

The TOOL SHED

Number 13

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WILLIAM J. WARD: A NEW JERSEY PLANEMAKER

Through the good office of Ray Townsend we have received from John Y. Dater a clipping of an article which ran in the Ramsey, New Jersey, Journal published by Mr. Dater. Printed in 1964 as part of a special Tercentenary salute to Ramsey, the article provides much background on planemaker William J. Ward, who is known to most of us only through his inclusion in Ken Roberts' Planemakers.... We quote part of Mr. Dater's article:

"A ride through the Saddle River valley today would not indicate to the average individual that in times past it was the scene of a number of thriving industries. One of these was the William Ward Edge Tool Factory and Saw Mill, which used to derive its power from the Saddle River at a site 1,600 yards south of the point where Lake St. crosses East Saddle River Rd. The mill was between the east road and the river.

All of the old carpenters used to buy their planes and moulding cutters from this factory, which had a high reputation for excellence. The tools were also sold in New York.

William J. Ward was one of the old time craftsmen, one of a kind that has now all but disappeared. Born in Sheffield, England, in 1821, he came to this country in 1846 and settled in New York. He had learned the tool making trade in the homeland, so it was only natural that he pursue the same business here. Hence we find him making tools and hardware on the site of the present Port Authority Terminal at 41st St.

A contemporary English friend was Disston, the well known saw maker. Ward was the son of an English Methodist minister, and when Disston came to visit the children were sent from the room because of 'extravagant' language of his friend Disston--at least that is the story.

In 1868 William Ward located in Saddle River. He purchased the old Van Ryper sawmill, located as above noted, along with five houses in the valley lying between the east and west roads. In one of these he lived, the others were occupied by English workers in the factory.

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NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 13, AT FIELD HOMESTEAD

The next meeting of CRAFTS of New Jersey will be held on Sunday, April 13, from 2:00 to 5:00 p. m., at the Field Homestead, 260 River Road (Rte. 18) in Piscataway.

The program for the April meeting will feature a talk and demonstration of "Woodworking Joints" by Chuck Granick. Harry O'Neill will bring the members up to date on plans for the May 17th auction.

The latter portion of the program will be devoted to "Whatsit?" identification, and the meeting will conclude with the "Swap & Sell."

The final meeting of the 1979-80 year will be held on June 8. At this meeting CRAFTS will hold its annual election of officers.



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Membership in CRAFTS is open to anyone interested in early trades and industries, and the identification, study, and preservation of tools and implements used and made in New Jersey. Annual dues are five dollars for the membership year of July 1 to June 30. Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer: C. Carroll Palmer, 725 Pemberton Ave., Plainfield, N.J. 07060.

The Tool Shed

Published five times per year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Editors: Larry Fuhro, 417 Bartlett St., Roselle, N.J. 07203; Robert Fridlington, 8 Keith Jeffries Ave., Cranford, N.J. 07016. Contributions, especially about New Jersey tools and trades, are welcomed.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

CRAFTS first "Show & Tell" program, held at the February 10th meeting, was a rousing success. Sixty eight members (including five new ones) were present, most of them clutching a favorite tool.

As tool collectors are modest and humble beings by nature, there was no boasting. But try as they might, the participants could not extinguish that little gleam of triumph in their eyes when called upon to talk about their treasures.

There were some truly outstanding items displayed, such as Erna Stenzler's Pilkington brace and Bob Cameron's tinsmith trade sign. But in this kind of program, each one is a winner.

Old friends and new ones were delighted to welcome Raymond R. Townsend to the February meeting. Ray, a long-time editor of the EIAA Chronicle, was one of the original members of CRAFTS, even though he lives in Williamsburg, Va. He has been one of the organization's most enthusiastic supporters and the most frequent contributor to the pages of the Tool Shed. We hope that he can get back to New Jersey soon. ■

Cont.'d from pg. 1~

Mr. Ward continued to turn out his fine planes with Sheffield steel blades until his death in 1891. ■

(The above article is reprinted from "Plane Talk, The Bulletin of the British-American Rhykenological Society," Vol. III, Spring 1978. The original title was "An Unnoted New Jersey Planemaker"; but now, thanks to BARS, Mr. Ward is no longer unnoted.) ■

NOT SO LONG AGO

In 1970 CRAFTSman Alexander Farnham published the first edition of his Tool Collectors Handbook, listing prices paid at auction for early tools. This delightful little book, which was a big factor in spreading the tool-collecting contagion, is now itself a collector's item.

A review of some of the prices that Alex listed for the years 1967-1970 might be of interest to some newer collectors and will undoubtedly stir fond memories among those who were around in "the good old days," only thirteen years ago.

Among the kitchen and household implements are: a large brass kettle, \$30; brass pails, \$12.50-\$15; 12-hole candle molds, \$17.50-\$25; rush lights, \$22-\$45; and a wrought-iron, swivel toaster, \$32.50.

The woodworking tools include: broad axes, \$4-\$37; twibils (minus handles), \$70-\$125; a pump drill, \$37.50; chamfer knives, \$10-\$12.50; goosewing axes, \$65-\$240; and froes, \$4-\$12.

For the plane buffs there are: sun planes, \$11-32; moulding planes, \$3-\$5 (the latter price was for "wide" ones); a crown moulding plane, \$27.50; plow planes, \$9-\$10 (although one with 8 irons went for \$21); and a five-foot jointer, \$31.

In among the farrier's tools and the blacksmith's tools are: travelers, \$4-\$15; a Russell's foot leveler, \$4; anvils, \$3.50-\$27.50, a leg vise, \$3; and swage blocks, \$16-\$38.

And remember, back in the late 1960's we could afford the gas to drive to auctions! ■

MACHINES IN A
WOODWORKING SHOP
by Frederick A. Shippey

Today one would have to visit a museum to see the woodworking machinery described here. The equipment was adequate but old-fashioned even in the 1920's when, as a lad of sixteen, I began a four-year apprenticeship. Possibly a description of this sash and door shop in upstate New York can be interesting reading. Employment began in the summer of 1925, at wages of twenty two cents an hour, yielding \$9.95 per week. As a day laborer, my brother received fifty cents an hour.

This large shop catered to custom woodworking: especially windows, doors, casements, moldings, mantels, cabinets, volutes, housed stair stringers, veneering work, and so on. If a new house required interior trim of wood other than pine or fir, our shop got the order. Builders specified whether they wanted chestnut, oak, gum, cypress, or mahogany. Chestnut and mahogany were popular choices in the 1920's.

To fill these orders, it was necessary to have many special woodworking machines. Skilled workmen on appropriate machines transformed lumber into finished products. The source of power was two large electric motors which ran eight hours a day. Each motor was connected via belt to a long shaft mounted on overhead beams. Individual machines ran from countershafts. It was the apprentice's task to oil the machines and the shaft bearings at regular time intervals. Moreover, he had to learn how to repair broken belts and to babbitt worn-out bearings.

A shopwide blower system with its spaghetti bowl of tin pipes sucked the shavings away from the machines, depositing the waste into a huge overhead

storage bin. Without this arrangement, a large -molder operator would be up to his knees in shavings within a few hours. Moreover, sawdust, scrap wood and other waste were swept up daily and burned in an old steam boiler.

The accompanying floor plan shows the locations of 23 machines (I have operated all but one!). Since our specialization was predominantly windows and doors, the millwork required the use of at least 14 machines. They were clustered together in the rear section of the shop. However, certain machines--planer, jointer, resaw, the molders, rip and swing saws--required space sufficient to handle long stock (16 feet), hence the evident spacing differential. Here follows an inventory of machines numbered to match locations on the floor plan.

1-A circular rip saw: 10-inch blade; heavy duty; power feed; used for ripping stock to size for the molders.

2-A circular swing saw: suspended overhead; 10-inch blade; 24-foot bench; used for squaring stock ends & cutting lengths for molding machines.

3-A molding machine (sticker): medium size; 4 square heads; power feed; used to run smaller moldings, parting strip, etc.

4-A molding machine (sticker): large size; 4 square heads; power feed; used to run larger moldings, tongue and groove planks, etc.

5-A band resaw: swage set; power feed; capacity 24-inch width; used to cut veneer stock and for heavy-duty timber resaw work.

6-A multiple drum sander: 36-inch width; power feed; 3 sanding drums; used to sand doors, casings, etc.

7-A tool grinder: heavy duty; two

8-inch wheels; used to grind machine knives and edge hand tools.

8-A wood lathe: 12-inch swing; 48-inch bed; power feed cutter; used to turn balusters, wood chandelier parts, spools for sandpaper rolls, etc.

9-A jointer: 18 inch; round head; adjustable; used to straighten edges, make rabbets, chamfer stock, taper and smooth lumber.

10-A circular combination saw: 10 inch; various blades; arbor raises and lowers; used to rip, cutoff, mitre, dado, and rabbet materials.

11-A circular swing saw: suspended overhead; 10-inch fine saws; 20 foot bench; used to cutoff square and to length, wobble saw for dado work.

12-A planer: 24-inch width; thickness capacity 6 inch; square head; power feed; used to dress lumber to uniform thickness.

13-A single-end tenoner: rotary cutters; cope heads; 1 1/4, 1 1/2, and 2 inch stock; used to make tenons and cope rails for sash, doors and cribs.

14-A hollow chisel mortiser: adjustable table; several sizes; foot lever; used to mortise sash stiles and rails.

15-A chain mortiser: adjustable table; several sizes; foot lever; used to cut rectangular mortises in sash, door and crib stiles.

16-A small molding machine (sticker): 2 square heads; power feed; various cutters; used to cut sash shapes, door ogees and other molded edges.

17-A box or finger joint maker: for sash; wobble circular saw; foot lever; used to cut bridle joints on check rail and sash stile inside ends.

18-A check rail dresser: square head; hand feed; adjustable; used to true up check rails on upper and lower sash after assembly.

19-A plow & boring machine: adjustable; hand & foot feed; used to cut a stop groove & bore hole for sash cord knot, on edges of double hung sash.

20-An arm sander: inverted disc; frame bench; raising & lowering device; used to sand sash and doors.

21-A squeeze machine: manual adjustments; foot lever; used to assemble sash or doors, clamp joints tightly for squaring and pinning.

22-A band saw: narrow blades; 30 inch throat; tilt table; adjustable; used to cut curved work for stairs, eyebrow windows, wood chandeliers, etc.

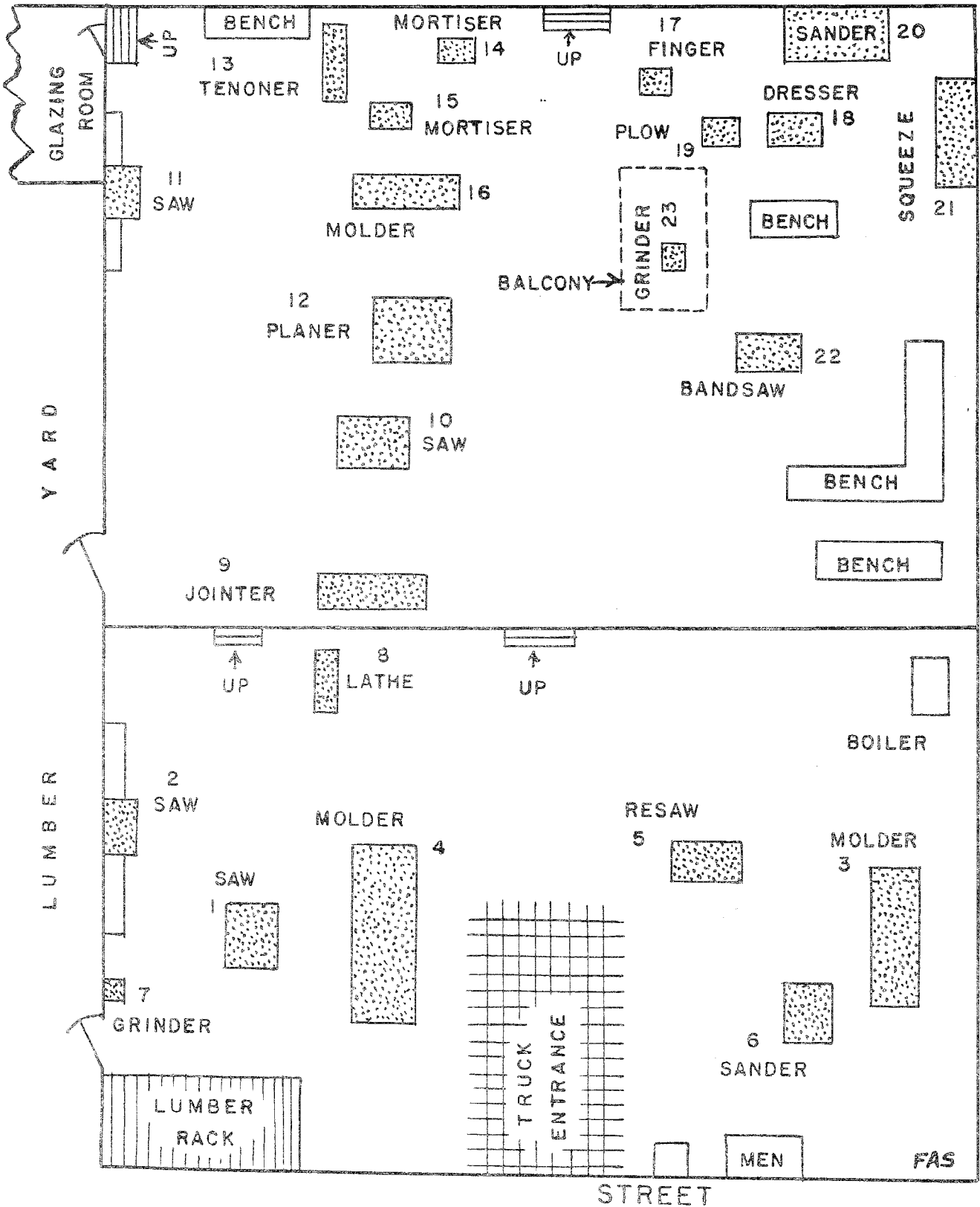
23-A saw sharpener: wide band type; electric motor; used to gum band saws, grind out gullets and prepare for swage setting of teeth.

Finally, this shop did not have a shaper because the senior owner feared that too many workmen would get seriously injured using the machine!

It was a union shop. Employees belonged to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. Apprentices paid the same monthly dues (\$1.50) as craftsmen. Moreover, all men were exposed to the hazards of employment. The shop was hot in the summer and bitter cold in the winter. Indeed, a few workmen risked wearing gloves around the machines in winter. The outcome was a loss of fingers. One man lost a thumb while working on a rip saw. Later, another worker was killed by a splintered block of wood that kicked back from the saw, hitting him in the stomach. Both of my hands bear scars from accidents while working on the jointer and sash molder. Truly, the machines of the 1920's were dangerous.

All custom orders required some machine work. But about three-fourths of the orders required some bench work also. At least four men worked at the bench most of the time. Unfortunately, there was only one tool chest in the shop. It belonged to the highly skilled, master cabinet maker and contained all of the tools needed for fine cabinet work--planes,

ALLEY



scrapers, bits, gouges, back saws, layout tools, etc. These hand tools were always sharp and clean. However, the cabinet maker loaned his tools to no one (except me, after I had learned to sharpen them). The other bench men owned but a few of the most commonly used hand tools--hammer, saw, plane, chisel, nail set, etc. The employer provided very little: an ancient mitre cutter for small moldings, a few bar clamps and hand screws, plus the essential tools for sharpening and swage setting wide resaw blades.

In conclusion, I must speak of this woodworking shop as a place of daily miracles. First, it was a miracle that so few men got hurt on the machines during my apprenticeship. The safeguards were rarely used. Second, I learned to do accurate mill-work on machines which had unreliable

fences, gauges, jigs, and improvised repairs and attachments. No machine possessed micrometric adjustments; each operation had to be measured out manually. Third, the cabinet maker taught me to cover the rough, uneven surfaces of benches in order to avoid damaging fine joinery in the process of assembly. He urged that negative work conditions never excuse poor craftsmanship with hand tools.

Fourth, the shop was a melting pot of people: Irish, French, Swedish, Italian and English. There was a lot of "kidding" but no ethnic hatred. But if you did not chew tobacco, you were not one of the men. Fifth, the greatest compliment one could receive was to be called a "mechanic," respecting either machine operation or bench work. Fine craftsmanship was regarded always with solemn respect ■

THE WELL-POISED AXE

"In the conquest of the west the backwoods axe, shapely, well-poised, with long haft and light head, was a servant hardly standing second even to the rifle; the two were the national

weapons of the American backwoodsman, and in their use he has never been excelled."--Theodore Roosevelt, The Winning of the West (1889) ■

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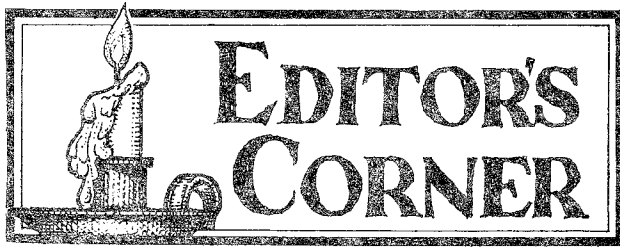
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ON THE WING

Want to create some excitement?
Just write an article on the goosewing
axe!

We had all but concluded that tool collectors were only interested in planes, when a debate developed among some CRAFTS members concerning the identifiable characteristics of American goosewings. The arguments were soon exhausted, but Herb Kean continued to pursue the matter.

The initial report (we hope there will be more) on Herb's research appeared in the September Tool Shed. Word spread quickly, and we began to receive requests for copies from non-members. But after a few weeks the demand seemed to be satisfied.

Then in the October, 1979, issue of the EALA Shavings John Keabian included a note about Herb's article, and the requests started all over again. In response to the Shavings note alone we received between 30 and 40 letters (our record keeping leaves something to be desired).

Interestingly, only a couple of these letters came from Pennsylvania, which may or may not indicate that Pennsylvanians know an American goosewing when they see one. The other letters came from across the country--Calif., Missouri, Ohio, N.Y., New Hampshire, Vermont.

Even before this mail began to arrive, however, another debate was started. Just after our members received the September Tool Shed, many of them also received Iron Horse Antiques Catalog No. 19. There, on page 40 of the catalog,

four goosewings are pictured--two right-handed and two left-handed. The problem is that what Herb describes as a right-handed axe Iron Horse calls a left-handed axe. At last report, the right-hand vs. left-hand debate is still going on.

In any event, all of this set us to thinking. And we decided that there is a whole lot that we do not know about goosewings. For example, where did the name originate? It seems improbable that it is of German or Pennsylvania Dutch origin. The Germans seem to have a number of names for this style of axe--das Plattbeil, das Breitbeil, das Lenkbeil, etc.--but none of them are related to "goosewing." The earliest use of the term that our superficial research turned up was in Mercer (1929), who calls the axe "the remarkable so-called goose wing." Perhaps Henry christened it himself.

Another question crossed our mind: how common were goosewings in areas with a large German population outside of Pennsylvania, such as Ohio, Texas, Missouri or Wisconsin? And although the goosewing form certainly retained its popularity in the Pennsylvania Dutch region, was it really introduced, as Mercer contends, by the Germans? As Herb Kean points out in his article, the only signed New Jersey goosewing that we know about was made by Luke Miller (ca. 1780) of Madison--and Miller was of English descent. The Miller axe, by the way, is in the Museum of Early Trades and Crafts in Madison.

Last of all, we suspect that at least some of the "early" goosewings are really not so early. If memory serves, J. B. Stohler and H. H. Stricker were both making axes (and presumably their goosewing axes) well into the twentieth century.

Perhaps our Pennsylvania friends can shed a little light on some of these questions.

HOW ARE YOU COVERED?

by Herb Kean

What is the second most valuable thing you own? You might be surprised to find that it is your tool collection. Yes, more valuable than your car, or your wife's diamond ring, or even your furniture.

But is the collection properly insured? Most people don't know, and the rest freely admit that some coverage is lacking. Tools will burn as easily as furniture or oil paintings, but they are usually treated as country cousins when it comes to insurance coverage. I think this is because collectors feel the cost and effort would be prohibitive. Not so!

Antique tools are not specifically limited under the personal-property section of your homeowners policy. Therefore, within the general limits of that section (one-half the value of your house) you are covered. Even if your collection (in total with your other personal property) exceeds the general limit, you can increase the limit for about \$2 annual premium per thousand dollars of collection. This is paid only against the excess.

A slightly more expensive but far better coverage is a separate Fine Arts Floater. This runs about \$1.30 per thousand for the entire collection (premiums vary by company). Its advantages are:

1. There is no deductible.
2. "All risk" is offered, rather than the specific "named perils" of the usual homeowners policy.
3. Your entire collection, or any part of it, is covered off your premises--at tool meetings, displays, etc.
4. And last but not most important, you can have each tool insured for a predetermined "stated amount" rather than the vague "actual cash value" of most homeowners.

To have coverage is one thing, to properly collect is another. One simple way that precludes any problem is to prove in advance that you have the tool

and that its stated value is correct. This requires an inventory (a few composite photos are a big help). Copies of your inventory sheets are sent to the insurance company and updated whenever you like.

You can have them approved by an appraiser of your choice (any recognized tool dealer will do), or you can offer your collection "open to audit." I elect the latter and have recent catalogs available to cross-check prices. However, the likelihood is that you will never see an auditor. Many insurance companies consider antique collectors good "moral risks" and will accept their inventories without audit.

So for a day or two of effort, if you don't already have an inventory, you can rest easy about insuring your collection. True, insurance cannot guarantee against the loss of your treasures, but at least it gives you the option of replacing them properly ■

AUCTION

Auction-impresario Harry O'Neill has announced that CRAFTS second annual auction will be held on Saturday, May 17, 1980, at the L. H. Taylor Hose Company, in High Bridge, N. J. Herb Kean, of Morristown, will be the auctioneer.

The sale will offer about 400 lots of antique and primitive tools, including a large number of outstanding items. Among the tools committed thus far are a pit saw and a Marples "Ultimatum" brass-framed brace. There is a possibility that there will also be a Stanley No. 1. Harry O'Neill will give a full report on the auction at the next meeting.

Anyone who would like to include some of their tools in this auction can bring them to the April meeting, or get in touch with Harry at (201) 638-6981.

And the auction committee is still looking for some volunteer workers for auction day. So if you are willing to spend a few hours in a worthy cause, please let Harry O'Neill or Herb Kean know. They need the help ■