farm, which Smucker moved to a busier road a few years later.

"We used to work on it (making harnesses) on rainy days and wintry days, when we didn't have anything to do on the farm," he said. The local trade was for working harnesses, however the business began to branch out into the more elite harnesses.

"I saw that show driving was coming back again and got interested," said Smucker.

Now, however, "the industry is much bigger" and competition is abundant among harness makers.

The old-style harnesses endure as driving competitions, which are steeped in tradition, dictate that the harness design remain true to history.

"We redesign bits and pieces," but in the driving world major changes in harness designs are not welcomed. "If we would make too many changes they just don't buy it. We can redesign



The store offers an array of equine products, besides harnesses.

a few things but we don't want to play with it too much," said Smucker.

To design the harnesses, Smucker attended auctions and purchased old harnesses to serve as templates.

Sales also yielded hardware on a limited basis. When he could not find brass buckles he refurbished nickel-plated pieces for the traditional-looking harnesses, however "now we can buy brass buckles," he said.

The harness designs are not the only part of the busi-

ness that reaches back into yesteryear. "One of our best machines is probably 100 years old," he said. Other tools include a 100-plus years-old embossing plate.

"Fortunately we can still buy parts for it," said Smucker.

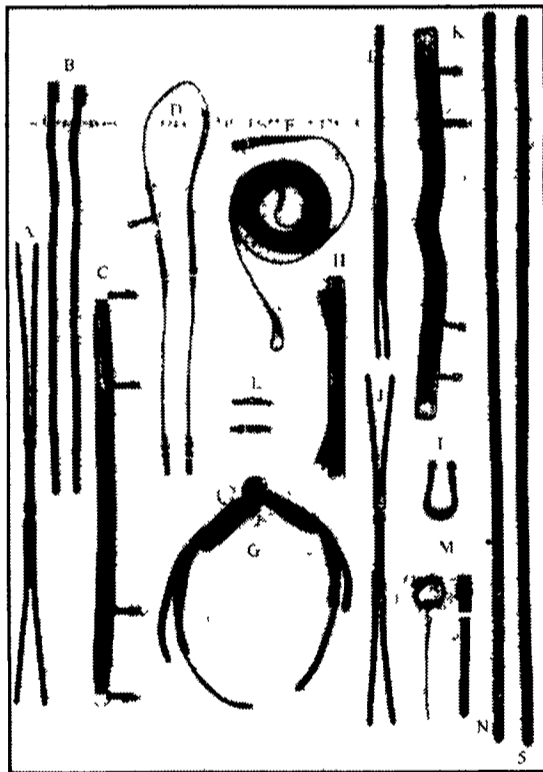
The spot setter machine, which sets the brass decorative "spots" on the harness is also around 100 years old.

"I used to go to Wisconsin or Georgia when old harness shops went out of business, to

buy their old materials and bring the equipment home," he said.

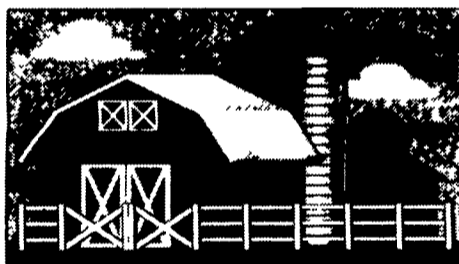
Newer machines are used for synthetics. "They are easier to use but will not sew as tightly on leather," he said.

At the end of the assembling process, the black harnesses are dipped in an acrylic finisher for shine and protection. Next the hardware is cleaned, then the entire harness is pieced together.



- A. Hip Strap
- B. Breeching Straps
- C. Breeching
- D. Side Checks
- E. Gag Runners
- F. Reins
- G. Saddle
- H. Girth
- I. Turnback
- J. Neck Strap
- K. Breast Collar
- L. Crupper
- M. Shaft Tugs
- N. Traces

Can you name the different parts of this harness?



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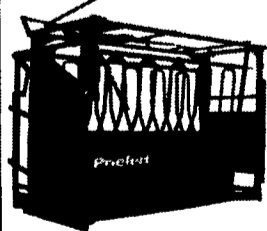
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Can you name the different parts of this harness?



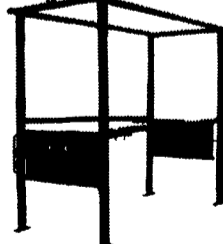
Carousel Saddle Rack
J arms - \$180



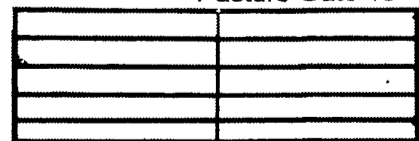
Vertical Saddle Rack
2 arms - \$119



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Horse Stock - \$699
Pasture Gate 10' - \$59



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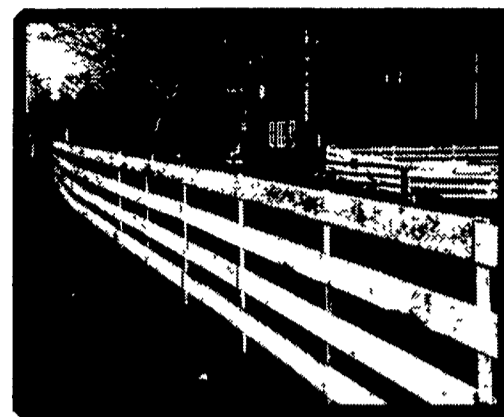
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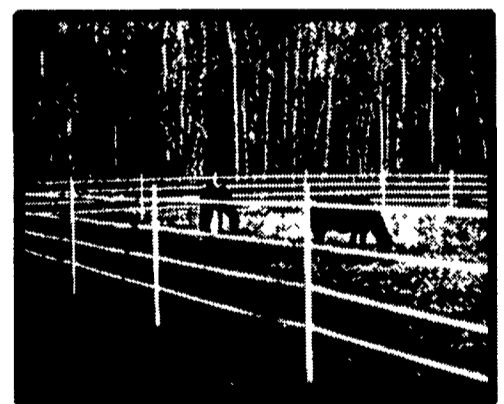
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