

THRASHER CARRIAGE MUSEUM

WORK AND PLAY: THE STUDEBAKER RUNABOUT WAGON & THE BREWSTER GOLF CART

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The Thrasher Carriage Museum collection continues to grow with the recent addition of a 1900 Studebaker Runabout wagon and a 1905 Brewster & Co. golf cart. Located across from the Frostburg Depot terminus of the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, the Museum houses one of the best private collections of horse-drawn vehicles in the United States.

“The Studebaker was more of an everyday vehicle,” says Gary Bartik, director of the Thrasher Museum. “Everyday” doesn’t necessarily mean boring. This particular runabout buggy sports a jaunty color scheme, featuring a body painted in classic Studebaker light green and darker Brewster green contrasting with bright yellow wheels, all accented with cadmium red pin-striping. The Studebaker and Brewster green colors represented popular shades of specialty buggy paint.

Based in South Bend, Indiana, the Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company started out in the mid-1800s as a wagon maker for farmers, miners and the military, and soon became the world’s largest wagon manufacturer.

“Wagons were their premium quality vehicle,” Bartik says. “During and after the Civil War,



Studebaker wagons were at the top of their game.” After using the wagons for hauling wood he once sold for a living, General Ulysses S. Grant was sufficiently impressed enough to order thousands of Studebaker wagons for use in battle.

Studebaker’s reputation for quality extended to its carriages. They transported Presidents like Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, Benjamin Harris, and Abraham Lincoln, whose black Studebaker transported him and his wife Mary on his last journey to the Ford Theater. Studebaker became the only top-ranked carriage builder to become a top-ranked automobile manufacturer.

While the Studebaker runabout was more of a general purpose vehicle, the Brewster & Co. golf cart was all about fun and high style, with a black and white body sitting above fire-engine red wheels. One of the first of its kind, the Thrasher Museum’s golf cart was made for J.B. Brewster, the president’s son. Based in New York City, Brewster & Co. held patents on the style. Its primary purpose was to transport golfers between clubhouse and golf course.

“Brewster carriages were high quality, high style, well crafted and aerodynamic in design,” Bartik says. “Both of these carriages are distinctive, each with an identifiable style.”

To see these and other horse-drawn vehicles, visit the Thrasher Carriage Museum at 19 Depot Street, Frostburg, Maryland, May – October, Thursday through Sunday, noon to 2 pm; November through mid-December,

Saturday and Sunday, noon to 2 pm.

Special tours by appointment – 301-777-7200. Also visit www.thrasher-carriage-museum.com.

