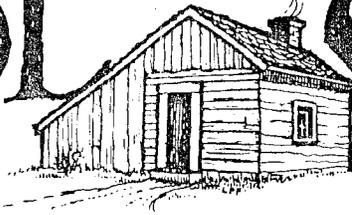


# The TOOL SHED

Number 6



Feb. 1979

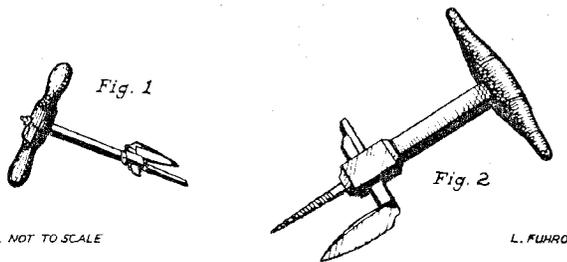
• • • A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey • • •

## UNUSUAL COOPER'S BORERS

by Raymond R. Townsend, Williamsburg, Va.

The washer-type borers appear to have escaped notice among collectors of cooper's tools.

The first notice of this type borer was in an unidentified American catalog of 1865, where it was advertised along with other cooper's tools (Figure 1).



DWGS. NOT TO SCALE

L. FUHR

A 1900 German lexicon, under "Cooper's Workshop," illustrates a similar bung borer, or "Spundbohrer" (Figure 2). According to the description, "...large bung holes are bored with [it] in the manner of a scribing compass with adjustable knife."<sup>1</sup>

The familiar type washer cutter has two blades, either on one side of the shank (as in Figure 3) or one on each side. None of the catalogs consulted advertised a single blade. Salaman (*Dictionary of Tools*, p. 502) illustrates a single-blade washer cutter used with a brace and a small, one-blade cutter that he states is often home made.

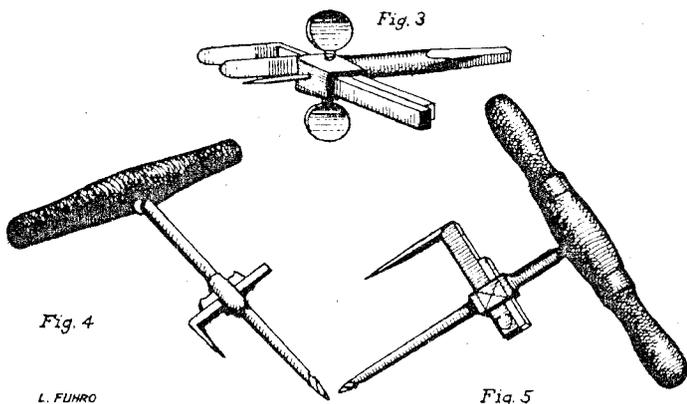


Fig. 4

Fig. 5

L. FUHR

## NEXT MEETING ON FEBRUARY 11th AT FIELD HOMESTEAD

Swap & Sell Moved Up

The next meeting of CRAFTS of New Jersey will be held on Sunday, February 11, from 1:30 to 4:30 p. m., at the Field Homestead, 260 River Road (Rte. #18), in Piscataway.

The earlier starting time reflects a change in the usual meeting format. The February 11th meeting will begin with the "Swap and Sell," which will start at 1:30 and will end promptly at 2:15. The program will follow.

The topic for the afternoon's program will be "American Axes." Program Chairman Fred Shippey asks that any member with a favorite or an unusual axe bring it along for exhibition and discussion. Bob Fridlington, of Cranford, will speak on "The McKinnon Family and the Rockaway Axe."

Harry O'Neill will preside over the "Whatsit?" identification, concluding the day's meeting. As usual, members are asked to bring no more than one item for the "Whatsit?" session.

Looking to the future, the last two meetings of the current year will be held on April 22 and June 10, so mark your calendar. At the April meeting, Mrs. Erna Stenzler, of Elkins Park, Pa., will speak on "The Art of Wood Sculpture."

Having never seen one except illustrated in catalogs, the first thought was that it was used only for dry cooperage, where the staves are not as thick nor the wood as hard as in wet cooperage. However, it can be seen that the borer (Figure 4) shown in Vern Ward's catalog<sup>2</sup> is sufficiently durable to bore a hole in a wet cask stave.

Another interesting type of cooper's borer (Figure 5) was found in a 1945 German-French woodworking-tool catalog<sup>3</sup> and could easily be confused with the bung borer. It is called, in German, "Handgriffbohrer... der Griffe an

COLLECTORS OF RARE AND  
FAMILIAR TOOLS SOCIETY  
OF NEW JERSEY

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Trea. - C. Carroll Palmer, Plainfield

Membership in CRAFTS of New Jersey is open to anyone interested in early trades and industries, implements used and made in New Jersey, or the identification and preservation of those tools and implements that are part of our heritage.

Annual dues are: \$5.00 per year for individual membership and \$5.00 per year for husband and wife membership. The membership year runs from July 1 to June 30. Membership fees should be sent to the Treasurer:

Mr. C. Carroll Palmer  
725 Pemberton Avenue  
Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

The Tool Shed is published five times per year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Address all correspondence, articles and ideas to the Editor:

Mr. Larry Fuhro  
417 Bartlett Street  
Roselle, New Jersey 07203

A NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors to The Tool Shed who submit illustrations with their articles should note the following:

For photos - use black and white only; clear "glossies" are preferable. If Polaroids are submitted, be sure they are not murky and have clear picture definition.

For drawings - whether originals or copies, line work should be clear, as linework "bleeding" together will not reproduce well. Ink is preferable to pencil.

EAST JERSEY OLDE TOWNE  
SEEKS TIMBER HEWERS

An eighteenth-century Dutch barn is being restored at East Jersey Olde Towne in Piscataway, and some volunteer help is needed to work on the timbers.

Any CRAFTSMen with experience in hewing or mortising beams, and who could give some time to this worthwhile project, should call Mr. Nick Schurko at (201) 634-0809, during the day.

Cont'd from pg. 1-

Kübein und Butten" (handle borer... for handles on buckets and tubs) and, in French, "Mèche à élargir pour percer les poignées de baquets et de cuves" (enlarging bit for piercing handles of buckets and tubs).

Some buckets and tubs have two staves, one opposite the other, that extend slightly above the chime. A hole is pierced in each extended part to slip a rope through and knot on the outside to act as a handle.

It would be difficult to state how the bung borer and handle borer could readily be identified, since no measurements are available.

Both have a bit type shank for entry into wood.

A 1929 German book on woodworking<sup>4</sup> calls a similar type a "Handdaubenbohrer," or hand stave borer (Figure 6). Although this is classified as a cooper's tool, there is no mention of its purpose. A common type cylindrical bung-hole borer with auger point is illustrated along side the hand stave borer.

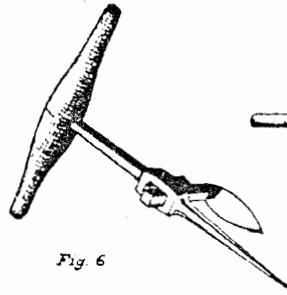


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

L. FUHRO

An "Improved Bung Hole Cutter" (Figure 7) is illustrated in Mathieson & Sons 1899 Catalog.<sup>5</sup> Colonial Williamsburg Master Cooper, George Pettengel, had never seen one. He did suggest, however, that the center shank could well fit into the vent hole pierced in the shive (bung) of a beer cask and could then be used to cut around the bung to remove it. Note that the cutters and center are adjustable.

It would be interesting to know its exact use.

References

<sup>1</sup>Otto Leuger, Lexikon der Gesamten Technik und Verein mit Fachgenossen (Stuttgart und Leipzig, 1901).

<sup>2</sup>Iron Horse Antiques, Inc., Catalog Number 14 (Poultney, Vt., 1977), p. 18. (Permission of Vernon U. Ward)

<sup>3</sup>Holzwerkzeuge, Outils de Qualite, Generalkatalog, Catalog General No. 12 (Strasbourg, 1945).

<sup>4</sup>F. Grossmann und F. Steininger, Sachkunde für Holzarbeiterklassen (Leipzig, 1929).

<sup>5</sup>Alex Mathieson & Sons Eighth Edition Catalog (Glasgow, 1899). (Permission of Kenneth D. Roberts)

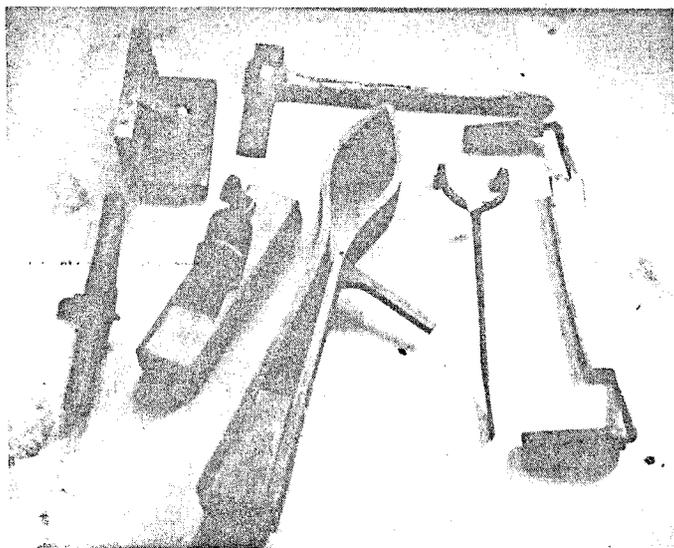
## "CRAFTSMEN" AT MYSTIC

by Alex Farnham

At least three members of CRAFTS were present on October 28, when the fine tool collection of the late Bob Carlson was sold at auction at Mystic Seaport, Conn. Bill Gustafson, who bought among other tools a good Gage plane by Stanley, was there. Bud Steere, our Rhode Island member, also attended.

Bob Carlson was a long-time member of ATTIC and was the first president of ATTIC.

The auction was not open to the public, as Bob expressed the wish that his tools go to his friends, most of whom belonged to one of the four north-eastern tool groups to which the sale was limited. Included in these four groups are many of the leading collectors in the country. Besides ATTIC (Connecticut) there were members of ACTIVE (Vermont), ETC (Long Island) and TNT (Massachusetts).



The first item sold was a common level which brought \$11. Next, a Davis level with an original label sold for \$21, demonstrating what a difference a label can make. A pair of bench shears went for \$16, and shortly after that a Stanley metal adjustable circular plane brought \$50. A number of metal-bodied planes by Stanley and other makers were sold throughout the auction, usually for higher prices than the earlier wooden planes. A number of metal Stanley adjustable tonguing and grooving planes were sold at prices ranging from \$18 to \$24. A Stanley 55 with four boxes of cutters brought \$130. A Phillips' patent plow plane, the first cast plane of this kind produced, also brought \$130. A Stanley 72 sold for \$140, and an early catalog illustrating metal planes brought \$6. Only within recent years have metal planes been considered collectible, but their prices continue to rise at each sale.

Among the outstanding early tools sold were a race knife for \$55, a pair of 18th century shears for \$22, a wide molding plane marked "E. Johnson" for \$90, a long, tapered auger marked "Israel Mann" for \$28, a wooden bitstock for \$65, a gracefully curved hollow shave for \$18, and an extremely early and beautifully wrought Connecticut adze blade for \$45. Of the several broad axes sold, the rarest and most expensive was one which looked as though it came out of the Middle Ages but was marked by Connecticut maker "G. W. Bradley." It sold for \$130. More traditional ones brought from \$12, for one with a rivet repaired blade, up to \$85 for a conventional Bradley. A broad hatchet sold for \$17.

Of the other edged tools sold, mortising axes brought from \$22 to \$30, carpenter adzes ranged from \$12 up to \$36, a cooper's hand adze went for \$34 and a cooper's chamfer knife \$20. A wide mast knife sold for \$26, and a cooper's bowl adze, which appeared to be of mid to late 19th century, went for \$50. English reaping hooks brought from \$14 for a fairly recent one to \$34 for one that was older. A large half-moon-pattern cutter went for \$26.

Quite a few deck caulking tools were auctioned off. Among them were several long-handled caulking irons which sold for from \$22 to \$40. Of the two caulking mallets sold, one in almost mint condition went for \$32, while a rough one brought \$25. A funnel used for tarring deck seams sold for \$20.

The most outstanding item sold in the non-tool category was a cast iron lady's shoe! What it was used for I don't know, but it struck me as a very decorative piece. It went home with me for \$55.



WANT TO BUY?    SELL?

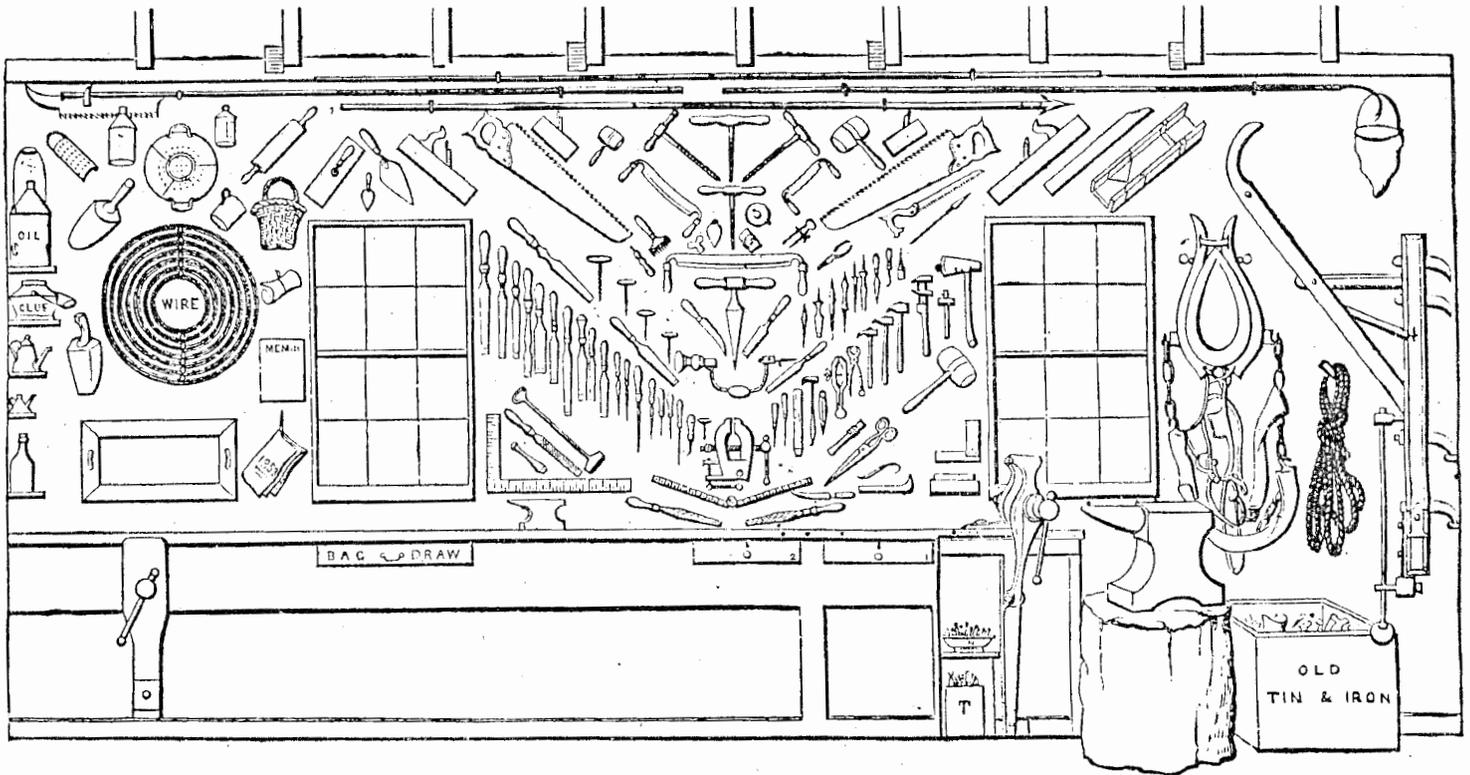
Beginning with the April issue, The Tool Shed will include an insert sheet carrying classified ads listing items for sale, items wanted, notices and other announcements.

The rate will be 10¢ per word for all ads. Standard abbreviations and numerals will count as words. When placing ads, be sure to include your name, address and telephone number.

All copy for classified ads should be sent to:

Larry Fuhro  
417 Bartlett Street  
Roselle, NJ 07203

The deadline for the April issue is March 15, 1979.



**CRAFTSMEN ATTENTION!** Here's how we expect the self-respecting tool owner to display his collection. According to the February, 1862, issue of the American Agriculturist this arrangement illustrates "...the value of the principle of association... and perhaps no other mode is so effectual in impressing the necessity of returning borrowed articles."

### SOME UNUSUAL TOOL FINDS by C. Carroll Palmer

In 1937 John M. Conner, Jr., a charter member of EAIA and a collector/dealer sold me a chisel about ten inches long, including the turned handle. The surface of the handle was rough. The flared, three-inch wide blade was bevel-cut and had the contours of a molding, but it showed no signs of having been sharpened. Conner had acquired the tool from the personal collection of the late Stephen Van Rensselaer of Peterborough, New Hampshire.

Displayed in my tool collection, this chisel was identified by a guest as a shaper for scraping semi-wet plaster mouldings when installed on a wall or ceiling. The alkali in the wet plaster had caused the finish on the handle to bleach out and show a rough surface.

In 1974 a dealer in Toms River, N.J., sold me a wide axe head with a knife edge and without a poll. The eye socket was formed by a wide band, enlarged at each end to a heart shaped design, bent into a loop and clasped to the upper blade by three rivets. This clasp bulges out on each side of the D-shaped blade, which would prevent the use of the tool in squaring wood.

In H. J. Kauffman's book, American Axes (1972), page 93, there is a photograph of such a tool, called a turf axe. In a circular published by the State Department of Agriculture entitled "Some Vanishing Phases of Rural Life in New Jersey" (June, 1941), page 34, is another such axe with an inserted full-length handle. I quote: "Very often a turf axe was made by welding or riveting an iron handle loop to a piece of an old circular saw. . . . The turf axe is used largely for cutting vertical sides of narrow ditches extending across cranberry bogs."