

108-year-old drag coach star of carriage auction

BY SID RODAWAY
They don't make 'em like they used to — especially 108-year-old, 16-seater park drag coaches.

For antique carriage dealer John Perry one such ancient road coach represents up to a \$12,000 deal with a collector who can afford to participate in a growing but expensive hobby.

On June 9 at 10:30 a.m. 50 horse-drawn vehicles will go on the block at Perry's Britannia Road farm. The auction will attract buyers from all over the continent.

Perry held his first such auction last year and sold \$30,000 worth of equipment. He hopes to triple that total this year.

There was once a time when untold thousands of these auto-predecessors were the main form of short and long distance travel but now the demand among collectors far surpasses the supply.

Perry scoured North America for "pieces" as he calls them and then travelled

to England to outbid competitors for 23 British and European rigs. His prime catch there was an exquisite Landau complete with what is reputed to be gold-plated wheel hubs manufactured by the Burlington Carriage Company of Oxford Street in London.

The gleaming model of Victorian elegance hasn't lost its ability to impress. Even the most car-oriented visitor to the storage shed can recognize the roots of style that affected early auto design in this century.

But Perry's pearl of the auction is the French park drag coach, France's answer to the American West's stage coach. With a dozen passengers up top and another four inside a leather-lined, cramped compartment it represented the epitome of horse-drawn transportation before the steam locomotive took over.

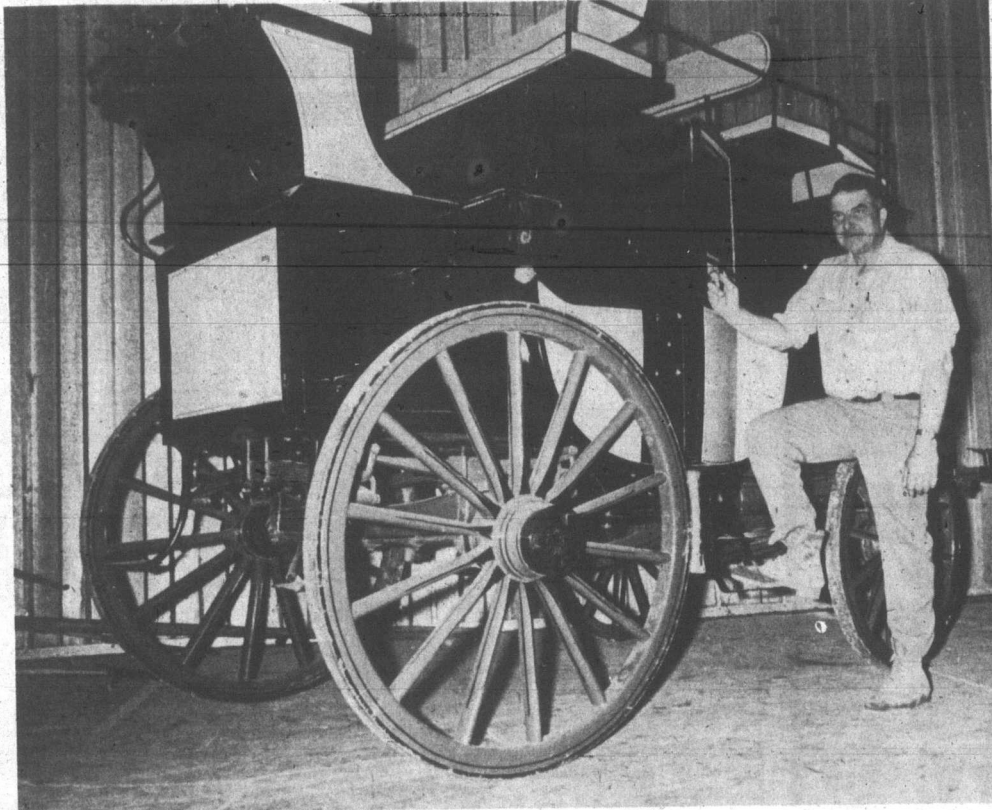
Victorian sensitivities aside, the coach still boasts a small china toilet under a removable cushion. Even

Perry wonders how its use was achieved in a rolling cockpit cramped with three other passengers.

The gleaming piece was purchased from a carriage museum in Libertyville, Ill. just north of Chicago. In New Jersey he picked up an extremely rare and superbly rebuilt South African made Cape Cart, a two-wheeled vehicle that was pulled by two horses. For the low budget collector he even offers a \$25 walking plow.

Perry started off in the dairying business and 17 years ago converted the farm into a trucking firm headquarters. Now he concentrates a growing percentage of his time on his hobby-business.

Invitations have been sent out to the members of the Carriage Association of America and major collectors in Europe. With the addition of 15 to 30 consignment vehicles, the sale promises to become the biggest of its kind since carriages were swept off the road 60 long years ago.



John Perry climbs aboard 1865 French made 16-passenger coach at his Britannia Road Farm. The coach could fetch as much as \$12,000 at Perry's June 9 auction of 50 horse drawn carriages.

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OMB approves hotel

STREETSVILLE — The Ontario Municipal Board has approved a 10-room hotel for Queen Street despite opposition from the Town of Mississauga.

Mississauga had objected to the number of parking spaces offered by the Franklin Inn. Developer John Mason allowed room for 35 cars but Mississauga said 100 spaces should be required.

Mayor Chic Murray has

said "there is no way we want to take over a situation like that, with not enough parking".

Under provincial regional government proposals, Mississauga would absorb Streetsville to form a borough with Port Credit.

The Inn, which will feature two dining rooms and two lounges in a mid-1800's design, is to be built on the existing site of the Franklin House.

Sunday sales survive

A ban on Sunday selling, supported by Port Credit Reeve Frank Leavers, has been turned down 5-2 by general one committee of county council.

The resolution to have stores closed on Sunday was termed "an excellent step in the right direction" and "long overdue" by Leavers.

The reeve called for tighter regulation of store hours, saying extended retail hours cost taxpayers money because of extra labour costs and overhead.

"It seems the stores are now open almost 24 hours, seven days a week," he claimed.

Leavers' statements were questioned by Mississauga Councillor Ron Searle who

said there is no proof that longer hours increase costs to the consumer.

"There's no reason to enforce a time when a man can do business," he said. More working wives and additional leisure time have resulted in more need for a variety of hours, he added. "We should let the market dictate hours and let the retail field reflect the feelings of consumers."

Leavers and Brampton Mayor Jim Archdekin were the only committee members supporting the ban on Sunday shopping.

Act allows Peel airport solicitor

County solicitor Ron Webb told general one committee Thursday that a Peel county solicitor would be allowed under the provisions of the Ontario Municipal Act.

Webb said the act allows municipalities to establish, operate and maintain air harbours. Council had requested a legal opinion on whether the Brampton Flying Club's proposal to have the county buy its land was feasible.

Chinguacousy Deputy Reeve Terry Miller, who had opposed the airport which would be located in his township, moved that the opinion merely be acknowledged. But committee amended the motion to read that Peel accept the solicitor's opinion.

Oil spill clean-up job satisfactory

The Ministry of the Environment is satisfied with the clean-up job done by a Mississauga transport firm after an April 2 oil spill into the Speed River near Guelph.

Liquid Cargo Lines Ltd. had performed an initial clean-up in April but was ordered by the ministry to repeat the procedure when it was found to be unsatisfactory.

The spill occurred April 2 when a storage tank was overfilled.

Mail plant contract

A \$479,000 contract for the concrete superstructure of the bulk handling plant at the Gateway Postal Facility has been awarded to a Toronto firm.

Umacs Construction Limited submitted the lowest of the five bids on the project for the Eglinton Avenue-Dixie Road facility.

Expected completion date for the contract is Sept. 14.

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