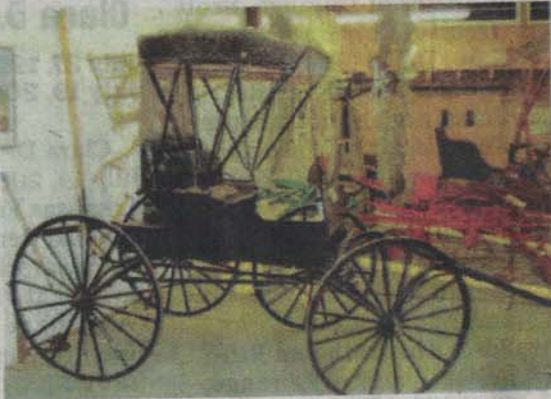


Buggy salutes days gone by

Otero Museum displays fine example of horse-drawn carriage



COURTESY PHOTO

More than 25 million buggies were used in the U.S. between 1890 and 1910. They were produced by more than 700 manufacturers.

By **M. F. Hockemeyer**
Otero Museum Association

Probably very few people younger than age 65 can remember when doctors made house calls.

A few older people may recall that the doctor arrived in a buggy pulled by a pair of fine carriage horses. The horse and buggy was an ideal conveyance for the often over-worked doctor.

With a well trained team, he could bundle up in a heavy coat, cover with a buffalo robe and doze off while

his team took him home, sometimes through blinding snow or dark of night.

Some of the adventures of the "Horse and Buggy Doctor" were recounted in the book by the same name by Dr. Arthur Hertzler published in 1938, and now out of print.

The doctor was not the only one who used the buggy during the last part of the 20th century and the first of this century. It became very popular along about 1880 as a means of transportation to church or neighbor visits. It

was the conveyance of choice for the business man or salesman who needed to travel to see customers in his area. Young men often used it to take their lady friends for a Sunday drive.

It is estimated that between 1890 and 1910, there were more than 25 million buggies used in the United States, produced by more than 700 manufacturers at retail prices of less than \$100 each.

See **BUGGY**, 6

Buggy

FROM PAGE 1

Because of their popularity, it was perhaps not unusual that the early inventors of the "horseless carriage" mounted a motor on a buggy in their first attempts to manufacture an automobile.

By the late teens, with the proliferation of the automobile, buggy manufacturing ceased and the factories such as the dominant Studebaker wagon factory turned to making car bodies instead.

A buggy such as used by the local doctor around the turn of the century, can be seen at the Otero Museum. This model has interchangeable shafts or tongue so that it can be used for either one horse or a team. The buggy on display at the museum was a gift from Dr. Gordon Vandiver of La Junta.

The museum is open daily during the summer months from 1 to 5 p.m. (closed Sundays). Admission is free, but donations are encouraged.

The museum's budget is financed solely through donations and all of the staff are volunteers.

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