

Lombard's Log Hauler: The First Crawler Tractor

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A book titled *Endless Tracks in the Woods* notes, "Steersmen who resisted the temptation to jump were known as 'stay with 'er' men and gained the respect of the loggers."

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The Phoenix Company of Eau Claire, Wis., built, under license from Lombard, a similar tracked log hauler called the Centipede. It had a two-cylinder, vertical steam engine mounted on each side of the smoke box that drove the tracks through shafts and pinion gears rather than chains.

Lombard continued to build tracked log haulers into the late 1930s, but after 1917, gasoline engines were used instead of steam. In the early '30s, Lombard introduced a 10-ton truck-tractor powered by a Fairbanks-Morse diesel engine that could handle 250 tons in sleds on iced roads.

These gas and diesel haulers looked nothing like the steam versions. The fronts were like the heavy trucks of the day and the backs resembled a World War II half-track. These truck-tractors were often fitted with front wheels instead of runners and were used as heavy dump trucks and to push snow plows.

Log haulers on display

Vintage log haulers/crawlers still can be seen at a few museums around the country. These include:

The Patten Lumbermen's Museum, P.O. Box 300, Shin Pond Rd., Patten, ME 04765, (207) 528-2650, Web site www.lumbermensmuseum.org. Open seasonally. As of 2001 the collection includes two Lombard log haulers, one steam and one gasoline, according to curator and director Marcia Pond-Anderson.

The Rhinelander Logging Museum, operated by Rhinelander Area Seniors Inc. Open seasonally. As of 2001, this museum, begun in 1932, owns a Phoenix log hauler made by the Phoenix Foundry in Eau Claire, WI, according to Walter Krause, president of Rhinelander Area Seniors, which operates the museum. **FC**

Sam Moore became interested in agricultural machinery while growing up on a western Pennsylvania farm. Now a resident of Salem, Ohio, he collects antique tractors, implements and related items.

Read more: <http://www.farmcollector.com/tractors/lombard-log-hauler.aspx?page=3#ixzz22J8yTYnh>

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