

I'm the only one of its kind. The world's first working rotary thresher. What's a thresher? Today I'd be called a combine. I was built in the 1930's by a local inventor who was a genius when it came to machining. His purpose was to make life easier for farmers. This is my story!

My rusted body was almost lost in the overgrowth, when an antique collector, Jim Oleksuk, found me on his uncle's farm near Lac Du Bonnet. He spotted my worn-out body, surrounded by horse plows and hay mowers, as he searched for unique machinery. The writing on my side caught his eye: 'Winnipeg, Canada. J.B Hathaway'. Oleksuk researched the name 'Hathaway' and learned I was the only remaining Hathaway Turbine Threshing machine. Designed and built in the 1920's in a blacksmith shop near Deloraine. By entrepreneur, Bruce Hathaway.

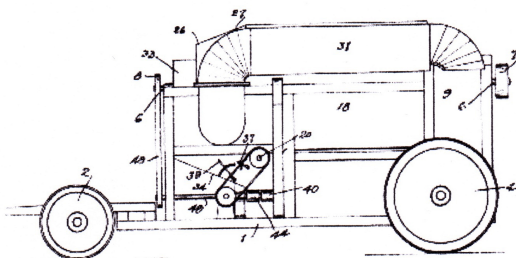


Fig 1

*A sketch from the patent application.*

As Bruce was building me, I learned from his conversations that he as a 10 year old and his family arrived in Southwest Manitoba in 1886. As a young man he partnered with his brother to build machinery in their farm-based blacksmith shop, northeast of Deloraine. I can attest to Bruce being both inventive, and, cantankerous. Folks talked of him walking to the beat of a different drum. Some would say 'eccentric'. But, he was a genius! In addition to his inventions, he was a musician with published compositions. He patented his first thresher in the 1920's - and that was the world's FIRST rotary thresher, but apparently, he and it were too far ahead of their time to catch on. He dumped this first rotary in a lake on Turtle Mountain. Why? He knew he had a winning invention but when he

tried to sell it to a manufacturer for a million dollars, he was offered ½ that. So, I suppose a half million was, indeed, an insult. Hathaway built another version in the late 1920's and set out for Winnipeg to secure investors. When that failed, he dumped THAT threshing machine in the Assiniboine River. Yup! That young man had a temper!

Thankfully, though, Bruce didn't give up. He built ME a few years later. I eventually lived and worked on a farm in Saskatchewan. Like many others, my owners lost their farm in the Great Depression. They picked up and moved everything, including me, to Lac Du Bonnet, to try farming again. If you don't first succeed, try again, I guess.

Eventually, I was parked in the weeds. Where I waited for many years, fearing I too would be thrown in the water! But the story improved! Mr. Oleksuk, the antique collector, contacted Neil Hathaway, the great nephew of Bruce. Neil came to see me. It was a sweet reunion, meeting a relative of the genius inventor! Inventor of Me, the prototype of axial-rotary threshers that are used in combines today!

I now reside at the Flywheel Club's Museum, outside of Killarney, near where inventor Bruce Hathaway sketched and hammered me into life.

*'The Hathaway Thresher' is based on a story in Vantage Points 4.*

*Vantage Points Flashbacks were written by David Neufeld with help from Betty Sawatzky. They were originally aired on CJRB Radio out of Boissevain, Manitoba in the early 2020s.*