

Ernest Warther Life and Train Carvings



Rick Lach

- CLINIC BACKGROUND
- ERNEST WARTHER BIO
- WARTHER MUSEUM
- TRAIN CARVINGS
- WARTHER LEGACY

- I GREW UP IN AKRON
- DOVER – 25 MILES AWAY
- AWARE OF TRAIN CARVER
- OBLIVIOUS TO THE DETAILS
- NEVER MET MR WARTHER--REGRET
- DIV 3 TRAIN SHOW SINCE 2015



- POOR, HUMBLE, RURAL
- SWISS IMMIGRANT HERITAGE
- 1885-1973
- FATHER DIED AT AGE OF 3
- ONE OF 5 CHILDREN; 2nd GRADE EDUCATION
- MOTHER HAD 20 CENTS, A COW, 5 KIDS
- RESILIENT: FAMILY WAS KEY

- SUPPORTED FAMILY EARLY- COWS
- NICKNAME “MOONEY” – BULL OF THE HERD – STUCK REST OF HIS LIFE
- FOUND POCKET KNIFE, CLEANED IT
- BEGAN WHITTLING (FATE DETERMINED REST OF HIS LIFE)
- 5-14 PRACTICED– SPEARS, ARROWS, BOATS
- HOBO TAUGHT HIM TO MAKE PLIERS

- AGE 14: STEEL MILL, EARNED UP TO \$3/DAY
- HARD WORKER; BEST OPERATOR ON BIGGEST MILL
- LEARNED TO TEMPER STEEL AT BLAST FURNACE
- MADE OWN KNIVES, HANDLE SOUP BONE, BLADE SCRAP METAL, SOLD PARING KNIVES; BEGAN CARVING
- ACTIVE CHILDHOOD; BIG PERSONALITY; HARD WORKER
- SOCIALIZED AT ST JOHN’S EVANGELICAL CHURCH
- MET FRIEDA RICHARD, SWISS HERITAGE, BIG FAMILY
- MARRIED IN 1910; BOUGHT LAND IN DOVER FOR \$450
- 2 YRS TO BUILD HOUSE, GARDEN, WORKSHOP; REMAINED FOR LIFE



• PORTRAIT WITH HIS WIFE

- 1913: THE PLIER TREE – BLACK WALNUT 13" LONG, $\frac{3}{4}$ "W, $\frac{5}{8}$ "THICK
- IN HIS MIND: CUT 511 PAIRS OF PLIERS WHEN OPEN FORMED A TREE- LIKE OBJECT
- JUNE 24 – AUG 28; 6-8 HRS/DAY; "MASTER PIECE OF TONGS"
- 31,000 CUTS; EACH OPENED AND FORMED A TREE— UNBELIEVEABLE
- RIPLEY SHOWED AT CENTURY OF PROGRESS IN CHICAGO IN 1933
- AFTER FEW YRS, THEY BOUGHT ADJOINING ACRE OF LAND; SWING, BIGGER WORKSHOP; ALWAYS NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS AROUND
- THINKING OF A LIFE-TIME PROJECT



- JUST AFTER PLIERS, HE DECIDED HE WOULD CARVE **THE EVOLUTION OF THE STEAM ENGINE**; PROJECT FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE
- BEGAN 1913; AGE 27; FINISHED AGE 68 IN 1953
- LOVED STEAM ENGINES; APPRECIATED THEIR IMPORTANCE; LINKED USA; THEY SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN IN AMERICA
- PRIOR TO 1913, DISCARDED MANY STEAM ENGINES
- DECEMBER 1913: NEW PHILOSOPHY: **SCALE ½ INCH TO FOOT**; CARVE IN SMALL SECTIONS; PIECES, THEN ASSEMBLE; WHEELS AND VALVE GEAR WOULD WORK, BELLS AND COUPLERS FUNCTION; EBONY, WALNUT, AND IVORY (HARD MATERIALS); APPLEWOOD FOR FRAMEWORK; 6,000 – 11,000 PIECES; MOTHER OF PEARL TRIM; **USED AN OILY WOOD FOR MOVING PARTS**; NEVER USED A DROP OF OIL
- MADE SEVERAL MODELS OF EACH ENGINE; HOBBY AS A CARVER; RESEARCH AND PHOTOS; SOME TOOK DAYS – SOME 4-6 MONTHS; A FEW TOOK A YEAR

- BY DEC 1, 1917, 4 YRS INTO EVOLUTION, 16 ENGINES FINISHED
- WORKED STEEL MILL 1899 TO 1923; APPRECIATED THE LIVELIHOOD, NOT LIKE THE WORK; IT PROVIDED FOR HIS FAMILY OF 7
- SOLD KNIVES ON SIDE (ESPECIALLY WHEN MILL CLOSED)
- FATE INTERVENED: CLEVELAND ATTORNEY JOE HOSTETLER WANTED A KNIFE LIKE A FRIEND SHOWED HIM. SAW THE KNIVES, BUT ALSO THE ENGINES; GOT THEM PUBLISHED IN CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER
- 1923, CLEVELAND BUSINESS MTG TO PROMOTE RR; SAW CARVINGS PIX; DETERMINED CARVINGS WOULD DRAW PUBLIC TO RR

- LED TO CONTRACT WITH NYC RR; PULLMAN; DEMONSTRATING TRAINS TO ATTRACT PEOPLE
- ON ROAD 5 MONTHS; THEN DISPLAY AT GRAND CENTRAL STATION; MONTHLY APPEARANCE FOR FEW DAYS; \$5K FOR 4 YRS
- NO MORE MILL; GAVE HIM FREEDOM TO CARVE; 15 MODELS FOR “SERVICE PROJECT SPECIAL”; FAMILY COULD VISIT HIM
- HENRY FORD OFFER: \$75K FOR COLLECTIONS; MOVE TO MICHIGAN, \$5K/YR – REFUSED FORD AND DID NOT RENEW NYC; WANT HOME
- 15 ENGINES ON DISPLAY IN NY THRU 1926; 3 MILLION VIEWERS

- 1924-1933: GOLDEN YEARS OF CARVING
- NO INCOME AFTER NYC; NOT RETURN TO MILL
- 1927: BOUGHT A TRUCK WITH BROTHER, CUSTOMIZED IT FOR SHOWING; TOOK 20 ENGINES ON THE ROAD FROM 1927 TO MID-50’S
- EXHIBIT FOR FREE; TOOK DONATIONS; EAST COAST TO WEST COAST, NORTH TO SOUTH; WARTHER WOULD SOMETIMES ACCOMPANY
- TRUCK EXHIBITION SHOW CALLED “DETERMINATION” — SUCCESSFUL
- CARVED 20K PLIERS/YR TO GIVE KIDS; THEN DECIDED TO CHARGE 5 CENTS FOR PLIERS
- \$100/WK WAS THE FOUNDATION FOR MUSEUM; 12X18 MUSEUM OPENED 10 MAY 1936; ENGINES NOW OUT OF THE HOUSE



- WAR YEARS: NO CARVING; MAKE MILITARY COMMANDO KNIVES
- ½ DAY PER KNIFE; MADE THOUSANDS OF KNIVES; POPULAR
- DAY WAR ENDED HE STOPPED MID-KNIFE: THAT UNFINISHED KNIFE IS ON DISPLAY IN MUSEUM
- WITH WAR OVER, HE WAS FREE TO CARVE ENGINES AGAIN
- AFTER WAR, SIGNED CONTRACT TO DISPLAY ENGINES AT 26 DEPT STORES (1947 TO 1952) AT \$2500 PER WEEK; APPEARANCE POPULAR
- APR 7, 1947 CITY OF DOVER HONOR HIM WITH PLAQUE; SPEECHLESS
- EARLY 1950'S: CARVED STEEL MILL FOR "DETERMINATION"; ANOTHER FOR MUSEUM

- FINAL YEARS: 1953 FINISHED EVOLUTION OF STEAM
- THEN EPICS OF RR HISTORY: GOLDEN SPIKE, CASEY JONES, GREAT LOCO CHASE, OLD IRONSIDES (MULTIPLE CARVINGS IN SCENES)
- TWO 8 FOOT LONG COMPLETE TRAINS: NYC 999 PLUS 4 COACHES IN IVORY; AND LINCOLN FUNERAL TRAIN IN EBONY
- BEGAN FINAL ENGINE LADY BALTIMORE IN SEPT 66 – NEVER FINISHED.
- JUNE 8, 1963 MUSEUM EXPANDED; PRESENTED W/A BUST
- HEALTHY TIL LAST COUPLE YEARS; FELL, STROKE;
- JUNE 8, 1973 DIED
- MUSEUM EXPANDED IN 1988 AND 2002





SCENES FROM
HIS HOUSE







- HIS WIFE VERY ARTISTIC TOO
- BUTTON COLLECTOR
- HER TOOLS AND COLLECTIONS
- OVER 73,000 BUTTONS
- INCLD BUTTON FROM MRS LINCOLN





INFLUENCES:

- TRAINS (SENSE OF HISTORY OF STEAM ENGINES – DISLIKED DIESELS)
- ABRAHAM LINCOLN
- CHARLES LINDBERGH
- FAMILY SUPPORT
- LOVE OF COUNTRY



THE MEDIUM:

- ALL HARD MATERIALS: IVORY, WALNUT, AND EBONY
- ALL HAND TOOLS – NO LATHE
- DRILL PRESS ONLY LATER IN LIFE







THE TRAIN CARVINGS:

- HISTORY OF STEAM ENGINES
- NO DIESELS
- 64 TOTAL (MANY DUPLICATED)
- RESEARCHED; ALL PARTS TO SCALE







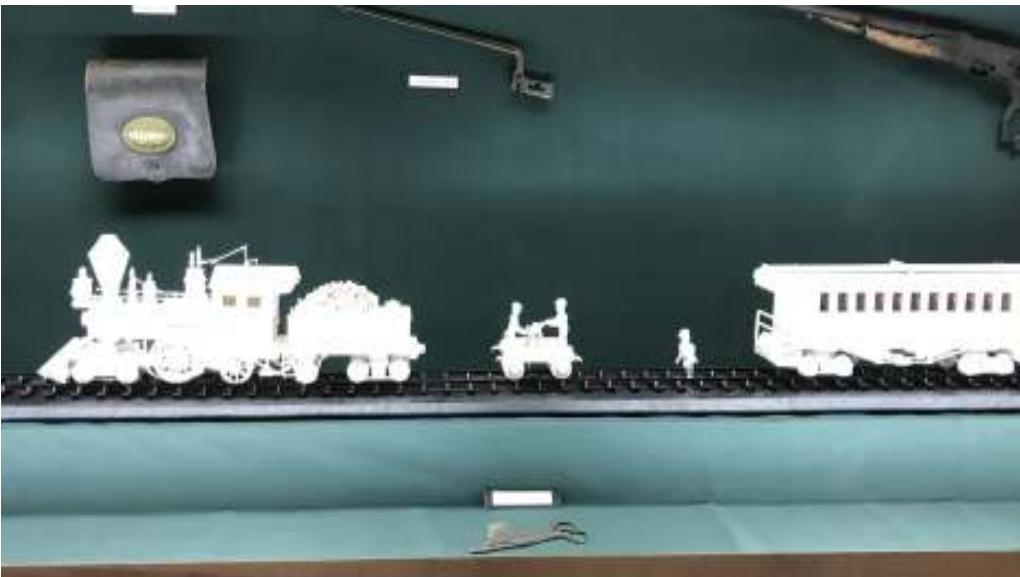






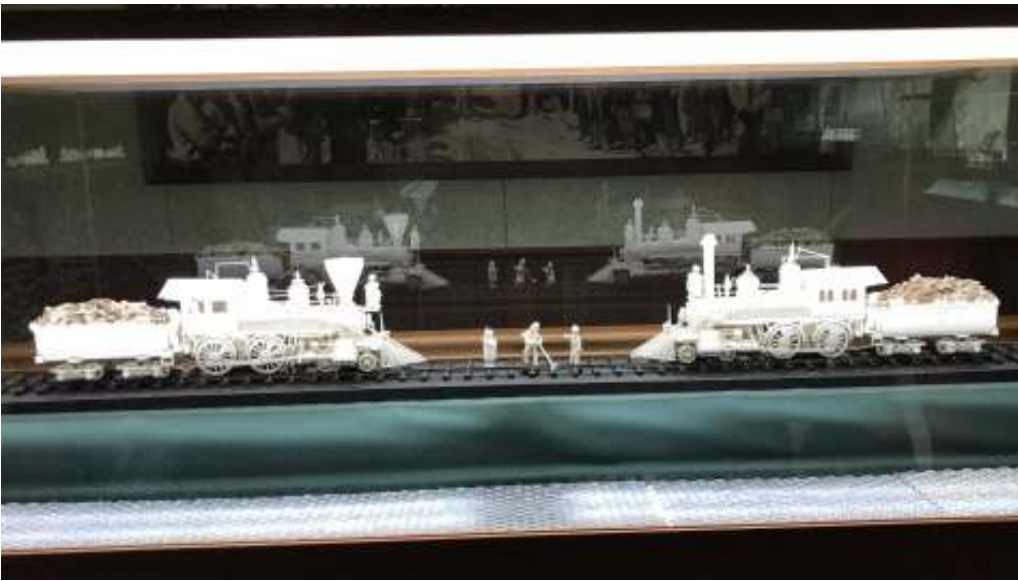
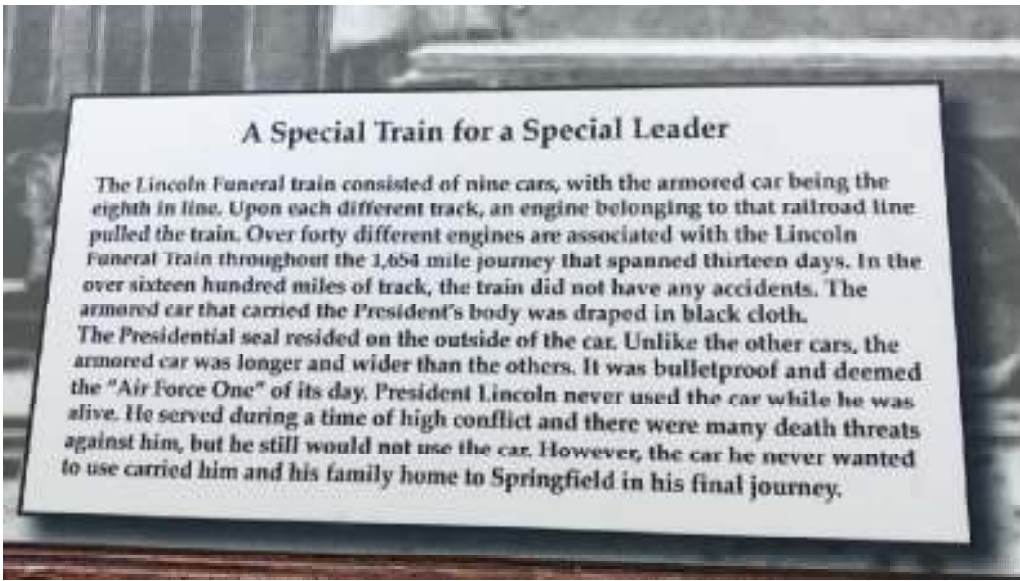
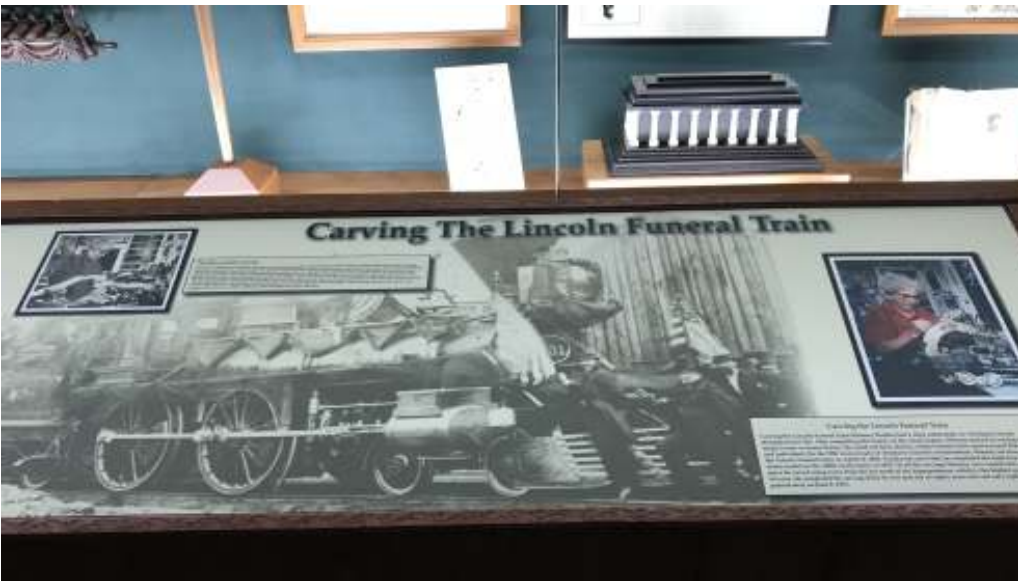






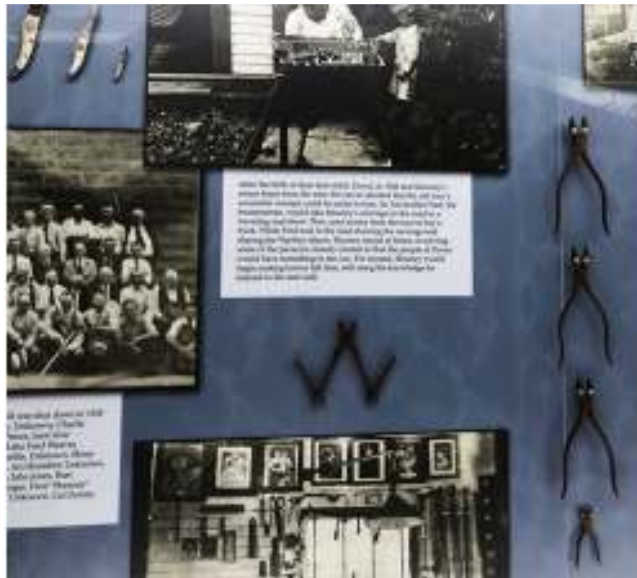














The Plier Tree

How can you make a tree out of wood in all different colors? The size of the tree is 100 cm high. It is made of 32 cuts of wood in all.

There are 32 cuts in the wood. Each cut is 10 cm long. The cuts are made in a way that they form a tree. The tree is made of 32 cuts of wood in all.

The number of pliers in each tree is given in the table below:

Year	Number of Pliers	Number of Cuts
1988	10	10
1989	10	10
1990	10	10
1991	10	10
1992	10	10
1993	10	10
1994	10	10
1995	10	10
1996	10	10
1997	10	10
1998	10	10
1999	10	10
2000	10	10
2001	10	10
2002	10	10
2003	10	10
2004	10	10
2005	10	10
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2008	10	10
2009	10	10
2010	10	10
2011	10	10
2012	10	10
2013	10	10
2014	10	10
2015	10	10
2016	10	10
2017	10	10
2018	10	10
2019	10	10
2020	10	10
2021	10	10
2022	10	10
2023	10	10
2024	10	10
2025	10	10

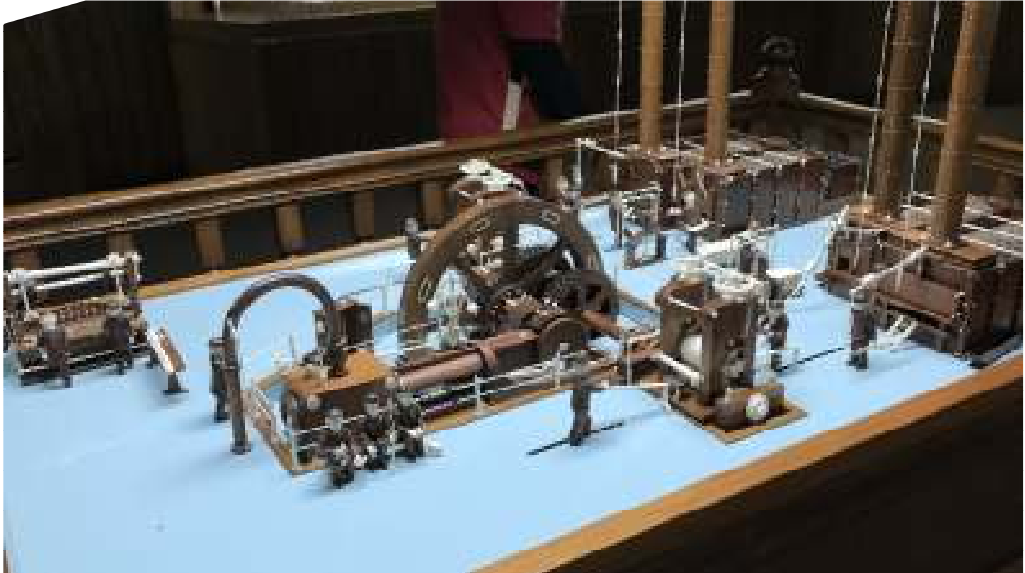
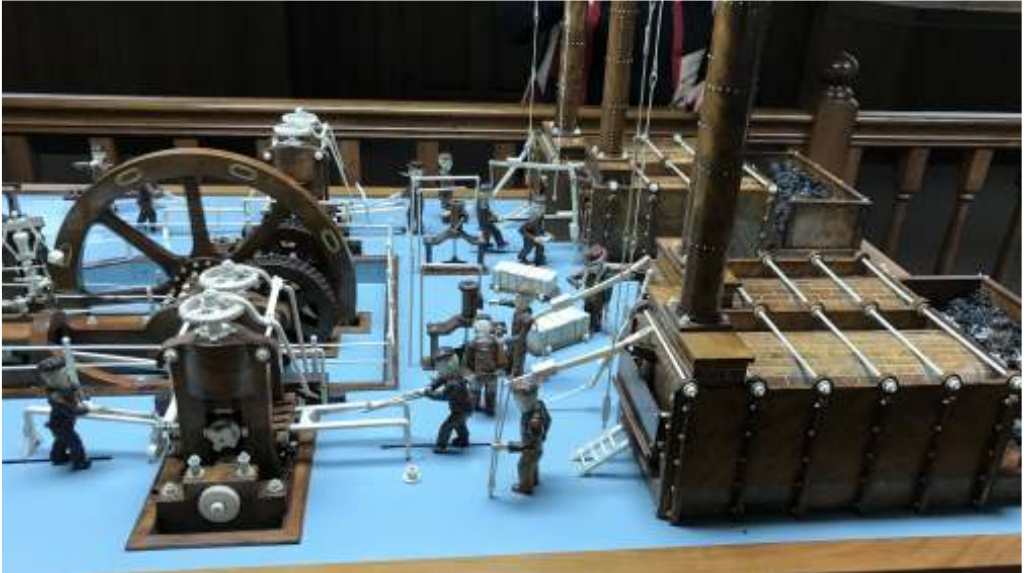


Pictured below is Mooney carving a pair of pliers for General Omar Bradley, who, at the time, was one of the current joint Chiefs of Staff for the United States. Above is the letter General Bradley wrote to Mooney expressing his gratitude for the small gift after the event.



Above, Dwight D. Eisenhower's letter of thanks expresses his enjoyment for Mooney's works. Pictured below is Mooney meeting Eisenhower's Vice President, Richard Nixon, in 1954.





CLOSING THOUGHTS

- CREATIVE GENIUS, FAMILY & HOME VALUES
- BIGGER THAN LIFE PERSONALITY
- MASTER CARVER OF THE WORLD
- NEVER SOLD OUT; TREMENDOUS INTEGRITY
- SMITHSONIAN: CARVINGS ARE PRICELESS
- GO SEE THESE TREASURES

ERNEST WARTHER LEGACY

- MUSEUM WITH 64 EVOLUTION OF STEAM LOCO'S; EPICS OF RAILROAD HISTORY CARVINGS, LINCOLN FUNERAL TRAIN, NYC PASSENGER TRAIN, PLIERS DEMO AND PLIERS TREE, CARVING OF THE STEEL MILL
- CARVED WALKING CANES HONORING LINCOLN AND LINDBERGH, CARVED PLAQUES HONORING LINCOLN
- DISPLAYS OF HIS KNIVES AND BLADES, WORKSHOP WITH TOOLS AND ARROWHEAD DISPLAYS, HIS ONLY HOME FOR NEARLY 80 YEARS, FRIEDA'S BUTTON COLLECTION, THE FAMILY GARDEN, PROPERTY WITH REAL CABOOSE AND DOCKSIDE ENGINE, GIFT SHOP, AND KNIFE PRODUCING FACILITY
- TOTALLY CREATIVE GENIUS; GREAT FAMILY MAN; BIGGER THAN LIFE PERSONALITY, GROUNDED; 4 GENERATIONS OF WARTHER WOODCARVERS

**QUESTIONS
OR COMMENTS?**