

Cider Press Restoration Project (November – December 2016)

Back sometime in the '70's I bought a cider press from a neighbor in Moore's Corner. It was old and rusty. For many years we used the press to make apple cider in the fall. We did this with our own kids as well as with kids who came to visit us with their parents. I have some old paper photographs of the press in operation. I hope to get them digitized so that I can include them here.

[Imagine photographs of happy kids playing with cider press here]

Later when we moved to Leyden the press was stashed in the back of the barn. We did not use it very often, but here is a picture that shows it in operation with Julie Petty and her children:

[I hope to find this photograph soon]

A lot of time went by. The cider press remained in the barn, gathering dust. During several years we did not use it at all. Eventually I decided that it might make sense to sell it off. I mentioned this to Elizabeth, and she objected. She said that she would take it. That seemed to me to be a much better idea, and so I agreed. But then I thought that I would take a look at the press to see if it was in good enough shape to hand on to Elizabeth and her family.

So I went to the barn. This is what I found:





It seemed to me that the cider press was in pretty bad shape. The paint was peeling and chipped; rust was showing through everywhere; the press was disgustingly dirty. So I decided that before trying to haul it out to Ann Arbor, I would first have to clean it up and repaint it.

The first step would be to dismantle the whole thing as far as possible. Here are some pictures showing what I found as I started to take it apart:



Rust and peeling paint everywhere! A total wreck. So I got out my angle grinder with a wirebrush installed. I started to grind off the old paint and the rust. Here is a typical before-and-after comparison:



Before wirebrushing



After wirebrushing

I also dismantled the bin into which the apples are placed to be ground up. This was a complicated job since some of the gears were firmly rusted onto their shafts. I had to get a gear puller to get the gears off the shafts. The rest came apart pretty easily:



The bolts were rusted and bent. They would have to be replaced. After wirebrushing all these pieces I primed them with grey primer and then painted them with Rustoleum Regal Red paint. Here is an example of a part first wirebrushed, then primed, and then painted:



I then proceeded to prime and paint the rest of the pieces. It was very cold in the barn; the paint was not drying properly. So I moved the painting operation into the furnace room in the cellar. Here is a picture showing some parts drying down there. And another showing pieces on the workbench:



Once the painting was finished, it was time to try to put it all back together. I did that back in the barn using a new set of bolts that I got at Fastenal in Greenfield:



And then, when the press had been completely reconstructed, I took it outside to get some nice pictures on a bright sunny day:



The cider press restored and ready to be transported to Ann Arbor.