



I AM NOT A FARMER
and I have never lived on
a farm but I did grow up in
a rural community. As a
schoolboy, I spent nearly
every summer vacation
working for local farmers
and a couple of uncles
who were farmers.

One day when I was about 13 or 14 years old and working for my uncle who had an Allis-Chalmers B tractor, I dismounted with the engine running. When I jumped off the right side, my shirttail caught over the gear shift lever and pulled it in gear. Fortunately, when this happened, it stalled the engine. I hate to think what could have happened otherwise. I guess when operating these tractors you should keep your shirttail tucked in.

I had a Cushman motor scooter that I rode to my farm jobs. When I bought my first car, I sold the Cushman scooter. Bad move!

I don't know what there is about the tractors of the thirties, forties, and fifties, but if you have used or been around these tractors, you just don't want to see them disappear. It really irks me to see one of these tractors parked behind a shed or in a wooded lot just rusting away.

Although I am a little partial to pre-1962 Ford tractors, I have also used others—red, green, yellow, and orange ones. Each of the makes has its good points and its not-so-good points, but I like to see all of them restored and kept alive. I also enjoy discussions about which is better, a

Colorful Prospects

1958 Ford 641 Workmaster

by John M. Jackson



I removed the manifold and found a carburetor throttle plate floating around inside.



hand clutch or a foot clutch, and the merits of 2-cylinder engines versus 4- or 6-cylinder models.

As the years went by, I never lost the desire to own an older tractor. The winter of 1978 was a bad one in northwest Ohio and it seemed I was always snowed in. Keeping my driveway open was a good reason for me to look for a tractor. The next spring, I bought a 1949 Ford 8N. The rear tires were loaded, and with tire chains, the old Ford did a pretty good job keeping my driveway clear.

It looked rough, but my 8N ran great. There was never a day so cold that this tractor wouldn't start. I believe that if you keep these old engines tuned

up, a 6-volt system will usually do the job. I don't like to see an older restored tractor converted to a 12-volt system.

The next spring I thought the old 8N could use a facelift so I stripped it down, cleaned it up, made some minor repairs, and gave it a new coat of paint. It looked pretty good for about six months until the paint started to fade. I should have used better paint.

In 1987, we moved from our rural home to one closer to my work. After 30 years, I got tired of driving 70 miles a day to work. Before we moved, I sold my 8N, two-bottom plow, disc, and snow blade at an auction. I did not think I would have a need for them anymore. Another bad move!

Our new home had a small workshop. I added onto it and put a garage on one end. That made room enough to restore another old tractor and I purchased my 1958 Ford Workmaster shortly thereafter. It ran rough and the engine would not idle below 1,200 rpm when I bought it. I removed the manifold and found a carburetor throttle plate floating around inside.

As you can imagine, this did not contribute to a smooth-running engine. Evidently the throttle plate came off and was sucked into the manifold. Rather than remove the throttle plate, someone had just replaced it with one that was much too small. This is undoubtedly why the

engine would not idle below 1,200 rpms. It was getting too much air around the sides of the undersized throttle plate when it was in the idle position. I was not able to find the correct size throttle plate so I used one that was larger in diameter, filed it down to the proper size, and installed it. I then rebuilt the carburetor, installed new points, condenser, rotor, distributor cap, plugs, and plug wires.

My engine now runs great and will idle in the 450 to 500 rpm range. I did, however, have a problem with the plugs fouling, which is a common problem with Ford tractors. I replaced the Motorcraft AL7C plugs with hotter-firing Champion H-12 plugs. This

seems to have eliminated my plug-fouling problem.

The hydraulic lift arms for the three-point hitch were not responsive when I purchased this tractor. When I raised the hydraulic control lever, the lift arms would not respond for approximately two to three minutes. I removed the hydraulic pump and noticed that one of the O-rings between the hydraulic pump manifold and the front of the transmission was not seated properly. I replaced the hydraulic pump manifold and made sure that the new O-rings were seated properly. The hydraulic system is now very responsive, works like it should, and was a relatively inexpensive fix.

I also replaced various seals and bearings and then cleaned, wire brushed, sanded, sandblasted, and painted the entire tractor. This time I used a good-quality automotive paint with a hardener. It was rather expensive, but after you go to all the work of tearing down a tractor and getting it ready to paint, you want it to last longer than six months.

I am looking for another tractor to restore, but I think I will have to make another addition to my workshop first. Seems like a person never has enough work and storage space. I have not told my wife yet, but eventually I would like to have an antique tractor of each of the above-mentioned colors. 🚗



Here is the 771 buried under a fallen tree after a storm. It had not been restored yet and only received minor damage.



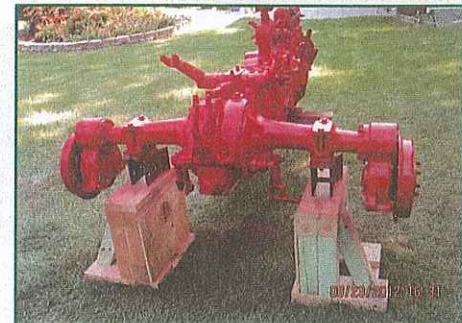
Here's another look at that fallen tree on the Ford 771 before it was restored.



No tractor restoration can be considered complete until there is a table covered in parts.



Beneath the sheet metal, the owner found his 771 was a solid machine.



It was featured in the July/August 2001 issue of *Antique Power*.

I told John I thought it would be a good idea to buy it and that I would be over with my truck and trailer to pick it up. This tractor obviously dodged a bullet and did not go to the scrap yard.

It is my understanding that, in 1959, when this tractor was new, there was only about a \$200 difference between the 771 and the 971, so most farmers chose the 971 with its larger engine and more horsepower. I think this is why the 771 is so rare—Ford did not sell so many to start with.

When we tried to move it from the storage building where it had been for 25-plus years, the rear wheels would not turn. My son borrowed one of the company's fork trucks, and we were able to lift the rear end and move it outside, where we blocked it up and removed the rear wheels. The tires were original, and one had a good-sized bulge.

We took the rear wheels to Miller Tire, our local farm tire dealer, to remove the ballast, and we needed one rear rim and one boot. In the meantime, my son borrowed my Ford tractor shop manual and discovered that Select-O-Speed (SOS) models have a coupling sleeve that can be manually disengaged by turning a lever on the side of the rear end. This moves the splined sleeve forward on the transmission output shaft and away from the pinion shaft. Then the rear wheels are free to turn. When we took the wheels back and mounted them on the tractor, we were able to push the tractor onto the trailer with the fork truck.

We took the tractor to my place because my son lives in town and does not have room for a tractor of this size. We parked it behind my shop, where I put in new plugs, points, condenser, rotor, cap, and plug wires. I put in fresh gasoline and borrowed a battery

from one of my other tractors. When I turned the key and pushed the starter button, it turned over six or eight times and started as if it had been run only the day before. I checked out the transmission because I had heard that SOS transmissions can be tricky to operate, and this was my first adventure with the SOS. I went through all 10 speeds and both reverse speeds several times, and all worked well.

That evening, we had a rainstorm with a lot of wind, and it blew a good-sized limb off a nearby tree, right on top of the 771. The next day, we cut up the tree limbs and were pleased to see there was little damage to the tractor. Most of the smaller limbs went between the fenders and the seat—another bullet dodged by the Ford!

Even though the SOS seemed to operate properly, I called a friend (we will call him Dave) who has worked on Ford tractors most of his life. I wanted



This is how John M. Jackson's Ford 771 tractor looked in 2013 after his restoration.

The Ford Under the Tree

How my 771 went from storm survivor to show quality

by John M. Jackson

This restoration project started September 2006 with a phone call from my oldest son, John. The place he works had a building used only for storage, and the company was converting it to workspace. One of the items in the building was this Ford 771 tractor. The owner knew that my son restored garden tractors, so he asked if he would be interested in it. If John did not want the tractor, his boss would scrap it.

When John asked me if he should buy it, I had to stop and think about what a 771 looked like. I knew what a 700 and a 900 looked like, but I had never seen a 771, and I go to tractor shows just about every weekend in the summer months. I have a 641 I restored about 11 years ago.



As you can see, the 771 was not so pretty when Jackson pulled it from a storage building in 2006.

him to check out the tractor and change the transmission oil and filter.

In August 2008, he said the tractor show at Jones, Michigan, was coming up and, if I wanted to bring the tractor, he would take it from there to his shop.

When I got to the Jones tractor show and parked in the field, two men pulled up on a golfcart and asked if I was going to show the 771 or sell it. I had not planned to do either, but when Dave showed up, he wanted to display it. He even drove the ugly duckling in the parade. That evening, when we left the show, I followed Dave to his shop, which was not far from Jones. I left the tractor there so he could check it out.

Dave told me the tractor show in Hartford, Michigan, was about to start and that I should come up and take the 771. It just so happened I had to attend my grandson's wedding that weekend, so I told Dave that he could take the 771 to the Hartford show instead. He



The owner/restorer added a second step for easier mount and dismount.

took me up on my offer and also drove it in the parade. At this point, the Ford had been in two parades in its original work clothes—without the owner being anywhere around.

A couple of weeks later in September 2008, I went to Dave's shop to pick up the tractor. He said the transmission was in good shape but that the engine needed a little attention.

I installed a new 600-series wiring harness with a few additions for

the SOS, at which point I could not get power to anything. I assumed the problem was with the linkage from the transmission to the selector that I had removed to paint. I called Roger Clark from Covington, Ohio, and told him my problem. He said I might have to take the cover off the top of the transmission to adjust the linkage. Since I do not know a lot about the inside of the SOS, I thought it would be better to let someone look at it who knows what he is doing. I asked if Roger made "house calls" because I could not get the Ford on its trailer in its condition; there was silence on the other end of the phone for a bit. He said that since I was only 115 miles from him that he would come and look at it. He worked on it for about an hour-and-a-half, and it now runs great.

My only regret is that my very good friend Dave did not get to see the finished project. He passed away in late September 2010. 🚗

Ford Sends out an SOS *by Patrick Ertel*

Since the introduction of the 9N in 1939, Ford had been known for its utility-style tractors with adjustable wide front axle, adjustable rear track, and an operator's station that put the driver down low and astride the transmission. This compact, space-efficient design was so popular that, for a decade-and-a-half, Ford had no need to expand its offering, but seeds of change were sown in the early 1950s. Manufacturers whose bread-and-butter was tricycle-style row crop tractors were designing utility tractors to get some of Ford's market, and Ford management was busy designing tricycle tractors to get some of that business.

The first of the new Ford tricycle tractors was the 1955 Model 740. From that point on, Ford offered a row crop version of each of its utility tractor offerings. By 1959, the row crop line included the 901 series—with a 46.5hp, 172ci engine and weight of 3,247 pounds—and the 701 series, with its 33.6hp, 134ci engine weighing 3,175 pounds.

In 1959, Ford introduced a new model for each series. These tractors were equipped with a new clutchless planetary transmission that Ford called Select-O-Speed (SOS). Developed by Ford engineers, the SOS is a system of four serial, planetary gearsets that are always in mesh. The transmission's output speed is controlled by engaging various combinations of the gearsets. The combination of gearsets is manually selected

by a lever on the dash and hydraulically controlled through servo-operated brake bands and multiple-disc, hydraulically operated clutch packs. The SOS provides a total of 10 forward speeds and two reverse speeds. This transmission added a "71" suffix to the series number and a considerable number to the price tag. While the base model of the 901 series, the 941, with a 4-speed transmission, had a list price of \$2,855, the price of the 971 with Select-O-Speed was 15 percent higher at \$3,280. The base 701 series 741 with a 4-speed listed for \$2,458 while the 771 version was \$2,858.

In spite of its price, the SOS transmission sold relatively well. Ford's total sales increased considerably during the years it was offered, but, in the field, the SOS earned a poor reputation, with hydraulic system problems that kept the transmission from shifting correctly, causing many owner complaints. In a strange series of moves by Ford, in 1963, the 971 and 771 model designations were dropped in favor of new 2000 and 4000 series designations, though the tractors themselves were little changed. Then, in 1965, Ford dropped the old tractors in favor of completely new machines, but retained the same series designations. The SOS transmission outlived the 971/771 tractors by a decade. It was improved over time and, in spite of its initial problems, remained in use in small- and medium-horsepower Fords into the 1970s.