

Planning five entries

Rupert family "hitches up" for another parade

BY RALPH MAUGHAN
RUPERT — When you see "2-J Hatch" on those wagons and buggies in the parade, that's Ray Johnson and his family displaying his hobby. Everything — buggy, wagon, harness, bridle, double trees, even the neck yoke — was either made or restored by Ray.
 He may have from one to four or five vehicles in any given parade. Already this summer he has appeared in the Rupert Independence Day parade, the Paul Shindig, Deelo Days and the Pioneer Day parade in Oakley.
 The next event will be the Cassia County Fair Parade where the family expects to have five vehicles entered with dad and mom, four children and 15 grandchildren riding in the parade.
 Daughter, LaRae Noy is expected to be here from Belleville, Md., with her four children; Merrill will be here

ago after turning over most of the work on the farm to Alton. He still does some of the farming, just because he wants to, and can sometimes be seen out in the field cutting or raking hay with horse-drawn equipment. He has tractors to do the work but he likes to go out and work his horses.
 Ray's pride and joy is an original 1900 model Doctor's Roadster which he purchased 21 years ago from a fellow who lived in Daelo. (He doesn't remember his name.) Ray says the man had found the buggy, virtually unused, some years previously in Vale, Colo., and had brought it to Idaho, then offered it for sale. The buggy can be equipped to be pulled either by a single horse or by two horses. He usually has two hitched onto it for parades. It has solid rubber wheel surfaces over a steel rim and wooden spokes.
 Another prized vehicle is the scale-

from an old Model T Ford and another built with parts from a Ford Falcon. Both have steel tires set in place of the rubber tires.
 He has a restored wagon which was used in the last century by pioneers crossing the plains to Oregon and California and a "Narrow Gauge" wagon which was popular in the prairie states during the early days of the mid-west.
 Ray says he enjoys working with his old horse equipment and restoring it to almost new. He has several walls of his barn and shed covered with restored harnesses, some for his Shetlands and some for standard size horses. All are prettily decorated with spots which he painstakingly sets in place for effect.
 If a collar or a set of harness doesn't fit, he cuts them down to the size he wants. There are many bridle, some of which he has made from "scratch" including the bit.
 He owns a bridle which Reed Broadhead used when he was a lad on his father's farm at Albion many years ago and another very old bridle which a neighbor, Norman Sedholm, gave him recently because Norman knew he would appreciate it.
 Ray has a wood lathe with which he fashions double trees, single trees and neck yokes from raw pieces of hony locust, oak, maple or other appropriate wood. He does the necessary blacksmithing to make his own rings, hooks and other metal parts. One whole wall is covered with these items, some large, some short, some in between to fit different sized horses and outfits.



Doctor's roadster

Ray Johnson and his wife, LaRae, seated in the old 1900 model Doctor's Roadster which he has restored. The Johnsons are frequently seen riding in this vehicle in parades around the Magic Valley. (SIP Photo)

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from Levensand, Colo., with his two children; Jean Ann Biggs will be here with her five children from American Fork, Utah; and Alton, who lives next door to his parents in the Emerson District, will be riding with his four children.
 All will be driving vehicles built or restored during the past eight years by Ray. All the equipment, harnesses, bridle, etc., will have been likewise restored and decorated by the genius of yesterday.
 The highlight of his year, as in the recent past, will be the Wagon Days Parade in Kelcham the first week in September. The family makes a three-day outing of this event, pitching a tent and living in the open during the days of the celebration. They expect to have two outfits and 10 horses entered in the parade, with multiple teams on each.
 Ray began collecting and restoring old horse equipment eight or 10 years

ago after turning over most of the work on the farm to Alton. He still does some of the farming, just because he wants to, and can sometimes be seen out in the field cutting or raking hay with horse-drawn equipment. He has tractors to do the work but he likes to go out and work his horses.
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model stage coach which he built from the ground up using parts and pieces from other vehicles. The front axle and wheels (less tires) are from an old Star automobile and the rear axle is from a Model T Ford. He patterned the coach from a picture, cutting the pieces to scale of five inches to a foot. It has two seats and room for four people with luggage rack on top.
 Ray built the frame, the coach, the traces, the double trees and the neck yoke with provisions for hitching additional teams onto the coach for display in parades.
 Ray is fond and proud of the old Kansas prairie wagon which, he says, Allen Gallopie's dad used to move to this area from Kansas in 1883. It has the original wheels, but Ray has tightened the spokes using a simple but effective method which he developed.
 Then there's the small backboard wagon which Ray built using wheels



Making parts

Ray sets a piece of raw stock in his wood lathe as he prepares to make a single tree for one of his outfits. (SIP Photo)



Scale stagecoach

Ray Johnson, right, and his son, Alton, stand beside the scale model stagecoach which Ray built, inside is Alton's son, James. (SIP Photo)