

Locating Parts

The Rusty Acres Approach

By Dan Peterman

Okay... Here's the deal. You just bought the tractor of your dreams, and now you want to restore it to tip-top condition. You want every part to be as original as possible; just like it came from the factory. But, to get that done, you have to locate the parts.

Step one; make a list. Figure out which parts should be replaced with new or new-old-stock; versus those that can be replaced with suitable used originals. The list may not be exactly correct, as you may switch some items from one category to another as the search goes on, but make the list anyway.

Some parts are approaching the "non-existent" status, which may give you cold feet if you've heard horror stories about various obscure restoration projects; but, have faith, as in almost all instances there will be a way around apparent roadblocks. In fact, I have recently discovered a shop that is capable of "reverse engineering." Supply them a broken or worn part, and they can work backwards from it to develop blueprints and turn out duplicate after duplicate. They are mil-spec certified, so tractor parts are simply no problem. *As a head's up, aftermarket suppliers looking for a top-notch operation to crank out parts for the restoration industry may wish to contact them:*

**Commander Chassis • 32 Island Farm Road •
Salmon, Idaho 83467 • Phone: 1 800 555-3167**

While making your list, if any parts on your tractor are suspect, or just plain wrong, check the Parts Catalog that you *should* have purchased right after you acquired the tractor. Now that you have the list made, where do you find the parts? For starters, you may want to make contact and develop a good relationship with a salvage yard or two. I'd advise not appearing to be desperate, as that may drive up the price. Remember, there's no set retail on used parts. Shopping around at different salvage yards will help you to determine who tends to have the best price, most accurate description of part condition, most reasonable shipping price, best reaction time, etc. Some salvage yards are connected to other suppliers through a computer locator system, and that can be a big help. Establishing a good relationship will usually mean repeat business; a plus for both buyer and seller. Incidentally, some salvage yards have access to reproduction and aftermarket parts, so don't hesitate to ask them to take that route if doing so is acceptable to you.

Another excellent source for parts is a good swap

meet, like those that are part of the annual Two-Cylinder Expos. The parts are all laid out in plain view for your full inspection, which lends considerable comfort that you're getting exactly what you want. The face-to-face opportunity with vendors lets you size them up, and countless good relationships are developed at such events. A nice feature is that many vendors will buy or trade parts, as well. And, like salvage yards, some vendors have original-rebuilt or new-reproduction parts and services.

The Internet has become a viable source of parts, and this seems to be on the increase. Hop onto a powerful "search engine" and type in what you're looking for. There are several tractor sites on the Web, and most of them have links to bounce you to other locations. In addition, eBay® is a good place to keep watching, as worthwhile items continue to crop up. Pay attention to item price and shipping, as I've seen some items walk right beyond any scope of reason. Some eBay sellers offer a "Buy It Now" price, and even have what they call an eBay store.

I keep several catalogs around that offer parts and restoration supplies. If you purchase something from time to time, the catalogs keep coming.

And then there's the classic and original way to buy John Deere parts; the John Deere dealer. Due to a huge company maintaining a long list of parts for vintage tractors, the price of some very low-production parts are right up there. Sticker shock, if you will. But, most parts are reasonable and quality is what you would expect.

Don't expect Deere to carry the decals you need to do a proper restoration. For that, you need to contact a speciality supplier who has taken this segment of detailing to its technical extreme. Said differently, call Jorde. At least that's my opinion, based on years of experience and zero problems. There are other items supplied through Deere that don't match the originals; mufflers often being an example. Pay attention to what you're buying; don't assume anything; seek originality. A good parts counter representative at a dealership can really help with older machinery. I've seen some of these people search the country by computer and phone to get just what I needed. John Deere at its best.

And lastly, there is word-of-mouth. Sometimes talking to your friends will result in the most amazing discoveries. One way to ask a lot of friends all at once is through *Two-Cylinder* magazine. Every member of the organization is allowed to place a *free* "Wanted Ad" in every issue of the magazine. In the November-December 2007 issue, this amounted to less than a page. Hey folks, you're passing up a great opportunity!

Good luck on your projects. Involve others in your family. If there's a more enjoyable, worthwhile, hands-on hobby, I haven't a clue of what that would be. ☺