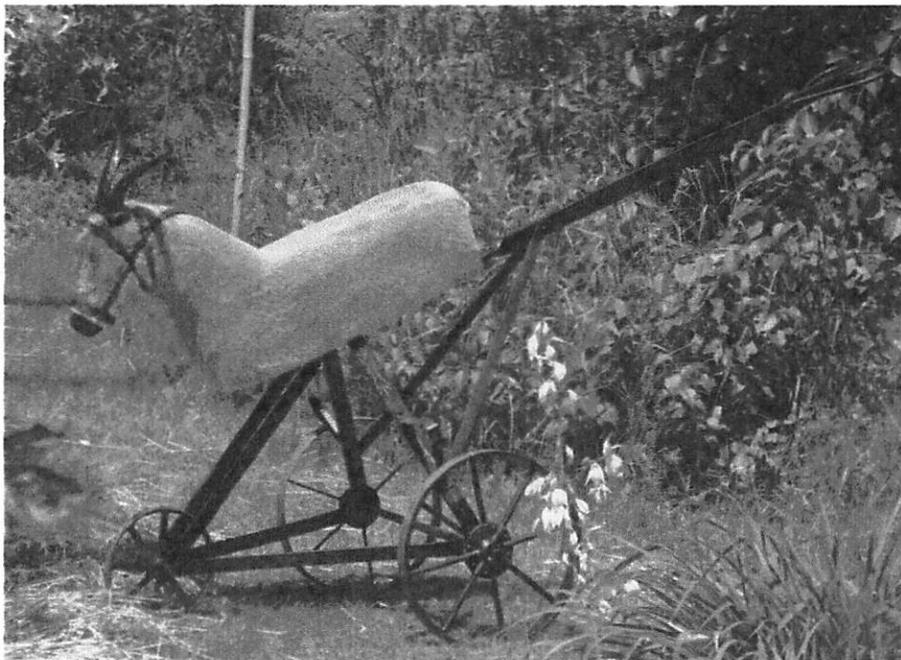


# RESTORATION REPORT

Restoration of the  
Modern Woodman of America Goat  
from The Painted Forest, Valton, Wisconsin  
for Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin



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## **Restoration of the Modern Woodmen of America Ritual Goat for Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin.**

### History

This Modern Woodmen of America (MWA) ritual goat was donated to the Historical Society of the Upper Baraboo Valley, for a display of MWA artifacts in The Painted Forest, by the MWA home office (Rock Island, IL), in 1982. The MWA home office donated a number of MWA ritual objects and costumes to interpret MWA practices in the newly restored former MWA lodge hall. The Painted Forest was built in 1898 as the fraternal lodge hall for MWA Camp #6190, in Valton, WI. A complete restoration of the building and its outstanding mural by Ernest Hupeden was undertaken by Kohler Foundation, Inc. (Kohler, WI), in 1981-82. The site had been gifted to Sauk County in 1982, and was re-gifted to Edgewood College in 2004.

An important aspect of ritual initiation in several fraternal organizations, including the MWA, entailed blindfolding (or “hoodwinking”) the candidate for the initiation, and subjecting him to a wild ride on a ceremonial goat. A range of hand operated and mechanical ritual goats were hand made or manufactured for this purpose. Several companies manufactured ritual goats for fraternal lodge halls; DeMolay and Pettibone companies were the primary outlets in the Midwest. Research into catalogs advertising various types of ritual goats and correspondence with the DeMolay company historian revealed that this goat was not manufactured by either company. It could have been one of a small run of hand-made objects, or a unique artifact. It’s not possible to assign an exact date to its creation, but the construction methods and comparison to manufactured goats and to MWA practices suggest that it was made in the 1890s.

### Condition

The goat given to the Painted Forest by the MWA home office was constructed by hand. The body was hand sawn and carved basswood covered, reinforced on both sides of the neck with steel straps, and covered with sheepskin. The horns were cast iron, most likely created by a small foundry, and retained their original pattern marks. The iron carriage and wheels were hand forged and welded by a highly skilled blacksmith, and had traces of pinstripe decoration. The goat was fitted with leather tack and a rope rein.

The goat was in worn condition when it was donated to the Painted Forest. After over two decades in the lodge hall, the sheepskin covering was badly deteriorated, with many large sections missing. A 3 x 3 inch section of wood was worn or broken off from the mouth, and a smaller area of wood was missing from the left ear. The iron components had minor corrosion. The right rear wheel was slightly larger than the left rear wheel. The leather and rope tack were deteriorated.

### Restoration

The goat was moved from the Painted Forest in May 2007; restoration was done by Jerry Paukstat (Furniture Clinic, Spring Lake, WI) and Don Howlett, Preservation Services.

Careful examination revealed that all parts, with the exception of the wheels and nuts and bolts, were hand made. The sheepskin hide was hand dyed using what appears to be an aniline dye; aniline dye was common at the time the goat was created. The remaining

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hide was removed from the body. Hide scraps were retained for testing. A new sheepskin hide was purchased, and dyed with aniline dye to match the original dye color. The new hide was stretched and fitted over the body and adhered with hide glue. The saddle area was distressed slightly, to make it appear used, as this area on the original goat was worn by repeated use. Missing sections of the basswood body in the mouth and ear areas were consolidated using Apoxie wood epoxy. Consolidated areas were covered with the new hide and are not visible.

The carriage was disassembled and parts were treated with corrosion converter, cleaned, and received a coat of clear matte lacquer. The rear wheels were examined and it appeared that one stirrup had been adjusted to the height of the larger wheel, suggesting that the goat was originally fitted with mismatched wheels. The original wheels were reattached. The pinstriping was repainted, matching traces of the original. A leather harness was recreated according to the design of the original harness fragments.

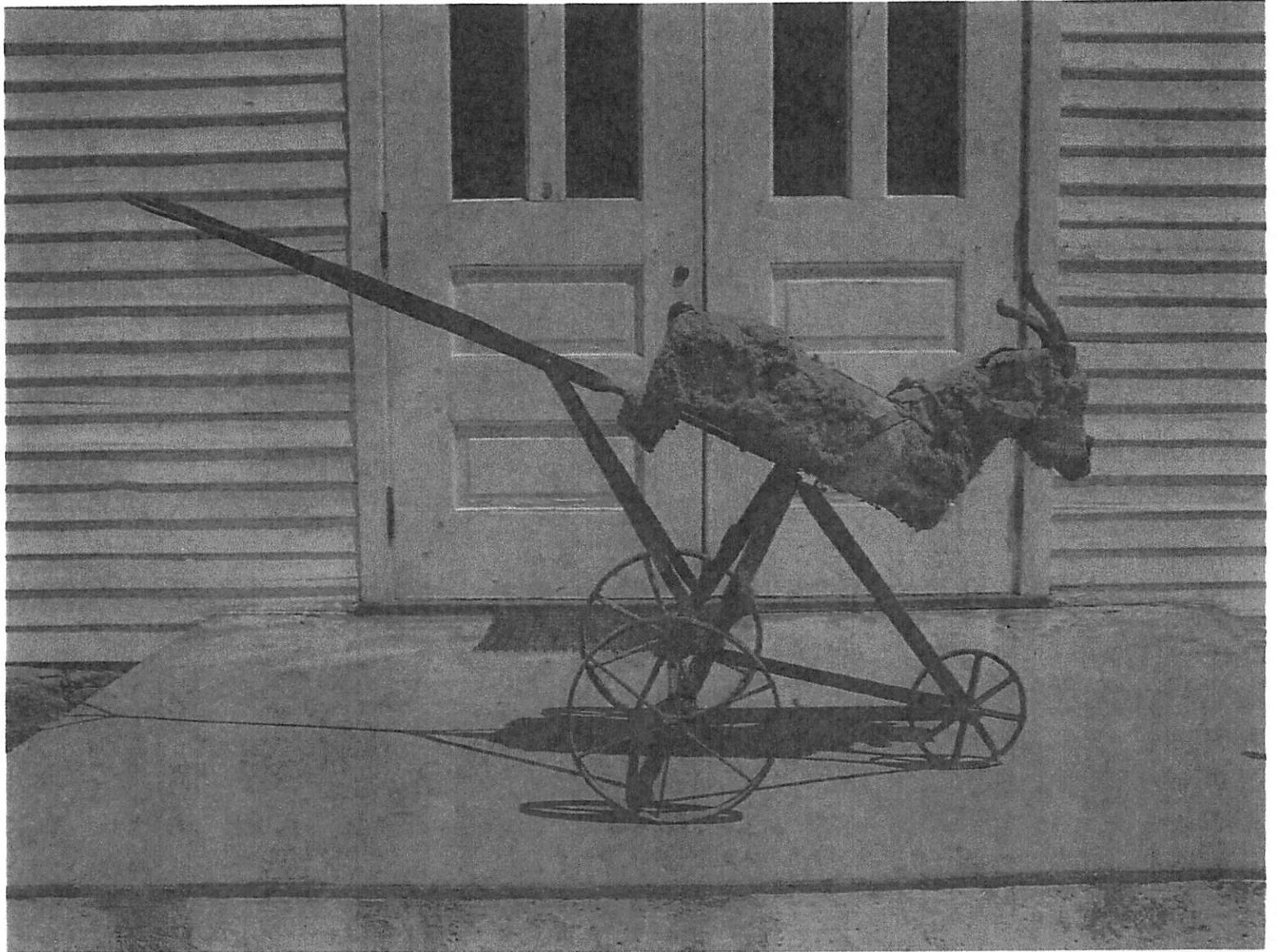
The completed goat will be returned to its place in The Painted Forest, as an important artifact and interpretive link to the Modern Woodmen of America's ritual of initiation, and to Ernest Hupeden's unique iconography.

Don Howlett  
Preservation Services, Inc.  
July 2007

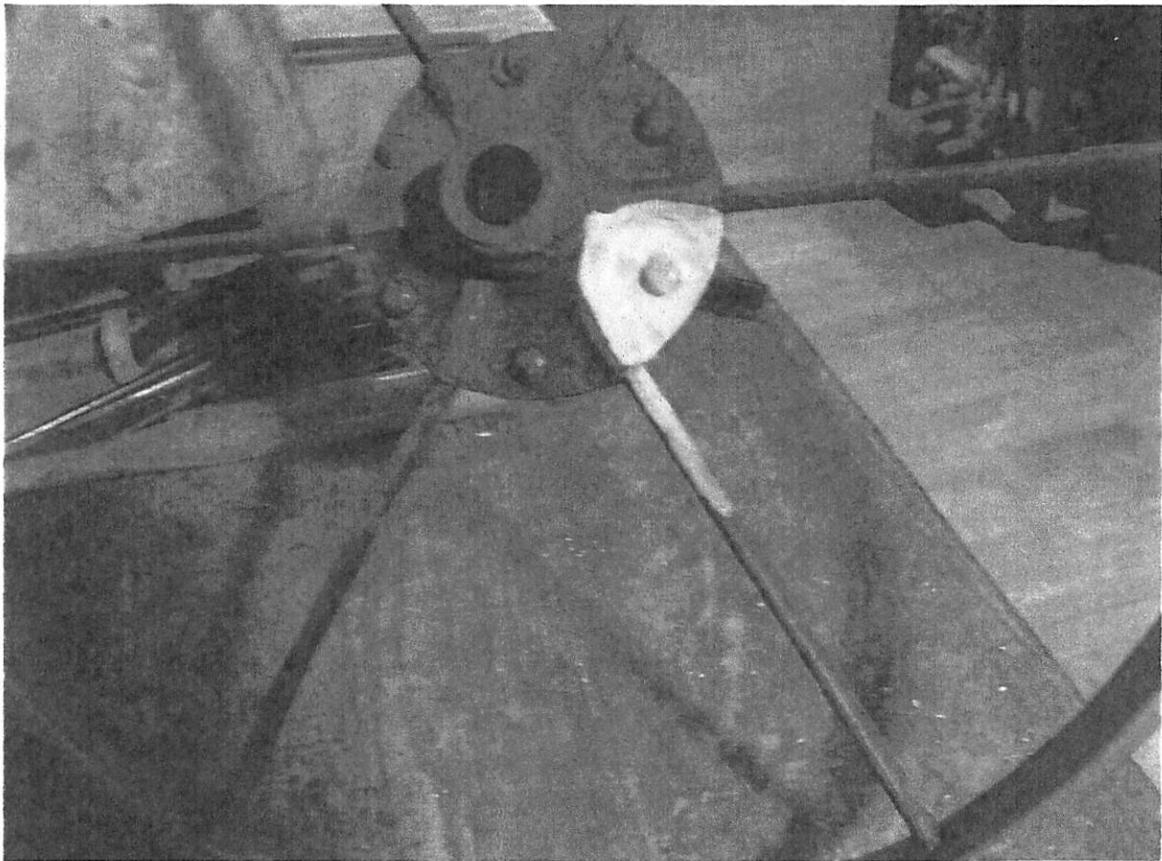
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Enclosures:

- Printed images of the goat before treatment, the treatment process, and the restored goat.
- CD ROM with digital images of the goat before, during, and after treatment.

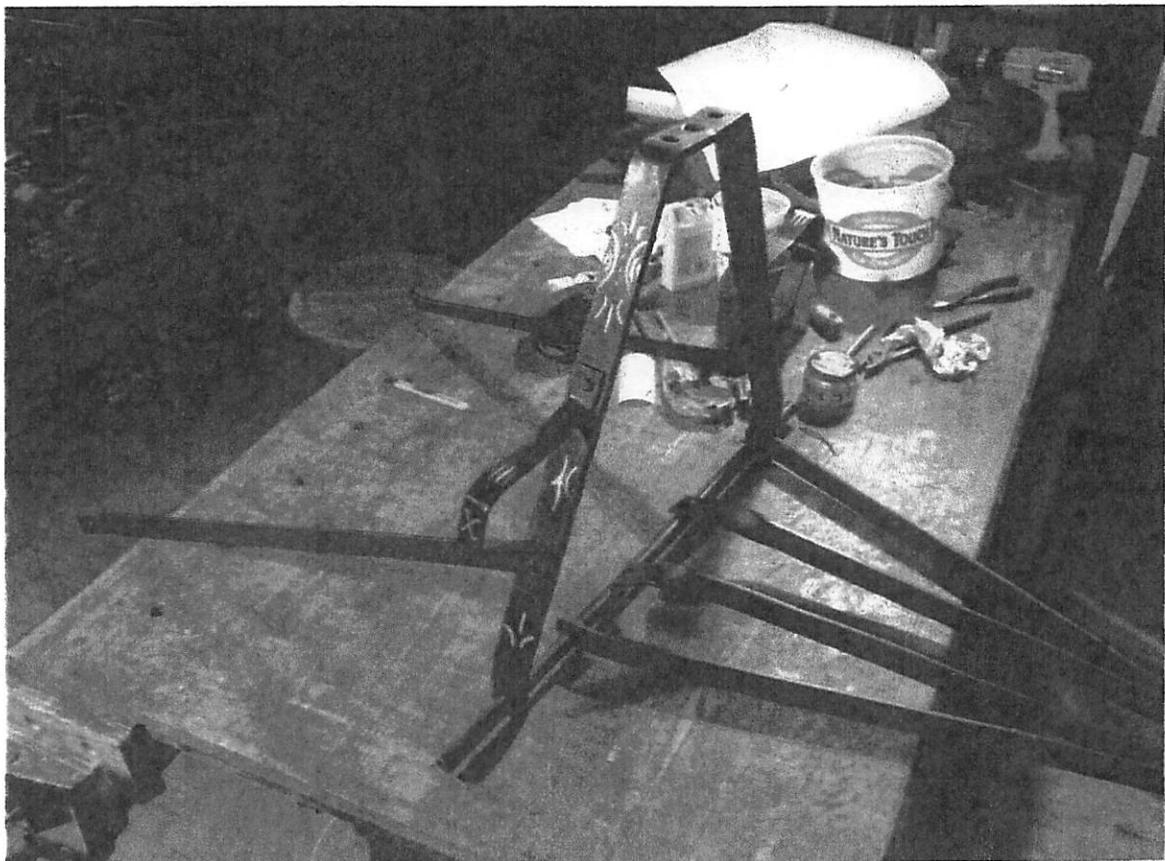


**Modern Woodman of America Lodge Goat  
before treatment, June 2007.**



Above: Goat body work in progress; voids in wood aaround mouth and horns consolidated with epoxy.

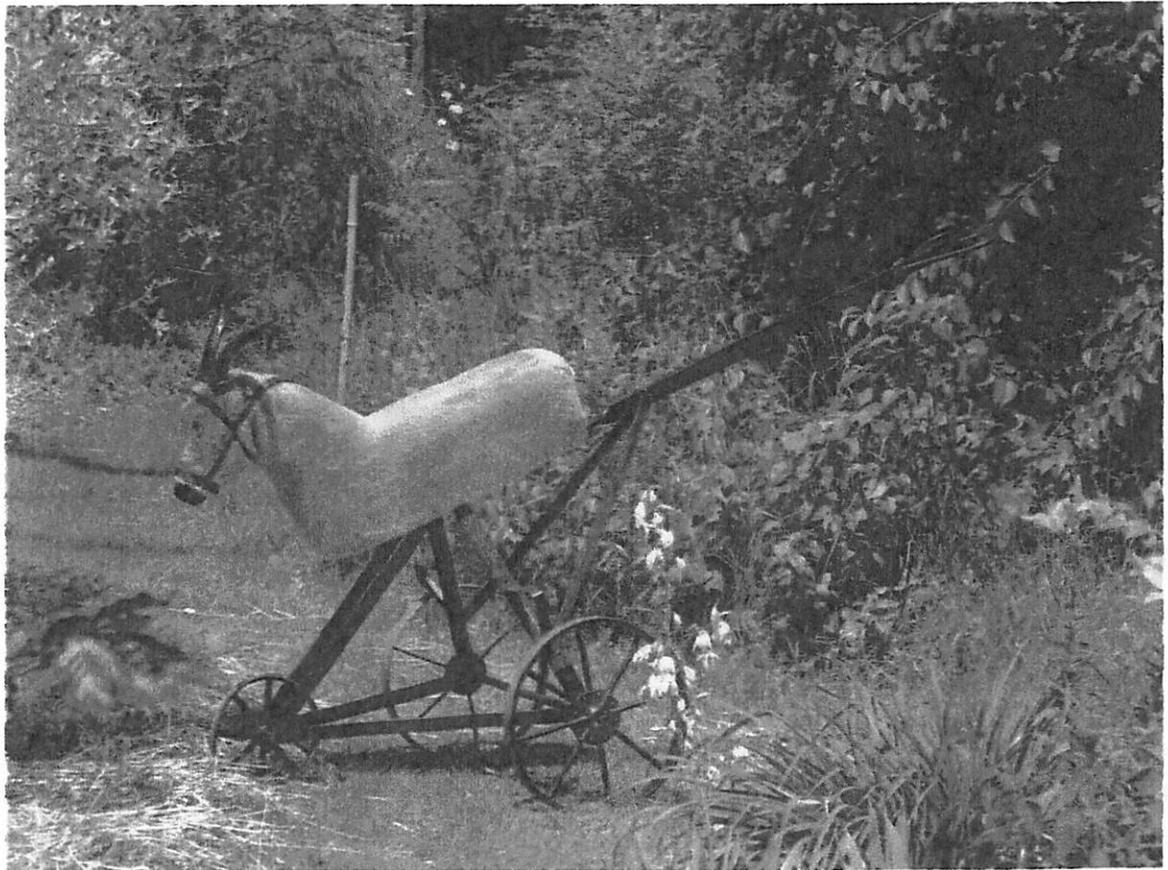
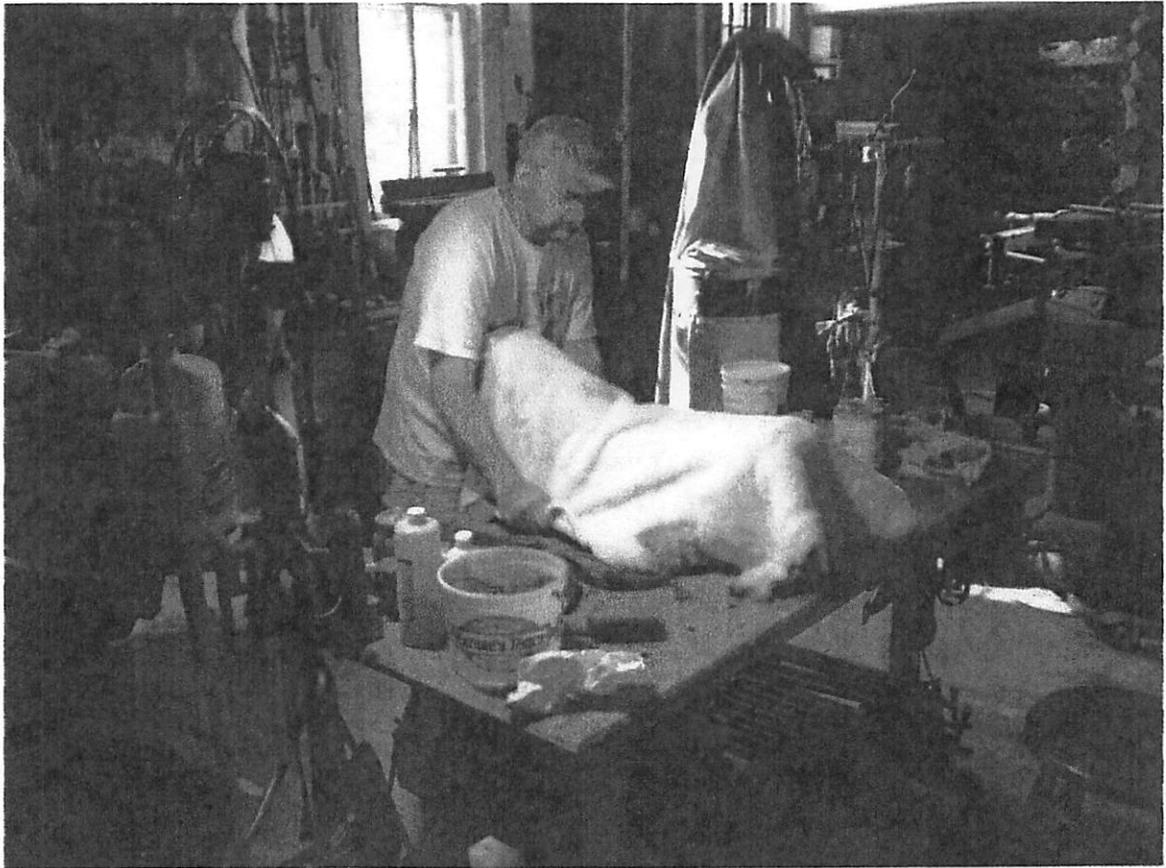
Below: Wheel being treated with corrosion converter.



Work on metal elements

Above: red paint applied to front wheel.

Below: pinstripping restored to carriage.



Above: Fitting sheepskin to goat body.

Below: Goat restoration completed. (Wheel rims still have protective tape.)