

## **Ed Malcom, the Le Roi Man**

I was born on July 19, 1941, in Taylor County, Iowa, one half mile south of the line that figured prominently in the “Honey Bee War” between Iowa and Missouri in the 1830 to 1849 time frame. Pull it up on the internet for some interesting reading. My parents were Robert and Verla Malcom. My dad went into business with his older brother in a mechanic shop in 1923, and I have some of his original tools. Sometime around 1930 they split up and the brother went to Colorado and my parents bought a 40 acre farm in Taylor Co. There were coal mines in the area and Dad worked the mines in the winters and farmed and ran his shop at home around the mining. In 1943 he went to work for the local phone company where he was manager and did everything for them until 1976 when they sold out and he retired. That was the third from the last phone company in the country to go dial. He quit climbing poles at age sixty-eight but then did small mechanic work plus electrical work until he was ninety when his legs gave out. Mom did bookkeeping and was a relief operator at the phone company for many years.

By the time I was 8 years old, my hands had been plenty greasy lots of times, and I also knew how to use a hammer and saw correctly. At about age nine, I started helping neighboring farmers take care of livestock and cutting weeds out of soybean fields (which is not done today) and anything else to make a buck. We had a neighbor who had traveled the Midwest doing drywall work, and at age eleven, I started helping him with drywall and small remodeling jobs around home. In those days, any young person who wanted money worked for it as none of our parents had any extra. After graduating from high school I worked for a couple of builders for about a year and had a chance to go to Altus, Oklahoma, to work on the Atlas missile sites for \$2.50 an hour, a HUGE raise in pay. While working there I met my future wife, and this September we will be married forty-eight years. We have four sons and three daughters and now sixteen grandchildren.

One of my greatest memories is working in New Orleans for Boeing Company for two years as a jig and fixture builder helping build the fixtures that the parts of the first stage of the moon rocket were made on. I had never stayed away from construction, so we have lived in several different states over the years and wound up in Jane, Missouri, in 1996, hopefully to stay.

NOW TO THE OLD IRON PART. My first Le Roi engine is a 1924 model that has been in our family since my Dad bought it in 1930. It was on a paving machine when Iowa Highway 2 was paved in Page and Taylor counties in 1928 and 1929. Someway, the crankshaft broke on the end and my dad wound up with it. He brazed the pieces back together and used it on an air compressor until the early 1950's when he put an electric motor on the compressor and the Le Roi sat over in the corner until 1976 when he gave it to me. We carried it around until finally, in May of 2004, I got it back running again.

THAT STARTED THE DISEASE. I'm now up to twenty-nine le Roi engines plus a couple of Waukesha engines, a Briggs FH and a Busy Bee. One day in Bentonville there was a small engine gathering at the Peel House by Wal-Mart. I talked to some exhibitors and away we go. I belong to Tired Iron plus Farm Echoes in Southwest Missouri (the first club I joined) and Rusty Wheels in Harrison, Arkansas. When anyone gets on SMOKSTAK on the internet and has a question about Le Roi, someone will refer them to me. We used to buy everything that came across eBay pertaining to le Roi and watched at swap meets and now have many books, manuals and over one hundred original ads from 1917 to the early 1950s. In 2007 we drove 18,000 miles and went to twenty-two different shows. Last year, the traveling was cut back to eight shows and this year will be about eighteen. We plan on

going back to Old Threshers in Mt. Pleasant, IA, which was cut last year with high gas prices as it is 900 miles round trip. Otherwise our travels are from Lathrop north of Kansas City to Winfield, Kansas, 210 west and east to Republic and southeast to Harrison, Arkansas, and lots of places in between.



Ed at Gentry, AR, July 4, 2009