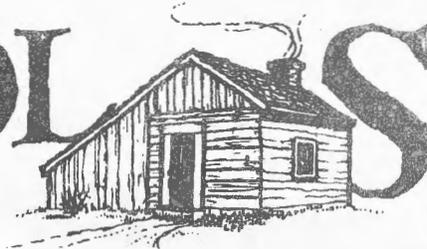


# The TOOL SHED

Number 13



September, 1980

VISIT Morris Park  
Pg 2

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

## CRAFTS OF NEW JERSEY HOLDS AN AUCTION

by Alexander Farnham

CRAFTS' May 17th tool auction was well attended, and nearly all of the audience participated in the bidding. The tools sold were of a higher quality than can be found at many of today's numerous tool auctions.

There was a great deal of brass, ebony, rosewood, mahogany, and lignum vitae in evidence. These materials were incorporated for the most part in those tools of British manufacture, which as a group brought by far the highest prices.

In fact, the highest price paid was \$450 for a Marples Ultimatum brace in ebony and brass. Some other British tools sold were an 8" level signed Buck, \$37.50; a 9" level signed Glasgow, \$40; a brass and rosewood square by Sorby, \$60; and three identical mortise gauges of ebony and brass, two at \$50 each and one at \$55. A small amount of brass seemed cause enough to double or triple the bids.

As has been the case at most tool auctions in recent years, there were a great many tools with names such as Stanley, Winchester, Keen Kutter, Sargent, and Miller Falls. Twenty years ago these would have been frowned on as collectibles; however, today they often bring higher prices than the real antiques. Two of the high-priced Stanley tools sold were an aluminum jack plane #A5, which brought \$70, and a #55 with four boxes of blades, \$175.

But there were also many of those rugged early American tools which built this nation. Such tools convey a strength which the others with all their beauty and finish lack. The first of these to come up was an 11" froe, which sold for \$22.50.

Slightly less than one-hundred lots later, a smaller froe along with a froe mallet brought \$35. A spoon-shaped bark spud brought \$22.50; a very small and crude bowl adze, \$27.50; a double-bitted

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### SEPTEMBER 21st PICNIC TO OPEN 1980-1981 YEAR

CRAFTS of New Jersey will open its 1980-1981 year on Sunday, September 21, with a picnic meeting at Alex and Barbara Farnham's home in Stockton.

Note: In case of inclement weather the meeting will be canceled. If you have any doubt about whether or not the meeting will be held, you should call either Steve Zlucky, (201)534-2710, or Bill Gustafson, (201)464-5771, after 9:00 am on the twenty-first. If the picnic is canceled, the next meeting will be held in November.

Note: The meeting will begin with the "Swap & Sell" at 11:00 am.

Bill Gustafson, who is presiding over this affair, has asked members and their wives to bring along a favorite collection to display. And he also wants volunteers to demonstrate crafts.

Bill's only other request is that you bring your own chair.

To get to the Farnham farm take:  
I-78 to the Clinton-Pittstown exit.  
Rte. 513 to Frenchtown.

Rte. 29 (South) for five miles to  
Timber Falls Road and turn left (look for sign).

Farnham's is the second driveway on the left.



Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society  
of New Jersey

PRESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_ Stephen Zluky, Whitehouse  
VICE PRESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_ Harry J. O'Neill, Annandale  
SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_ Robert Fridlington, Cranford  
TREASURER \_\_\_\_\_ C. Carroll Palmer, Plainfield

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.

On another subject altogether, we took a weekend tour of the Shupps Grove-Renningers neighborhood in Pennsylvania a couple of weeks ago. As usual, it was worth the trip just to drop in at A. M. Beitler's at the Black Angus. What a dazzling selection of tools!

We also stopped by Harry Ludwig's shop just south of Renningers on Rte. 272 next to the Howard Johnson's motel. Harry, who also has an outstanding stock of fine tools, now announces his CRAFTS membership on his shop sign.

Last of all, we should mention that Herb Kean's article on the spurious Stanley #1 (page 4 of this issue) has created a stir even before publication. John Kebabian announced in the August issue of the EAIA "Shavings" that we would be running this piece, and the response was immediate. Requests for copies are already coming in, weeks before we go to press.

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SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE: II  
by Larry Campanell

Inspired by Herb Kean's list of expressions (and translations) used in the buying and selling of antiques (Tool Shed, June, 1980), Larry Campanell has sent in some more of these familiar phrases. The numbering picks up where Herb's list stopped.

11- "It's in mint condition." Real meaning: I took all the rust off yesterday.

12- "This one is complete." Real meaning: It has something in all the holes.

13- "It's worth restoring." Real meaning: It ain't worth anything else.

14- "This is the only one known to exist." Real meaning: I asked three people and none of them had one.

15- "It's in fair condition." Real meaning: It's sure not in good condition!

16- "I have one just like it." Real meaning: Well not really, but it does the same thing.

17- "I don't think it's rare, but what will you take for it?" Real meaning:

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(fill this one in yourself)



Editor's  
Corner

Proof staff anybody? Ivins Smith, the miller at the Morris County Park Commission's Cooper Mill in Chester Township, wants desperately to obtain a proof staff. If any CRAFTSman happens to have one and is willing to part with it, he can get in touch with Ivins at the Cooper Mill, or he can let Bob Fridlington know at the September meeting. For those of you not initiated into the mysteries of the miller's art, a proof staff is a gadget that is used in dressing millstones.

If there are any of you who have not visited Cooper Mill, we recommend it. The beautifully restored 1826 mill is presently milling both corn and wheat. Smith had hoped to begin producing buckwheat flour this year, but his buckwheat crop failed him. Maybe next year.

# GUN BROWNING AS A TREATMENT FOR OLD TOOLS

by Lew Cooper

Although I have as thoroughly a monastic devotion to patina as any other member of CRAFTS, I am sometimes faced with a situation which calls for chemical treatment.

For example, I currently have a shipwright's adze which some rural bumpkin used to mix up a batch of concrete. It's been on there a long time, and all efforts to remove it have so far been unavailing. It's only on the front face of the blade, so perhaps our bumpkin wiped off the rest, overlooking the front. Anyway, when I finally do get the cement off, it is likely that not much of the patina will be left.

Under such circumstances, one can return about a hundred years of corrosion in twenty-four hours by using a gun browning solution. The one I've used for years has the following formula:

Soft or Distilled Water, 1 quart.

Blue Vitriol, 2 oz.

Corrosive Sublimate, 1 oz.

Dissolve the above, then add Spirit of Nitre, 1 oz., best kept in a dark-colored bottle.

To further identify the ingredients: blue vitriol is copper sulfate,  $\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5 \text{H}_2\text{O}$ . Corrosive sublimate is dichloride of mercury,  $\text{HgCl}_2$ , which is very poisonous. Spirit of nitre or "sweet" spirit of nitre is ethyl nitrite in alcohol. It is an old-time medication which may still be available from your local drugstore. It rapidly deteriorates when exposed to light and air, hence the advice to keep the mixture in a dark bottle. Failing that, put the bottle in a can or box or cupboard to keep out the light.

For restoring gun parts to "mint condition," the directions usually start off: "clean the iron of all scale and rust to the metal itself, either by acid or polishing, depending on the piece." For maximum retention of patina on old tools, I think we in CRAFTS can usually skip this step, but wire brushing will be useful, to remove loose particles. The next step

is very important: eliminate all oil, grease or wax by immersion in gasoline or some other petroleum distillate, such as benzine or lacquer thinner. This is especially important if paint remover has been used previously, because many of the latter formulations contain wax.

Immediately after degreasing, immerse the object to be treated in the solution described above, or apply the solution with a brush you don't value very much (shortly thereafter, the brush will probably self-destruct). For small objects, a Q-tip works well. Then place the object in a warm, dark place for twenty-four hours. Hanging it over a warm furnace or radiator is ideal. But don't put it in the kitchen stove because  $\text{HgCl}_2$  is poisonous and could condense on the inside of the stove and later find its way into food. I've even gotten good results in certain cases by warming the object with a propane torch (good ventilation is suggested). Wash off any residue and wire brush or polish to desired finish. A little boiled linseed oil or Watco finish will retard further corrosive action.

As usual in these matters, a search of my library shelves turned up a learned tome on the subject: Firearm Blueing and Browning by R. H. Angier, "Engineer-Graduate, Liege University and Arms Technician," published by the Stackpole Company, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, copyright 1936.

Monsieur Angier runs on at great length, or perhaps he was just being thorough. Anyway, he devotes 74 pages to gun browning formulations, including some I can't believe. So I hesitate to attempt an extract. For those who wish to pursue the matter further, I believe the book is still in print (my copy cost \$6.95 in 1975). In any event, I believe that the formula given above is the best, or one of the best, for our purposes.

One point this author makes which might be worth passing on is that spirit

(continued on page 7)

# THE STANLEY #1 FAKE

by Herb Kean

If you look at a fake Stanley #1 next to an authentic one, it is hard to believe that anyone would not detect the fake. But by itself on an auction block, or under the excitement of a bargain, it is possible that the fake could pass, which is exactly what the perpetrator depended on.

The defects, errors and sloppy workmanship involved were allowed only to the extent that they did not severely detract from the overall impression. To this degree the duplicator kept smoothing down the roughly cast parts until they were passable. The fact that they were made considerably undersized by doing this did not bother him. Who would think of measuring? Who would be carrying Sellens' book at that precise moment anyway?

So today there are a goodly number of these fakes floating around, and more will possibly show up as owners realize what they have purchased. Listed below are the incongruities that I picked up from one plane graciously loaned to me by Lee Murray, who has been instrumental in circulating warnings about the spurious #1's.

Body- Overall length to rear of handle extension is only 5 1/2" (approximately 1/4" short). Also, the handle extension is flat with the sole instead of being upraised approximately 1/32".

Knob & Handle Studs- Wrong pitch.

Knob- Too small; and made of two pieces.

Handle- Too short.

Knob & Handle Nuts- Poorly machined, with hacksawed slots; wrong pitch. Handle nut too short (prevents tightening).

Lever Cap- Too small all around, and porous. Rivet is brass instead of steel. Lever slot is far too deep.

Cap Iron- Tang hole filed instead of punched. Tension radius is too small and is non-functional.

Connecting Screw- Raggedly ma-

chined and doesn't fit through mating hole.

Plane Iron- Stamping out-of-square and letters are not all correct size.

Frog- Outline very rough and sanded fully on sides.

Frog Screws- Standard round-head instead of Stanley round-head.

Frog Washers- Missing.

Lever Cap Screw- Standard round-head instead of Stanley oval-head.

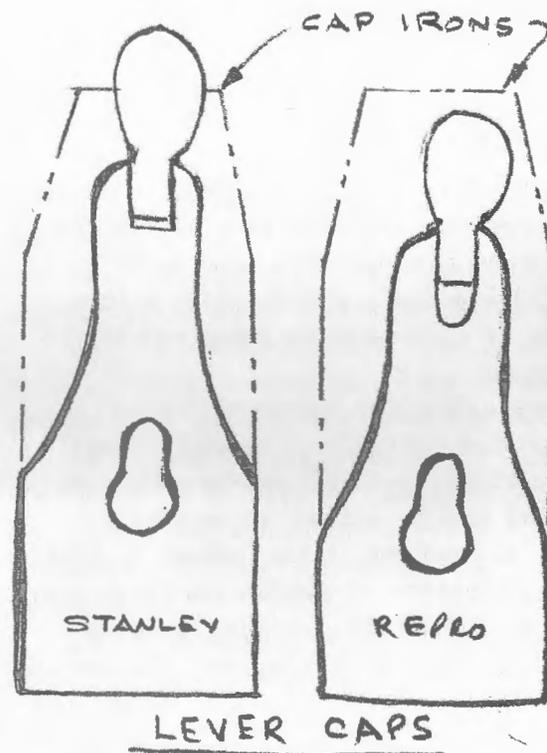
Adjustment Knob- Heavy porosity. No sign of finishing except with file.

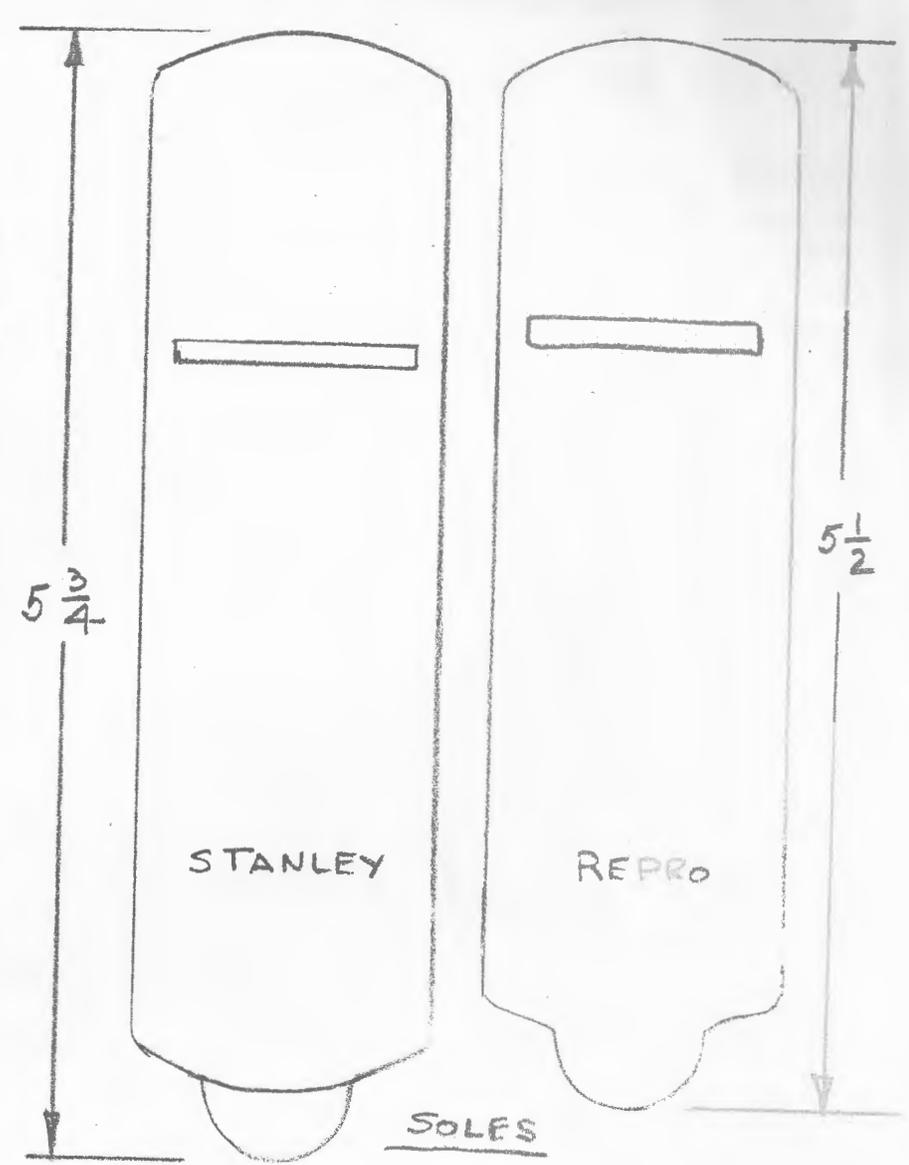
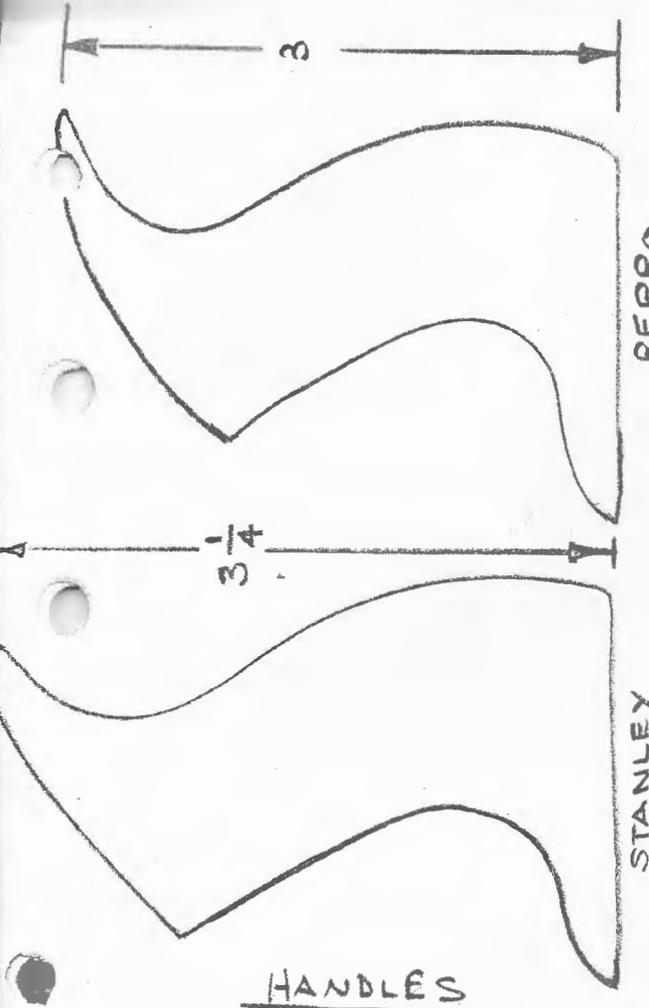
Adjustment Knob Stud- Diameter and pitch wrong.

Weight- 7/8 lb. instead of 1 1/8 lb.

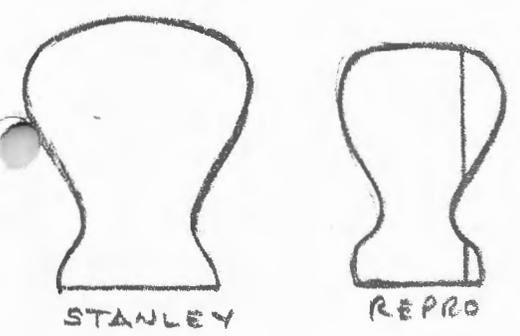
Based upon the markings, the reverse key slot in the plane iron, and the right-hand thread in the adjustment knob stud, my guess is that it was copied from a true #1 of the 1880 vintage. I feel that it was directly cast and smoothed undersize. The "just-get-by" attitude and the "for-profit" motivation rules out the making of patterns. Also, the direct casting (and its resultant shrinkage) would account for part of the undersize conditions.

Hopefully the information given above will help in preventing any further sales of these fakes.

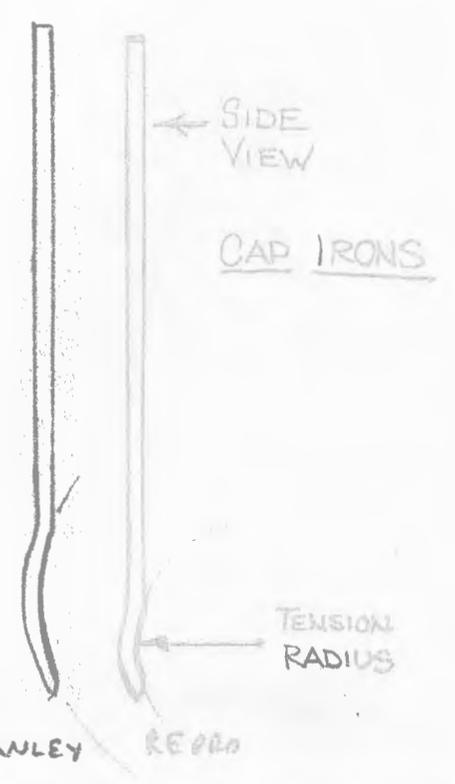




HOK 6/13/80



KNOBS



STANLEY RULE  
& LEVEL CO. INC.

STANLEY RULE  
& LEVEL Co.

↑  
REPRO

IRON MARKINGS

↑  
STANLEY

STANLEY

REPRO

(continued from page 1)

Pennsylvania mortising axe, \$65; a single-bitted mortising axe with a remarkably sharp edge, \$22.50; and another one which was signed, \$25. A log dog with a ram's-horn nut holding the hinged part sold for \$35, and an early reamer with a ram's-horn nut screwed to its shank to hold the handle went for \$22.50. A Conestoga wagon jack dated 1833 brought \$130. Signed broad axes went for \$32.50 to \$45; a coach axe for \$35; a bearded axe, \$80; and a small goose wing, \$195.

Among the cooper's tools auctioned off were two adzes at \$20 and \$25; saw-tooth crozes, \$20 to \$27.50; a V croze, \$37.50; a howell with a brass body, \$50; a sun plane, \$52.50; a buzz, \$20; a jigger, \$20; a flagging iron, \$20; a head setter, \$27.50; a 58" plane with stand, \$175; a 40" hoop driver, \$25; a left-handed chamfer knife, \$30; a draw knife, \$17.50; and a curved clamp, \$45.

Among the many saws sold was a 6 1/2' pit saw, complete with box and tiller. Going for \$275, it was the third most expensive item sold. Other saws were a frame saw, \$17.50; stair saw, \$17.50; 4' veneer saw, \$95; and a turning saw, \$40.

Two goose-neck mortising chisels went for \$55 and \$60. For some reason the prices paid for these chisels have been going down in recent months. Prices received for five corner chisels ranged from \$10 for one which had been shortened through consistent sharpening to \$30 for one in almost mint condition. Three 3" slicks each brought \$30; a 3 1/2" slick only \$22.50; and a 4" slick, \$37.50.

There were several bit braces besides the Marples Ultimatum previously mentioned. Two Sheffield braces sold for \$67.50 and \$70; two metal coach-maker's braces for \$16 and \$17; and two Spofford braces sold as a lot for \$16. The most appealing brace for many in the audience was an early primitive with a long wooden breast pad and an intricate bit-locking device. Never having seen another like it, I would not hazard a guess as to its origin, but it was quite

charming in its simplicity. I expect that there are more than a few who wish they had not let it go for the \$105 it brought.

The second highest price paid at the auction was \$425, for a large screw box with four various size taps. The high price was due to the rarity of that particular type of screw box. It deserved a place in a museum. For a private collector, however, a 1" tap and screw box sold earlier for \$70 would be more aesthetically pleasing.

Two interesting clamps sold were a hand-forged hewing clamp, looking like a piece of wired modern sculpture, which brought \$90 and a violin-profile clamp which went for \$40.

One of the more beautiful tools auctioned off was a large hand-made pair of adjustable calipers with the initials JPH cut out of the metal next to the hinge. A collector paid \$62.50 for this tool, in which some craftsman must have taken great pride.

As a collector of miniature tools, I couldn't resist the only true miniature in the sale, a hack saw with a 3 1/2" blade and 2 1/2" handle. It set me back \$17.50 but it is a great little piece.

In one lot of four N. J. made tools, tied in a plastic bag, there was a Heller Bros. farrier's hammer and a Wm. Johnson spoke shave, both from Newark and an S. C. Cook plane from New Brunswick. The fourth tool I was unable to see because of the plastic bag, but it and the other three sold for \$36. Another N. J. tool was a combination bit brace-wrench, made in Newark at the turn of the century by Peter Lowentraut. It brought \$22.50.

A rosewood and brass leather slitter by C. S. Osborn of Newark, at one time the largest leather-working tool company in the world, sold for \$25. A late box scraper by Wm. Johnson went for \$12.50. The earliest of these N. J. tools was a compass rabbet plane made in Newark by Mockridge and Francis sometime before 1872, when the name of the firm was changed to Mockridge and Son. This beautiful little plane brought \$32.50.

For the most part the prices paid for the more than 400 lots were comparable

to those I have noted at other recent auctions. Due to the efforts of the many CRAFTS members who did all of the work, it was a very successful sale.

A professional job of auctioneering was done by Herb Kean, with the assistance of Steve Zluky. Herb was stung on the cheek by a wasp while he was selling, but he kept on going.

Most of the preliminary work was done by Vice President Harry O'Neill, who put in a tremendous amount of time and effort. A special note of thanks should go to Jane O'Donnell who, under rather trying conditions, did a great job of running the refreshment stand. Lots of food was consumed, including dozens of my daughter Vivian's hatchet-shaped cookies.

The revenue received from the auction and food sale added substantially to the CRAFTS publication fund. This means that the Tool Shed will continue in its enlarged format and that some additional publications should be forthcoming during the next year.

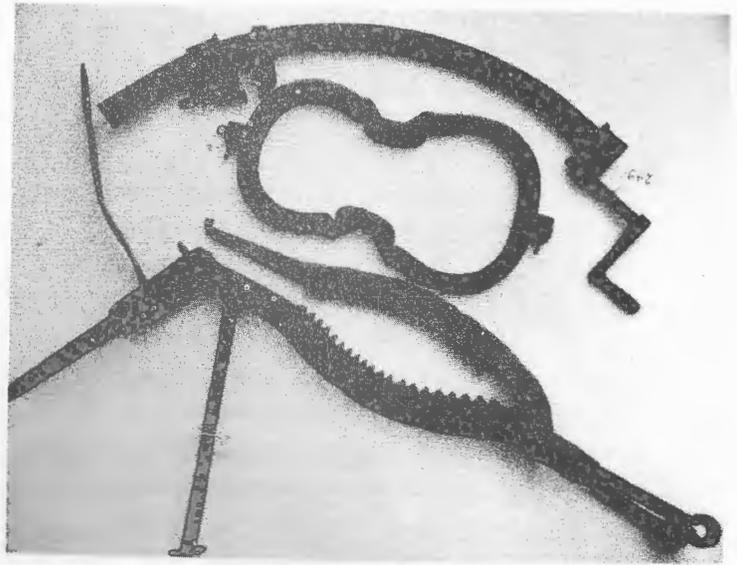
Reprinted from Maine Antique Digest by permission.



Marples Ultimatum bit brace, \$450.



Screw box with 4 taps, \$425.



Top to bottom: Curved cooper's clamp, \$45; violin profile clamp, \$40; hewing clamp, \$90.

(continued from page 3)

of nitre, because of its instability, may be advantageously replaced by a 15% spirit of nitrous ether, which is a regular article in the chemical trade. When dissolved in alcohol, it renders exactly the same service as the medicinal product. Ethyl alcohol is preferable to methyl alcohol, but do not use denatured alcohols (especially not "rubbing" alcohol) which are liable to contain substances which will mess up the chemistry of the process. Another point is that if you want a black color, add a little ferric chloride,  $\text{FeCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$ .

As another example of possible applications, a fellow CRAFTS member has a pair of hinges which he is try to match to an old pair in a restoration job. Although they are the same size, the older pair are cast iron, while the newer ones are brass plated. I suggested removing the plating, but he pointed out that this would also remove the patina. So I then suggested the application of gun-browning solution to rust the newly exposed surface. In all such situations, it pays to practice first on something of little value before starting on the real thing.

# CRAFTS OF NEW JERSEY "WHATSIT" QUIZ

by Whatshisname

All of the tools on this page were made in New Jersey. They are taken from the C. S. Osborne & Co. Standard Tools Catalog of 1911.

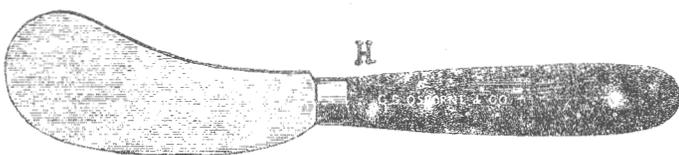
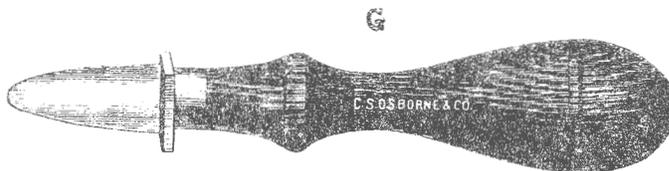
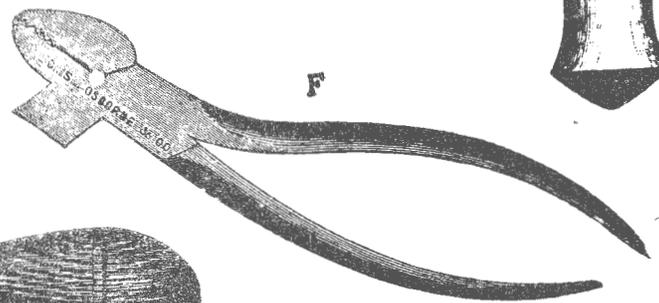
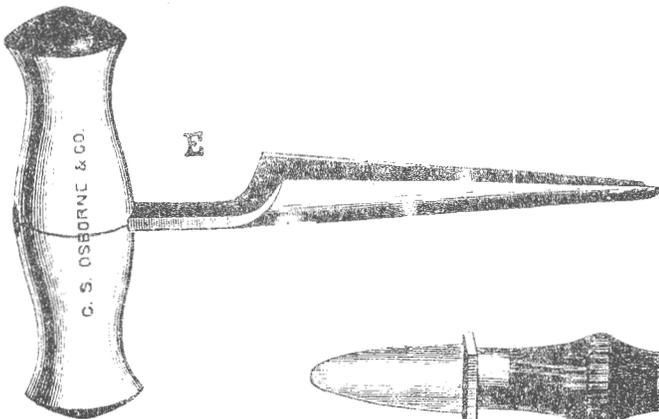
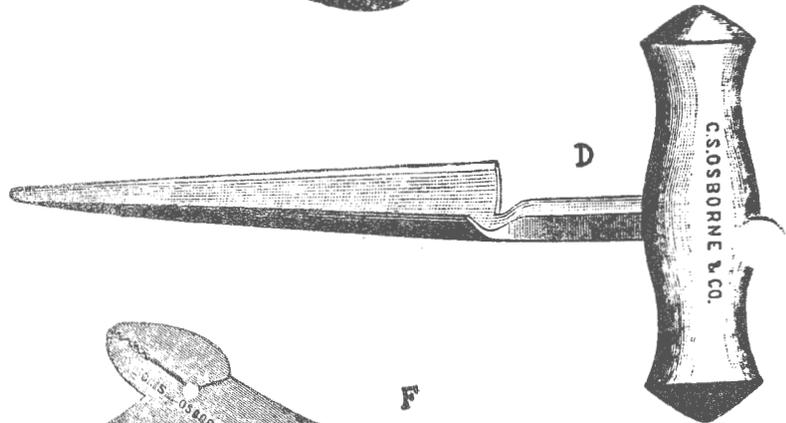
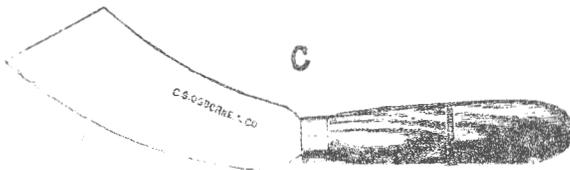
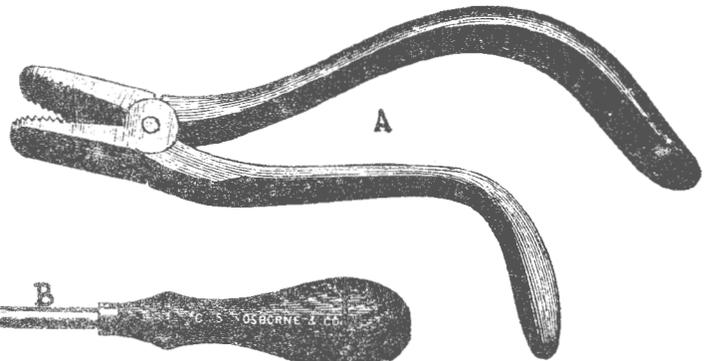
All you have to do is match the appropriate letters to the correct names in the column to the right. Anyone getting them all correct will be given a gold star for their membership badge (We don't know what we will do if our Whatsit Chairman fails this test).

If you have a copy of the Osborne catalog, do not cheat and look in it first. But it is OK if your wife helps you with some of the hard ones.

Time limit: 3 minutes.  
Solution at bottom of page.

- \_\_\_ 1. Tap Borer (Phila. Pattern, Ex. Heavy Shank).
- \_\_\_ 2. Paper Hanger's Knife.
- \_\_\_ 3. Ham Stringer.
- \_\_\_ 4. Tacking Pincers.
- \_\_\_ 5. Cabbage Corer.
- \_\_\_ 6. French Sardine Knife.
- \_\_\_ 7. Belt Awl.
- \_\_\_ 8. Cigar Maker's Knife.
- \_\_\_ 9. Tanner's Pincers.

Oops, we forgot: one of the knives should have said "(round point)."



(1) E, (2) C, (3) I, (4) F, (5) D, (6) G, (7) B, (8) H, (9) A.