



Democrat Carriage



HISTORY: Our records indicate that this Democrat was donated to O'Hara Mill in 1968 by an Ernest Leaven.

The “democrat” was a simple buggy which served as personal transportation from 1870 onward. Initially it was not generally affordable for many families before the 1890s but was popular with professional people for quick trips between towns. Small loads or luggage could be carried in the bed. Because it has no top or cover, in cold weather the driver and passengers used heavy lap robes and sometimes a metal foot warmer, filled with fire coals.

This wagon has three leaf springs: one (double) over the front, and two over rear axles. These fairly light springs, plus a horse-hair stuffed leather cushion, made for a comfortable ride. Of note, unlike many utility wagons (delivery, farm, freight), there are no brakes. The horse provided the force to stop as well as to go.

This image will be updated once the remaining task is for the seats to be reupholstered.



Democrat Carriage Restoration



Beginnings:

The photos speak for themselves. As always, in any restoration, once you start there are always "surprises". This proved to be no exception.



Step by Step

Everything was disassembled.

Parts were cleaned, replaced and painted.

The wheels showed many years of use of the hard roads and pathways having struck many rocks on its journeys. Spindles were dislodged and had to be refitted. The rim cracked and repaired. When you see it, note the unique method used to secure the steel rim to the wheel. This was original.

The seats were prepared to receive new padded upholstery.

The box required a great deal of effort to refit all the trim and bracing materials. A missing step was replaced.

