

Landis Sales & Service: Where Old Machines Go to Be Rebuilt

ELI SCHLABACH is one of those important transitional figure who oversaw and made possible the rebirth of the leather trades in the US. We all owe him and his family a big "Thank You!" He was there before fax machines. Even before UPS if you can imagine a world without Big Brown. He was there to see the demise of such industry giants as W. W. Gleckner, Hess & Hopkins, and Southern Saddlery and, subsequently, lived off their inventory of obsolete machinery, finished goods, and hardware while he struggled to find new suppliers and then became one himself. (See in this issue "Mast Harness Hardware: Gone But Not Forgotten")

ABOUT two years ago Eli was fortunate to consummate a deal he had been working on for about fifteen years with Tex Schumaker, a famous California holster maker who started in business about the same time that John Bianchi did. Eli was able to acquire from Tex a large number of parts for the Landis 16 which is kind of his specialty. He's got a pretty good supply of both parts and needles on hand for the 16.

Here's a 16 that Eli has begun to rebuild:

“He was there before fax machines. Even before UPS if you can imagine a world without Big Brown.”

WHILE Eli no longer manages a staff of over twenty employees and does business worldwide, he's kept busy since 2001 with the little business he started after his family sold Mast Harness Hardware—Landis Sales & Service. Eli "works on things that nobody else wants to work on" and that includes most of the old dinosaurs like the Landis 1, 3, and 16. He also works on Pearsons (No. 6), Champions, and most likely anything else you need repaired.



Landis 16

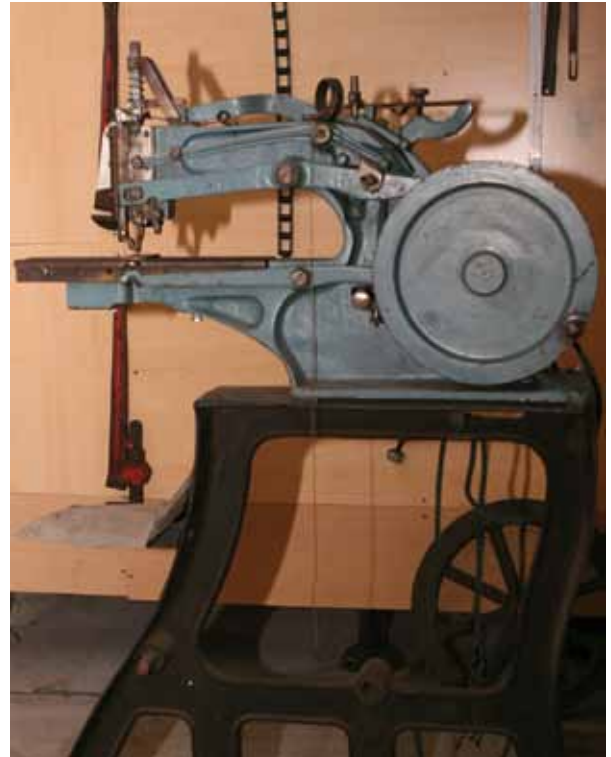
And here's one that he's completed:



Rebuilt Landis 16

COST for a basic rebuild is something like \$3,500-\$4,000 but a "super deluxe" package can run a bit more. Just depends on what you want done.

IF Eli doesn't have the part in stock, he can make pretty much anything he needs with the different lathes and mills he has in his machine shop. Recently, he bought a nice used Hardinge lathe just to make a special screw for Landis 1 shuttles which holds the bobbin in place and gets worn with use. It's just a tiny thing with 32 threads per inch and is left handed. Weird! Cost is \$35.



YES, Eli has needles for the No. 1, and the No. 3, and he's been working on a design for a new treadle stand that will work for the No. 3 or 16. Knowing Eli's innovative capabilities, it should be a beauty!

HERE'S a No. 3 that's on the bench and undergoing a rebuild:



ELI explained that when the machine first arrived in the shop it was an unsightly mess—no longer! It's starting to look great!

In addition to all the old stitchers that Eli restores, he also makes splitter blades for machines like the Landis 6" splitter, the Fenda splitter that Sutton sold, and Randall splitters. If you need it, Eli probably can make it. Such a talented guy.



WHILE Eli has stayed busy at the old home place in Arthur, his son, Kenneth, started a new business a few years back which has been, not surprisingly, as successful as the old business. Kenneth, with some help from his brother Merle, owns Day Star which installs these lovely natural lighting systems in large stores, factories, and warehouses—and they work! Kenneth installed a number of the light vents in Mast Harness Hardware's former building where Eli has his shop and they do a great job—even on a snowy, over-cast day with the sun nowhere in sight. They work!

YOU can reach Eli at Landis Sales & Service, 115 E County Road 500 N, Arthur, IL 61911, (217) 543-3464, fax (217) 543-2515. Kenneth at Day Star can be reached at 14226 Hwy 4, Campbell Hill, IL 62916, (866) 7-DAYSTAR.

In addition to working with his brother, Merle also distributes leather for Wickett & Craig and does exquisite reproductions of US Cavalry saddles and accessories. Top quality workmanship. Merle can be contacted at 488 Post Oak Rd., Campbell Hill, IL 62916-2009.

AGAIN, thank you to the Schlabach family for all the hard work they did—and Eli still does—on behalf of our trades. Mast Harness Hardware may be gone, but their many contributions are still remembered and appreciated.

Old Stitchers Never Die:

They just keep chuggin' along! And to help them do that, there still are a few companies out that work on the old machines, carry a few parts, and have needles. Unfortunately, as most people will admit, it really is getting harder and harder to find parts for obsolete machines like:

- **Bauer**
- **Champion Narrow & Wide Throat**
- **American Straight Needle**
- **Pearson (No. 6)**
- **Landis 1, 3, 16**
- **Singer 97-10**
- **Cyclone**



However, parts and needles for the Union Lockstitch, Campbell, and Randall stitchers are readily available.

Shop Talk! sells manuals for most all of the old machines.

Here's a partial list of companies that still work on and carry parts for the old stitchers. If you know of someone who can help with the old machines but is not listed below—or if you're needing help--please give us a shout and thanks!

Contact:

Shop Talk!

P O Box 497 Belgrade, ME 04917

Ph (207) 495-3600,

e-mail: shoptalk@proleptic.net

Aaron Martin Harness Ltd.

4445 Posey Ln., RR #1

Wallenstein, ON N0B 2S0

Canada

(800) 367-0639

(519) 698-2754

www.aaronmartin.com

If you are still using a No. 6 (Pearson)—and a lot of people still do because it gives a lovely stitch—then you are in luck! Aaron Martin Harness has quite a number of parts as well as needles for the No. 6 and they may still offer rebuilding services. In the past they've had used ones on hand for sale.

Bogle-Greenwell Machinery Corp.

3100 E. Main

Grand Prairie, TX 75050

(972) 262-8652

www.boglegreenwell.com

Bogle-Greenwell is one of those old, old firms which has been around for long years and, during that time, has acquired all sorts of odds and ends. You never know exactly what they might have on their shelves. Furthermore, they still actively service and sell the old stitchers.

Campbell-Randall Leather Machinery Co.

401 Irvine St.

Yoakum, TX 77995

(800) 327-9420

(361) 293-7015

www.campbell-randall.com

There's probably not a machine out there that the folks at Campbell-Randall haven't worked on at one time or the other. They have a huge inventory of parts for different stitchers plus they have can make any part you need in their machine shop. Very handy. Of course, they specialize in Campbells, Randalls, and Union Lockstitches and carry a full compliment of parts and needles for those machines. They're probably the only company in the world that has parts for the Cyclone.

FERDCO

P O Box 65

Harrison, ID 83833

(800) 645-0197

www.ferdco.com

FERDCO is another of those companies that's been around for a long time and has accumulated and acquired all sorts of odds and ends. There's probably not a machine out there that they haven't worked on at one time or the other. If you need and can't find it, give FERDCO a call. Even if they don't have what you're looking for, they might be able to suggest where to find it.

Keith Pommer

P O Box 323

Worthing, SD 57077

(605) 372-4523

Keith rebuilds a lot of leather equipment as well as old stitchers and has a reputation of always doing a top notch job. When Keith rebuilds a stitcher, he does it right! While he normally does not have parts on hand for resell, you never know so it probably wouldn't hurt to call him. Of course, he's always looking to buy parts and pieces for the old machines. At times he may have extra needles that he will part with.

Toledo Industrial Sewing Machines

3631 Marine Rd.

Toledo, OH 43609

(866) 362-7397

At one time Toledo carried a few parts for Champion stitchers but not so much now although they still have needles and awls. Of course, there's probably not a sewing machine, regardless of its make or model, that Toledo can't fix. They may have a few shuttles for the Singer 97-10.