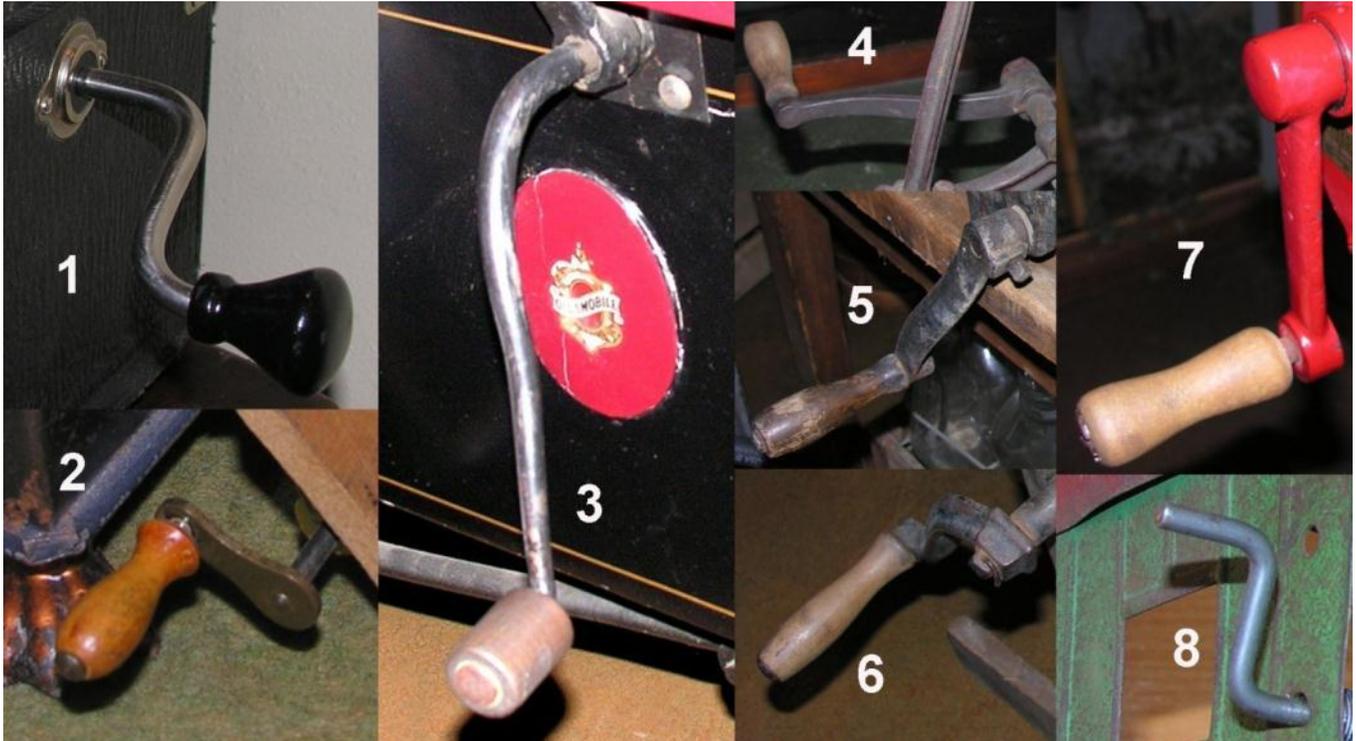


Feeling Cranky? Maybe it's the Weather, or Maybe Not . . .

I had a few days last week when I realized that “everything that could go wrong, would go wrong”, including the weather. When my boss called and asked “How's it going?”, I remained just sane enough to realize that I was cranky, and tempered my response. Well, the weather warmed up, we saw the sun for a few minutes, and I only had to shovel the driveway once, so my mood improved. But I was already wondering if maybe I was simply hanging around with too many cranks, and it was rubbing off, when I reported for docent duty at the Historical Museum.

(Wow, do we have cranks!) Almost as soon as I unlocked the front door, it hit me . . . I was surrounded by cranks! It wasn't raining that day, but even on a sunny day, the cranks were everywhere! I decided to take a few pictures (there were too many to show them all), just to help justify why I'm often such a crank. See how many you recognize, then consider stopping at the museum to visit the others.

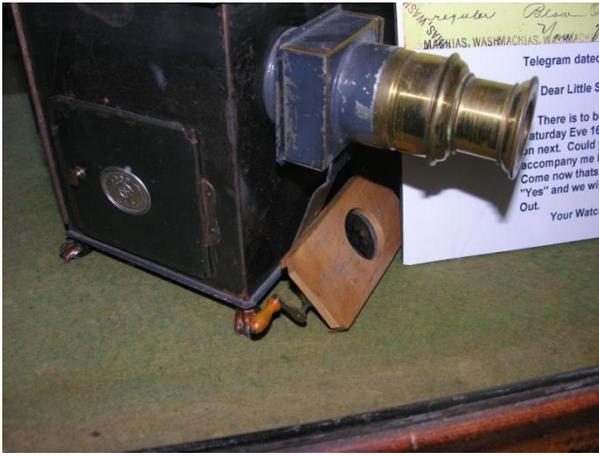
(No, the museum members aren't the cranks!) We have cranks meant to be used in the kitchen, in the parlor, in the garage, in the shop . . . cranks made for playing, cooking, working, entertaining, and transporting. Big cranks, tiny cranks, and cranks in-between. So, if you're tired of the winter weather, feel cooped up with nowhere to go, feel a little cranky for no good reason, consider coming by to see an army of other “cranks”, and shake off the “Winter Blues”!



Here are just eight of the dozens of cranks I found. Some of them are truly unique.



The first crank belongs to a morse code practice machine, which plays a punched paper tape to create the dots-and-dashes used by telegraphers. For those of you too young to be familiar with the term “telegraph”, think of it as “early texting” (one letter at a time).



The second crank is part of an early projector slide. Rather than being a simple "image", the slide is actually a kaleidoscope, which you crank to make a variety of colored patterns projected on the wall or screen. Amazing!



The third crank is the "starter" for the 1904 Oldsmobile on display in the museum. With a one-cylinder 8hp engine, tiller steering, and two-speed transmission, this is an exciting vehicle to drive . . . up to speeds of 22-25mph!



A hand-cranked food processor includes the fourth crank. The walking beam design drives a guillotine-style blade up and down with tremendous force, while the cutting board and surrounding metal bucket rotate. This device came in several sizes, none of which would be approved by OSHA today.



This centrifuge was used to process milk samples from different cows. It helped measure the percentage of cream in the milk, which determined the price the farmer would get. Notice the special bottles it held, with long thin necks, spun at very high speed by the fifth crank.



The sixth crank is part of a wooden butter churn, used to continually mix the “milk” until it thickened into butter.



The seventh crank is one of the favorites among children (and some older “children”), since it cranks the mellow, but loud, Sterling siren. It’s just like the one that had to be cranked on the early Chevrolet fire truck owned by Granite Falls in the late ‘30s and early ‘40s.



The eighth crank operates the tin toy pile driver donated by Bob Miller, who said, “I’ve pounded hundreds of sticks into the ground with this toy, and it still works!”

The museum has many others, on toys, tools, vehicles, musical devices, and a few that walk and talk. With the rainy days upon us, don’t let the weather get you down . . . instead, come to the museum and get real enjoyment (and maybe even learn something) from some local cranks!