The TOOLSHED

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The Saga of a Hammer

By Carl Bopp

(Time line, about 1986) – Years ago after antique shops started renting showcases so dealers didn't have to spend any or very little floor time, I made my first purchase from such a case. It was at a large antique shop in Smithville, (Atlantic County) N. J. that has since been torn down. The showcase area was in a long foyer. In one large locked case, I spied an unusual hammer. Figure 1. It was of a shape that I was not familiar with. Obviously it was not intended for heavy duty work. The head was slim looking and the handle was at one point very slender. The tag with it said it was a "railroad hammer", which I knew couldn't be right because railroad tools are very heavy objects, especially railroad hammers. The selling price on the tag seemed reasonable so I went to the counter and asked if the owner of the hammer was in, so I could buy it and ask some questions about it. I was told, no, he was not in but they could open the case for me but they had no knowledge of the hammer in question.

Figure 1. The Hammer

After the hammer was retrieved from the case, I could see that it had numbers marked on its head and the handle was some unknown reddish material with a black inlay trimmed with thin brass. Figure 2 & 3. After getting it home, I could see the numbers were intended to measure something.

(Time line, Nov. 1989) – Turning to my copy of *The Hammer the King of Tools*, by Ron Baird and Dan Comerford, that had just been published, I found the same hammer on page 60. The only difference was this one had a wooden handle. It was listed under tinsmith hammers and the book said it was a "bumping hammer with ruler". I

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February 5th - CRAFTS Meeting

Blacksmithing Workshop

Presented by Andrew Drysdale

Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society
of New Jersey

President……BOB GARAY, Hopatcong
Vice President……...DON KAHN, Hackensack
Secretary……ANNETTE VLIET, Danielsville, PA
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The purpose of CRAFTS of New Jersey is to encourage interest in early trades and industries, and in the identification, study, preservation and exhibition of tools and implements used and made in New Jersey as an integral part of our heritage.

Membership in CRAFTS is open to anyone who shares the above interests. Annual dues per person or couple are fifteen dollars for the membership year of July 1 through June 30.
Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer:
John Whelan, 38 Colony Court, Murray Hill, NJ 07974 (write check payable to CRAFTS of New Jersey).

CRAFTS of NJ meetings are held at the HOST Masonic Lodge in High Bridge, NJ.
Take I-78 to Route 31 exit at Clinton. Go north on Rte. 31 two miles to second traffic light at the High Bridge exit. Turn right and go about half a mile to Dennis Ave. Turn left, then straight to the Masonic Lodge (on the left).
Tailgate sales in the parking lot begin at 10 A.M., meeting starts at 1 P.M.

The TOOL SHED

Published five times a year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Editor: Dave Nowicki, 240 Woodlyn Ave. Glenside PA 19038. EMAIL - dnowicki@verizon.net.
Articles, especially about early tools and trades, are encouraged and may be sent to the Editor.

CRAFTS WEBSITE
www.craftsofnj.org

Containing general information about CRAFTS and its activities including: meeting schedules, Tool Shed articles, etc.

NEW MEMBERS

Philip & Barbara Delcamp, Long Branch, NJ
Robert & Shirley Demarest, Tannersville, PA
Tom Turanick, Budd Lake, NJ
Paul Hee, Ringoes, NJ
Ed Rentsch, Pennington, NJ
Michael Michalechen, Christiana, PA
Graham Chase, West Hartford, CT.

President's Corner

Well the winter is really here as Lake Hopatcong is frozen in our cove and ice fishing and ice skating has begun. The Christmas holiday activities have ended and the New Year is here. As always thoughts deal with optimistic New Years resolutions and I have made a list of ten resolutions I will try to keep.

1. Dust off every tool in my collection and label its important information.
2. Take a picture of the tools in my collection and get a value estimate for insurance policy.
3. Sell off duplicates in my collection.
4. Have all tools in collection on display and not hidden in a box.
5. Identify holes in my collection and make up a wish list.
6. Spend more time with my wife and family.
7. Develop activities at work (*Technology Shop Teacher*) that gains positive recognition.
8. Write another article for the Tool Shed.
9. Add members email addresses to CRAFTS roster.
10. Get five new members to join CRAFTS.

Of course these are not in order of importance, and so far I have a good start. I have been spending the colder nights in my basement reaffirming friendships with many tools I have neglected over the years. Dusting them off and re-exploring their historical details has rekindled my joyfulness in collecting tools.

I was more than pleased recently as a program I organized at work for the kids was a huge success. I invited some CRAFTS members and retired teachers to participate in a historical tool day in November. Over two hundred students participated in activities such as, 2-man saw competitions, blacksmithing, hewing logs, treadle powered grindstone sharpening, making spills with a plane, peeling and dicing apples, husking corn and drilling holes. All activities were applying tools and techniques that would have been in use over 100 years ago. It was a fitting educational experience for our town's bicentennial celebration. Thanks to CRAFTS members Herb Kean & Anna Rokita for their enthusiastic participation. We even had coverage on the Channel 12 TV news.

As I dusted off tools in the basement I put some duplicates in a box for the CRAFTS Auction. It is coming up in just over two months and the well known team of Greg & Steve are busy preparing another spectacular event. The meeting this Ferurary is one of the last chances to get your tools in to this auction. I have been busy taking pictures of my tools and updating records for the insurance. Now I just need to spend a little more time with my family to meet my New Years resolutions. I know, I will invite them down to the basement to help me dust off tools. Yea that will work, kill two birds with one stone!

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had ruled out that it was a railroad hammer and now could not believe that it was a tinsmiths hammer. The

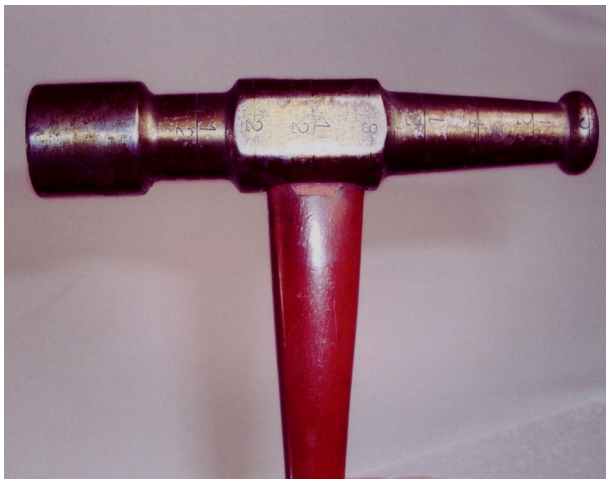

Figure 2. Detail of the head.

hammer made several trips with me to CRAFTS meetings and once on the CRAFTS whatsits table, with no help from anyone that saw it. The fact that I had driven to the meeting with the CRAFTS whatsits chairman, was of no help either.

I now kept thinking about the tag that said

Figure 3. Detail of the handle. The material seems to be some type of fiberglass or an early kind of plastic.

"railroad hammer". Trying to come up with what a light duty hammer with measurements could be used for on a railroad, I guessed maybe for checking and or adjusting some of the signaling devices that are found along railroads.

(Time line, May 7-9, 1998) – Back in 1998 the Early American Industries Association, (EAIA) held their annual meeting at the Railroad Museum, (Steamtown National Historic Site) in Scranton, PA. The hammer went with me to the meeting but nobody at the meeting or museum that saw it could shed any light on its use. Dan Comerford, one of the authors of the hammer book, was at the meeting and I told him what I thought it was for. He agreed that it could have been for checking and /or adjusting railroad signaling devices. I don't know if he agreed just to pacify me.

(Time line, about 2000) – Years later, CRAFTSman Clarence Blanchard, owner of the Brown Auction and the Fine Tool Journal, was at a nearby woodworking show and advertised he would give a Fine Tool Journal T-shirt if he couldn't identify a tool brought to the show. The hammer went to the show with me but I came home with a nice Fine Tool Journal T-shirt instead of an answer of what it was.

(Time line, May 2004) – I next found a drawing of the same hammer on page 5 of a book titled, What'sits in Canada, by The Dusty Miller, published by the Tool Group of Canada, edited by CRAFTSman Jim Packham. This hammer, like the one in the hammer book had a wooden handle. The head had the same numbers on it but was also marked "Quality Die Co. Chicago USA" on the side and "C&O" on the other side! Figure 4. The Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad sometimes used just "C&O" so my theory was looking good but still was lacking proof.

(Timeline, April 16, 2005) – At the CRAFTS auction parking lot sale I spied one of these same ham-

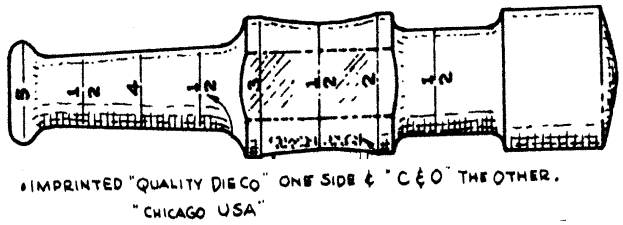

Figure 4. Detail from the drawing #5 in the book, "What'sits in Canada" by The Dusty Miller, courtesy of The Tool Group of Canada.

mers at CRAFTSmen John and Julie Kesterson's table! Julie was tending the table and saw me looking at the hammer. She said, "there are some papers under it that tells what it is for. I couldn't put the hammer down fast enough and look at the papers!!! The papers were three copies from some railroad history club publication that explained all about the hammer. Yes it was a railroad hammer as the tag said when I first bought my example but no it was not for signaling devices, nor was it a tinsmiths bumping hammer.

The article by Paul Burch identified it as a "Locomotive Inspectors Hammer". The making of this type of hammer, was a project that apprentices in training to become machinists for the Southern Railway had to make as part of their training. Burch points out that the tool was good for "tapping around" a locomotive, to check for loose nuts, metal thicknesses, etc. He said, "The head was designed to provide specific measurements, through physical dimensions as well as engraved markings". Included in the article was a copy of an original drawing of the hammer project from the Southern Railway System dated July 27, 1936. See drawing on page - 5. The original drawing was in ink, on linen. It lists some of the things the measurements were for. The drawing also shows markings on the handle that are not on my hammer. The lesson of the story is - attend a CRAFTS event, you never know what you will learn.

(Continued on page 5)

Occupational Surnames and the Tools Your Ancestor Used

By Don Wallace

Having been a collector of tools for just a few short years, and having an interest in the craftsmen and women who used my tools, I asked myself a fateful question: "How many people do I know who are named after the trades of there ancestors, such as my friend Bob Carpenter, Jimmy Cooper, Bill Mason, Walt Baker, Bill Smith, and Mitchell Schmidt?" I started to write these down and to search for others because I wanted to include the names of Janet Bishop, Bob Knight and Edwin Wisser (vizier, wise man) . I expanded the category to include all occupations including the tradesmen and "doers" of all stripes.

It wasn't long before I was seeking a German-English dictionary, then French and Spanish. I'm still hoping to find a Dutch-English dictionary, the older the better. Then instead of using telephone books to confirm these occupations were, indeed, actually used as surnames, I began to use the obituary pages in the *Inquirer* and *Courier Post*. I still pop up from my television viewing to jot down a name that I see in the news or on the sports field.

You might call it an obsession, but I think it has just become more of a habit. I don't know of another such list that exists, but I have acquired a copy of *the Origins of English Surnames* by P. H. Reany which includes many occupational surnames as well as others. I find it to be very interesting to peruse. Reany documents all his names with dates and places. It is a remarkable resource and I'd like to find more of the same in every language. As long as a name is "occupational", it would qualify for my list.

Friends have begun to give me lists of occupations and books about occupations. So, if you have a resource, or know of more surname resources, I'm interested. I've asked a friend of Armenian extraction for assistance. I've spoken to a PSE&G serviceman of Chinese extraction who says there are only about 200 different Chinese "surnames" in existence…any of them occupational? He didn't know or didn't understand. One acquaintance at an otherwise boring luncheon promised me a list of Irish surnames. His name was Mahon, and he thought that it meant a servant who operates between the kitchen and dining room. He delivered, and at least 50 of those Irish names were occupational. All nationalities and languages qualify, but my listing strictly applies to "occupational surnames". Did you know that Kehoe means jockey?

Having been at this for more than twelve years, the list is quesstimated to be over 5000 names and is still being added to daily. So when I suggested that, with my tenth year of volunteering in the Museum Cellars of Greenfield Hall, it might be time for me to conduct another meeting on tools at a general meeting, I was asked if I would like to mount an exhibit in Greenfield Hall, displaying those tools which we have that could be matched up with the appropriate occupational surname. So not all the names I've accumulated are listed vertically, wall-to-wall in the south-west exhibit room upstairs; neither are all the tools we have displayed wall-to-wall horizontally. But there are plenty. Even the names of our Cellar volunteers from 1973 to the recent group are listed with their names defined. My special thanks to my friend Norm Stuessy (he defines his surname one way, I define it another). Without his support, discipline, guidance, and technical expertise, we could not have mounted this exhibit. (The name of his wife Ruth, nee Pennypacker, means tile baker, "Pannebacher" in German.)

It was pure serendipity, when we had just about finished this display, that Ellie Reifsteck was in our office at Greenfield Hall. I invited her to be the first visitor to this new display. Not only did she find "Reifsteck", the hoop maker (barrels and tires), but she also found her maiden name, "Harshman", from Hirschman, the stag dresser, and her mother's maiden name, "Barbier", the Barber! Of course, Ellie is the mother of Bill Reifsteck II, who first organized the tools in the Museum Cellars with help from his grandfather, Mr. Harshman.

This display has received surprisingly nice initial reaction, especially from members whose names are represented on the big lists on the walls, or with a tool on the tables and in the glass display cases. Remember now, that if your name is not occupational it won't be there. Unless, however, you didn't know that your name was occupational. (This serves to demonstrate why our names are considered "dead metaphors") We don't think of Mr. Smith in his blacksmith's apron pounding away on red-hot iron and pulling the bellows as we greet him today. But, his ancestor, who took that surname, was certainly thought of that way. We only began taking surnames about 1000 years ago at the beginning of the previous millennium. It was because, for instance, there were too many "Johns" in town. So John who lived on the hill became "John Hill", John who was at the crossroad became "John Twitchell". John who worked for the King became "John King" In German, John the blacksmith, could have become "Johann Schmidt" or perhaps "Johann Eisenhower", and in Denmark "Danenhower", and so on.

This "Surnames and Tools Exhibit" is dedicated to my great and dear friend Bob Carpenter, who has been the prime inspiration for this exercise in onomastics. What a wonderful occupational surname. What a friend!

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P.S. Objections and corrections are already coming in. This from Stewart Repsher, who was always bothered by my "rib cutter" definition of his occupational surname: The correct German spelling of the name is "Rebscher", from Rebe for vine or grape and schere, to shear or cut. ("Grape Vine Cutter") So I couldn't agree more with this new spelling and definition because "Rep" is rib in German. Many misunderstandings surround B's, P's, and V's in German. Now you see what it takes to get proof? And we've never discussed his given (first) name which is also occupational! There are still plenty of grapevines left to be cut in Germany.

My listing may be unintentionally skewed, especially toward English and German due to the fact that I am unable to recognize potential Eastern European, Muslim, Asian, African and other occupational surnames in these languages. The only French names that I can recognize end in "ier" or "ard". Therefore I will need to enlist others to assist me in this regard with this research. Can you help me? Just a list of qualified surnames and there meanings will do.

Now you must get in here to see if we've treated your name correctly.

The Historical Society of Haddonfield at Greenfield Hall is located at 343 East Kings Highway in Haddonfield, NJ (Just 8.6 miles from the Liberty Bell) and is open on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 1PM - 4PM, and on the first Sunday of the month from 1PM – 4PM. Admission is $4. Call Don Wallace (856-857-9731, he'd like to know when you plan to be there. Also, call Don after May 1st to see if the exhibit is still in place. In any case, plan to see their tool collection it will be well worth your time. - ED

CRAFTS 2006 Auction
APRIL 1st

Item #350 - Weaver's patent smooth plane

Contact Greg Welsh at the Feb. meeting or call (908)439-3266 to submit tools for the auction.

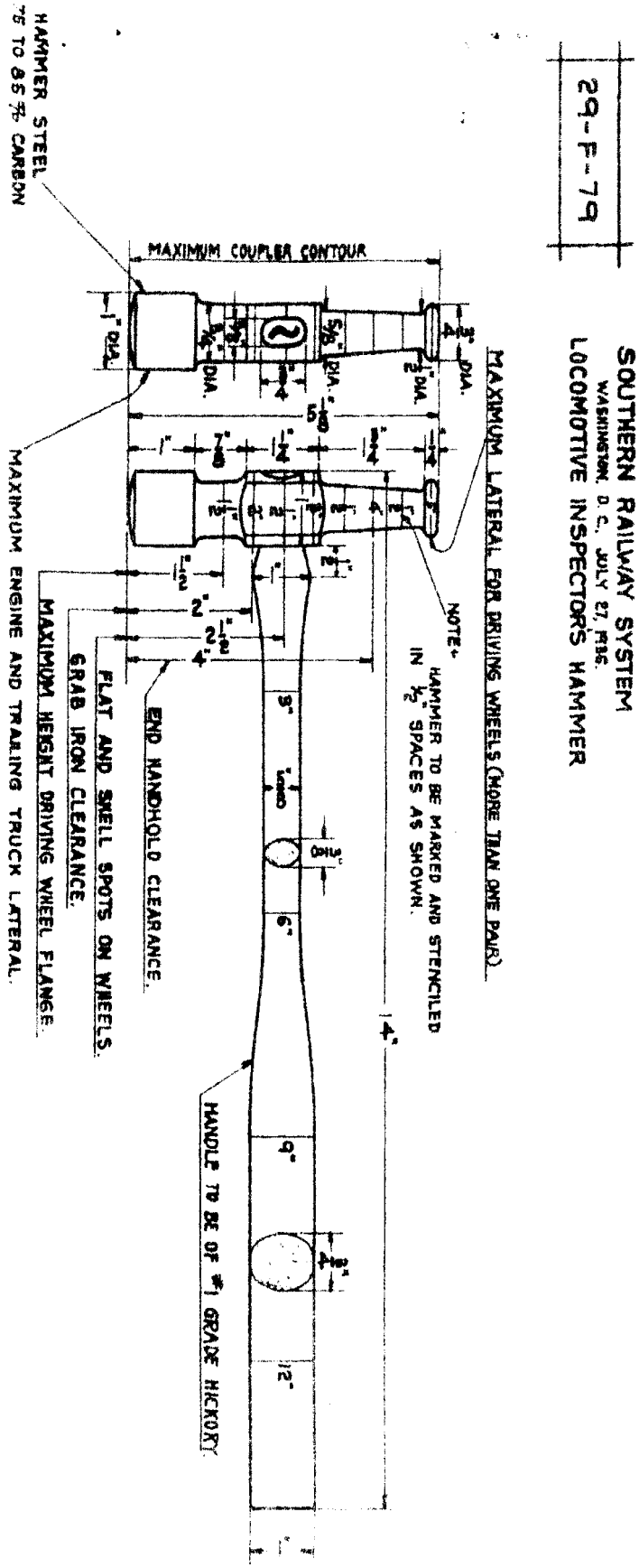


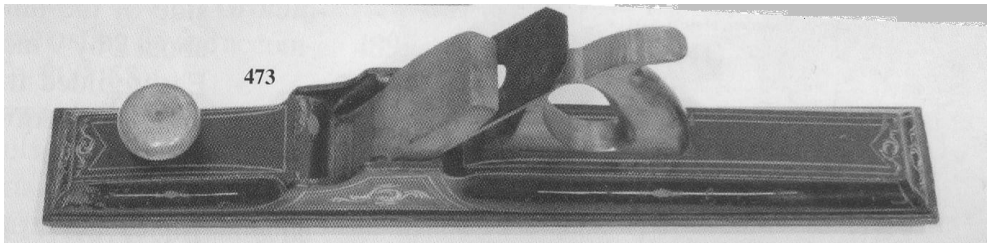
Figure 5. Copy of the Locomotive Inspector's Hammer drawing, from the Railway System, dated July 27, 1936.

A new Star at Brown's 27th Auction

By John G. Wells

The Star of the Show

It was clear from the beginning of Brown's 27th International Antique Tool Auction — the Knowles jointer would be the star (Lot 473). It was painted a dark plumb color, and was enhanced with pin striping and ornamentals in four colors.

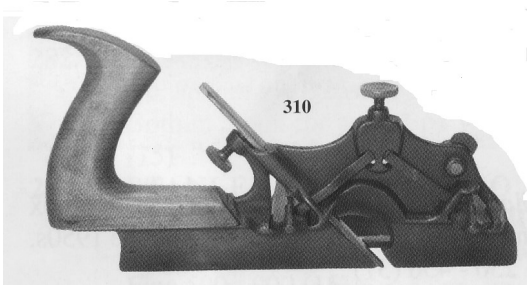


Lot 473 - Knowles Jointer

This great tool was destined to be the centerpiece of a new owner's collection by the end of the day. Bidding opened with an absentee bid of $16,500 and progressed rapidly into the high 20's. At the end, it was a hot contest between two bidders in the room, closing at $38,500. Its new home will be Andy D'Elia's museum for Patented American Planes in the new public library he built for Scotland, CT. *Prices quoted in this article include the 10% buyer's premium.*

Patented Planes

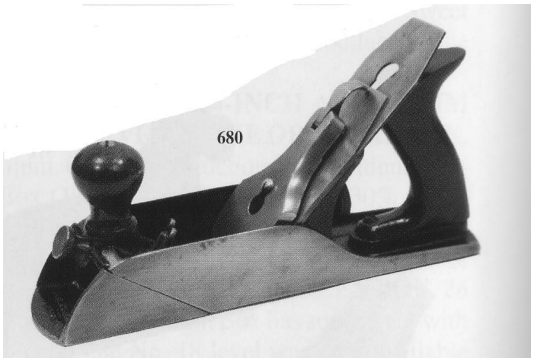
The graceful gunmetal Miller's No. 50 plow plane (Lot 339), was patented in 1872 by Miller and assigned to Judd and Blakeslee. This took place a year after Stanley began making and selling the No.41 and 42 plow planes made under Miller's 1871 patent which was assigned to them. The Miller's patent No.50 was offered for sale, in Russell & Erwin's 1875 catalogue, on the same page with



Lot 310 - Loughborough Plow Plane

Stanley's No.41 and 43. This example, in Fine condition, sold for $18,150 and will go to the same home as the previous lot.

A very rare Loughborough plow plane, patented May 3, 1864 (Lot 310), rated Good because of a small casting flaw and nil finish, brought $14,300. An equally rare Dutcher patented plow (Lot 684), pre 1844, with a cracked casting, and nil finish sold for $12,650. A Walkers patent plow plane (Lot 580), with a bed that could be adjusted to match the shape of the cut, a full set of 8 double end cutters, and with 99% nickel plating brought $6325. A Mayo's patented plow plane (Lot 331), with 45% of the gold paint and 9 cutters went for $5280. A Silcock patented plow plane (Lot 577) in Good + condition sold for $2310. A Fales combination plane patented by Otis A. Smith Mar 7, 1882 and April 1, 1884 (Lot 621), extremely rare in gunmetal, signed on the skate, and in Fine condition went for $3520. A rare George Gocher bead plane (Lot 678), patented April 10, 1877, with 80% japanning in Good + condition sold for $1485.



Lot 680 - Hardt Jack Plane with a vertically adjustable forebed.

The No.2 size smoother by O. R. Chaplin (Lot644), with cast iron handle and hard rubber front knob, and 35% to 40% of the nickel plating went for $12,100. A cute little Munks smoother (Lot 316), patented January 16, 1884, in Good + condition, sold for $6160. A Hardt jack plane (Lot 680), patented Aug. 8, 1893, with a vertically adjustable forebed, 95% japanning, and in Fine condition, except for hairline cracks at the mouth, brought $4400. A Birdsill Holly boat shaped smoother (Lot 322), and in Good + condition brought $3850. A rare rabbet block plane (Lot

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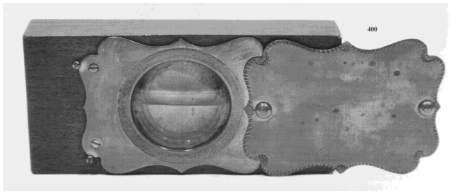
674) by John Norwood, patented April 6, 1875, with 98% japanning, and in Fine condition sold for $1018.

Stanley Planes

A Sweetheart era No.1 smooth plane (Lot 634) with 98% japanning and in Fine condition brought $1540. A No.2 smooth plane (Lot 509) with 90% japanning in Good + condition sold for $275. A No.9 miter plane with 95% japanning, in Fine condition (Lot 636) went for $935. A No.10¼ rabbet plane with tilting knob and handle (Lot 638) in Fine condition sold for $880. A No.10½ bench rabbet plane with an adjustable mouth (Lot 27) in Fine condition brought $1018. A Type 1, Millers No. 41 hump back plow plane with a hook, acorn finials, and a fillister bed (Lot 337) in Fine condition, except for the replaced handle, brought $6050. A No.42 gunmetal Millers patent (Lot 341) with a fillister bed and a set of cutters in Good + condition went for $2090. A No. 56 small core box plane (Lot 508) in Good + condition brought $1018. The cute little No.212 scraper (Lot 511) with 96% japanning in Fine condition sold for $1155. A No.602 Bedrock smoother (Lot191) in Good + condition brought $1430.

Lot 502, an experimental chisel plane from the Stanley model shop, ca. 1905 and contemporary

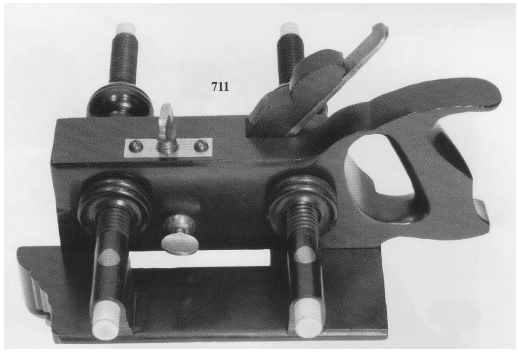


Lot 400 - T.S. Scoville Degree Plumb and Level

with the No.97 Type 1, brought $2860. A very attractive experimental version of the No.9½ block plane (Lot 619), also from the model shop, with a rosewood bun on the top of the lever cap brought $1760. A No.25 low angle transitional block plane (lot 493) with a laminated bottom of rosewood faced with boxwood, part of a set thought to have been made for display at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, in Fine unused condition brought $3520.

Inclinometers and Levels

A very rare 5¾ inch T. S. Scoville Degree Plumb & Level (Lot 400), patented Sept. 13, 1859, in Good condition brought $2640. A rare Patented Level Co. Eagle and Star inclinometer of great graphic form (Lot 403) in Fine condition sold for $1760. A rare Melick 3½ in. square inclinometer (Lot 425), with 93% plating, brought $2200. An outrageously mint Melick cast iron mantle clock inclinometer (Lot 423) with 100% of the gold decorative striping and the original box, sold for $7150. A Protractor Level Co. inclinometer (Lot 176), patented June 28, 1921, with 97%



Lot 711 - Sandusky No. 137 Ebony Plow Plane with ivory tips and improved handle.

of the original finish and in Fine condition sold for $1320. A Bradford Union inclinometer level (Lot 523) with a semicircular level tube to read degrees, in Fine condition, went for $935.

A rare cast iron illuminated level by C. Bede (Lot 522) with 55% japanning, in Good + condition, sold for $2860. A Davis and Cook cast iron corner level (Lot 540) with 90% of the japanning and plating in Fine condition, brought $1760.

Wood Plow Planes

A Sandusky Tool Co. No.140 center wheel

Lot 199 - Dirigo Jig saw

plow plane (Lot 709), in highly figured burl walnut with boxwood arms and fence, in Fine condition, sold for $11,000. A Sandusky No.137 Ebony plow plane (Lot 711) with four ivory tips and an improved handle in Good + condition brought $6160. A stunning E. W. Carpenter plow plane in boxwood and rosewood (Lot 715), in Fine condi-

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Piggins 'n Flagons 'n Buckets …Oh My!

By Dave Nowicki

On Sunday, November 6th CRAFTS members attending the November meeting in Highbridge, NJ were enjoyably entertained with a presentation on the art of coopering presented by "The Lederach Cooper", Justin Bergey. Dressed in period colonial garb of an 18th century cooper, Mr. Bergey, with the help of his wonderful collection of antique cooper's tools, proceeded to explain the world of the 18th century cooper. The following is a synopsis of his talk.

Justin Bergey "The Lederach Cooper"

COOPERS

A number of different types of coopers plied their trade during the 18th and 19th centuries. There were wet coopers who made the barrels and containers that would hold liquids. Dry coopers made things like nail kegs, and containers to transport grain and flour. Also, there was the white cooper, making buckets, tubs and custom containers. The jack of all coopering trades was the traveling cooper who went from farm to farm providing new items and repairs to those that could be salvaged.

APPRENTICESHIP

In order to learn the trade, young men, boys really, served an apprenticeship lasting 7 years. The apprentices ranged in age from 7 years to about 14. A contract or indenturement was written in three parts and signed by all parties with one going to the boy's parents, one for the apprentice himself and the last for the master. This was so that the terms of the contract were not able to be changed without the consent of all. A normal indenturement provided that the master was responsible for teaching the craft and supplying the food, clothing and all other requirements of the apprentice for a period of 7 years. In turn, the apprentice was to work Monday through Saturday, usually 10 hours per day while most of Sunday was usually spent in church. At the end of his apprenticeship, now a journeyman of 14, the boy would work another 7 years, for a small wage, producing usable products for the master. At 21 years of age the journeyman was expected to produce his master piece and join the ranks of Master coopers.

THE PROCESS

The wood used by the cooper depended on the work it was required to do. For example, oak and hickory were used where hard work and abuse was expected, as in barrels used for transport or a water well bucket. Poplar was used where light weight was a requirement, as in water buckets, scoops and measures. Also, wood was required in various lengths, again, depending on the purpose. For example, buckets required 12" to 16" billets while those for a butter churn needed to be 36". According to Justin the most desirable wood came from the base of a mountain on the Southwest side, preferably near a stream. After gathering the logs and sawing them to length the wood was quartered and billets were then split with a froe and mallet. While the cooper used some tools used by other trades, there were many specialized tools used only by the cooper. The sapwood and pith from each billet were removed with a cooper's axe, a specialized small broad axe utilizing a short handle for better control. It was also used to initially shape the billets. At the shaving horse, the shape of the outside of each stave was cut with a straight drawknife while a curved drawknife was used on the inside. From there it was off to the cooper's long jointer plane to apply the taper and angle the edge of each stave. Iron hoops were either made by a blacksmith or could be made by the cooper and were tapered to fit the shape of the vessel being made. Wooden hoops, however, were always made by the cooper. After initial assembly the outside was smoothed with a curved bottom plane and the inside was smoothed with a scorp or inshave. The top and bot-

A barrel and tub by Justin Bergey

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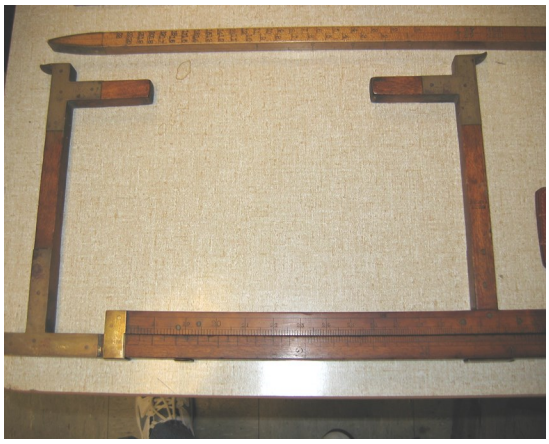
tom of the staves were smoothed with a curved leveling plane also called a "sun" plane. Another plane called a croze cut a groove at the end of a barrel on the inside. The croze provides a seat for the head, to seal the end of the barrel or could be

One of Justin's buckets

applied in the middle of the vessel as in a grain measure. The head could be a single piece of wood or several pieces either dowelled together or assembled with tongue and groove joints. The

Barrel set-up form

head was shaped to fit into the croze. In order to insert the head the cooper used a head key (head vise), an iron handle with a threaded taper which was screwed into head and used to position the head into the croze.



J. Watts Wantage Rod and Barrel Measure

There are many other specialized coopers tools and Justin Bergey had most of them on display. Two that I found most interesting were not the tools of a cooper at all but were used to measure the liquid volume and overall dimensions of a barrel. These were a wantage rod, or gauging rod and a very uncommon, barrel measure. Both were made by Joseph Watts, a Boston manufacturer of rules, gauges and squares from 1834 – 1849, and

J. Watts mark

marked J. Watts Boston. Both were in wonderful condition. Justin displayed a number of items that he has made and provided an opportunity for all to view and ask questions. Both Justin Bergey and George Duin, CRAFTS new Program Director, should be congratulated for providing a most interesting and enjoyable afternoon.

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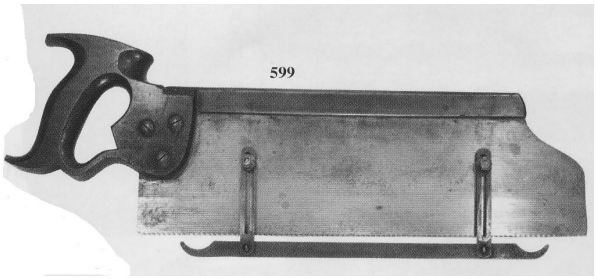
tion, went for $8800. An Ohio Tool Co. No.110 center wheel plow plane in apple wood (Lot 719), in good + condition, brought $2970.

Rules, Saws and Miscellaneous

A Stanley No.6 two foot 2 fold rule with slide and engineers tables (Lot 386) near new went for $468. A Stanley No.53½ Architects rule, made as a special with Special 1/10th and 100th of a foot scales on the outside (Lot 394), in Good + condition sold for $578. A rare Stanley No. 66½ Desk rule (Lot 380), in Good + condition brought $825. A very rare Stanley No.184 Aircraft Gas Gage zig-zag rule in black with orange lettering (Lot 507) made for use as a dip stick, in unused condition brought $633. An unusual Rabone & Sons three foot, three fold rule (Lot 376), with ivory slide and Timber scales, in Good condition sold for $550.

A Henry Disston and Sons improved backsaw



Lot 599 - Rare Henry Diston and Sons improved backsaw with depth gauge

(Lot 599), rare with a depth gauge, in Good + condition went for $825. A panther head handsaw by Woodrough & Mc Parlin (Lot 602) in Good + condition brought $2310.

A Dirigo cast iron, pedal operated jig saw (Lot 199), in black japanning with gold pin striping and lettering, in Fine condition brought $5060.

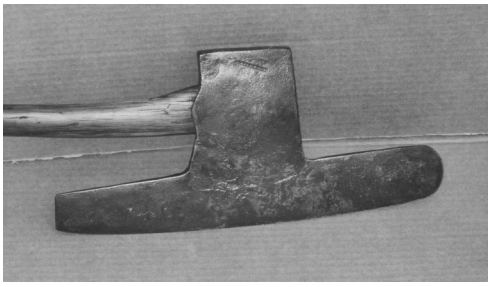
Epilogue

The auction gross was a $497,000 for an average price of $624 per lot. This auction contained a wonderful wide range of scarce and rare tools, many of which were in outstanding condition. Prices of some lots may have been affected by the current lack of confidence in the economy.

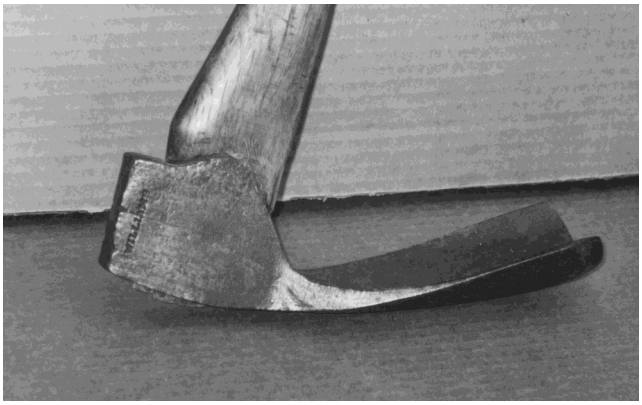
The next Brown International Antique Tool Auction will be held April 7 – 8, 2006 at the Radisson Inn, Camp Hill, PA. I understand it will contain tools from several great collections. See you there.

A Favorite Tool
by Alexander Farnham

Having amassed thousands of antique tools during the more than half a century that I have been a collector, I was placed in a dilemma when Dave Nowicki asked me to write a piece for the Tool Shed on one of my favorites. To narrow down my choice I decided it should have a New Jersey connection, since for many years I have concentrated my interest on tools made within the state. Edged tools, particularly axes, have always been among my favorites, especially those of a "one-of-a-kind" design. I settled on writing about an ax which I picked up at a CRAFTS meeting a couple of years ago.



This unique broadaxe made from a felling axe marked WILLIAMS intrigued me when I first saw it at a CRAFTS meeting and has become increasingly interesting with the passage of time.



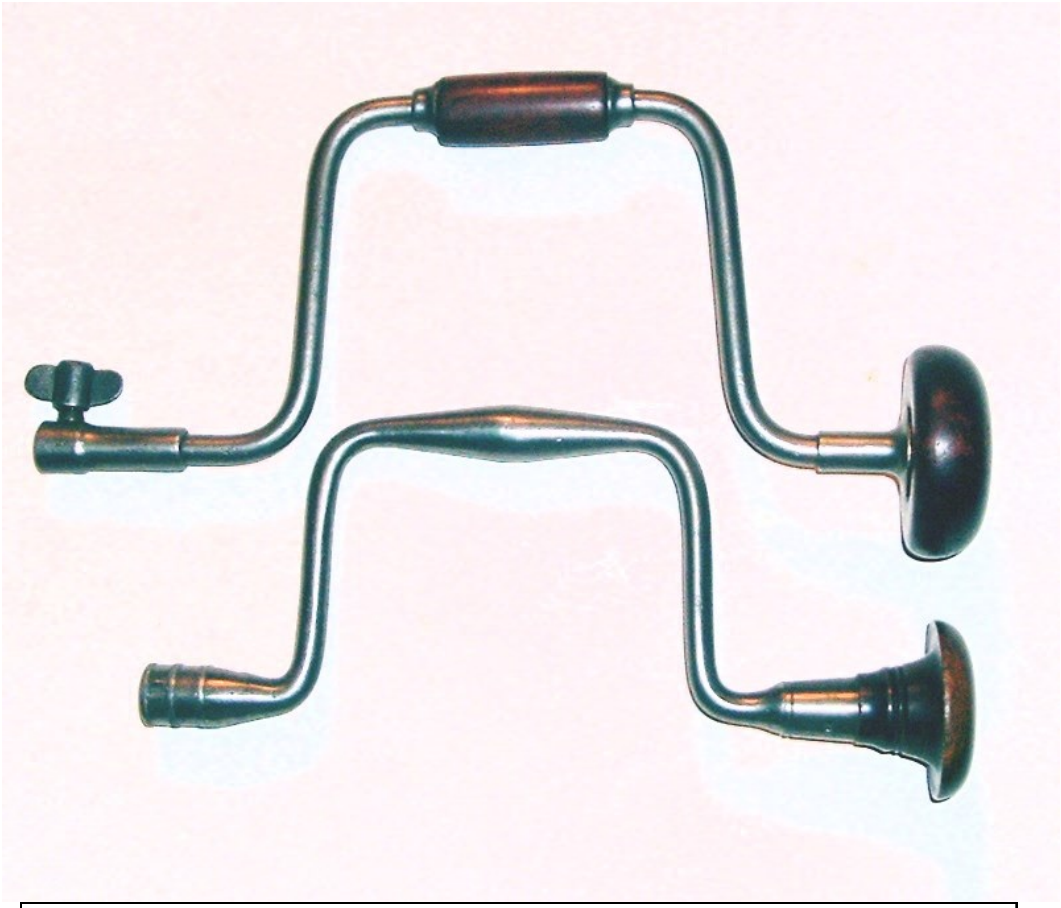
. This rare gutter adze is another of the fine edged tools produced by George Williams in Newark, NJ during the 1800's

The uniqueness of the axe lies in that an unidentified blacksmith produced a 15 ¼" "broadaxe" blade by welding a piece of metal of that length to the body of a felling axe stamped WILLIAMS. George Williams was an edge tool maker who worked in Newark, NJ. As far as is known he worked on his own except when a partner of George Stoudinger during the 1830's and with Martin B. Provost during the 1870"s. Although the bottom end of the blade is flat, the upper end is rounded and fairly sharp as if meant to be used as a barking spud. Whatever its intended use this axe was the product of a skillful and resourceful blacksmith. After some slight cleaning and restoration by Herb Kean, the axe hangs in a place of honor at the top of the stairs to my studio.

ROOKIES

It's hard for me to remember back 30 years to my rookie days as an antique tool collector. But I do recall that they were much more exciting than they are today. I guess as you become more knowledgeable, you become more jaded. It takes one heck-of-a piece to get me excited today. But it's almost a vicarious thrill to see a rookie get all excited about a $20 tool that he bought for $5. Such was the case with my daughter and her fiancé a few months ago.

We had all been to an antique shop together in her town in Massachusetts. I had 3 boxes of nice "antique-shop" tools in the back of my wagon, and the dealer went ape over the condition. The profit was higher than usual, as this dealer had never seen this many nice tools all in one place before. It gave my daughter pause to consider that maybe she could get in on some of this action.



Above is the extremely rare Amidon patent of July 22, 1879 that has a spring loaded receiver for the bit. The brace below is the elusive C.E.Staples configuration c.1860. (Both have been restored.)

People wonder why they can't readily duplicate the selling efforts of a successful dealer. They forget that you have to pay your dues with any collectible. You just don't walk in and start making money hand over fist. My daughter heard these words, but I doubt that she paid much attention. Dad could easily tell her what pieces to buy, her fiancé could clean them up, and they would sell them to the same guy in town that I did. And then they could go to the fancy restaurants.

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Doris, who always suspected that I gave all my tool information to my son Steve because he was a man, and not to Barbara, embarrassed me into giving in. OK, I would do my best to help set them up to buy low, sell high! Not that I considered that the best way-- as I buy low and sell low, and am happy about it. But it was the way they felt they could function with the dealer in town.

I had enough sense to just pick one area of tool collecting and concentrate on that. I figured they would get tired of it soon enough, and I'd be out of it. The area I picked was iron braces. Why? Because they are plentiful, cheap, and there are more surprises to be found with them than in most other areas. So I gave them a short lesson on patent iron braces.

But it didn't go well. Doris said I overdid it, and should simplify it for just a rookie. Simplifying things is not my long suit, as I tend to want to include all the known facts about an item in question. But "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed" asked that I start over. I searched my mind for some key that would help, and looking at my patent braces, it almost jumped out at me.

Barbara's fiancé knew what a Stanley-type brace of today looks like, particularly the shell chuck. I brought the buying criteria down to: any brace that DID NOT have a shell-type chuck, as long as it wasn't over $5 or badly rusted. I figured that would satisfy everyone, and by George it did! They couldn't wait to get on the road to stop at antique shops and flea markets to buy braces.

Well, my great plan both worked and didn't work. The didn't work part became evident when they announced to me a few weeks later that they had 16 braces ranging from $2 to $8. They violated the $5 rule for some pieces that they thought were really "weird". I figured I was in trouble already.

However, one of them must have had a good eye, as there were at least 6 or 7 braces that were fairly collectible, and would sell well on eBay. The long and short of it was that they came out ahead, and considering the two rare ones that I kept for my collection (see photo) -- way ahead. As Steve said (that's Barb's fiancé) they had a good day at the "braces".

Now they go out on the weekend with a mission. Well, not every weekend, but enough to keep the fire going. Sure, after a while, they might get bored and give the whole thing up. But for the time that they are into it, it pleases me to see the old spirit of the hunt that I had years ago. Bravo rookies, we need more of you!

TOOL EVENTS 2005

Jan. 28th Mid-West Tool Collectors - Area"P" Antique Tool Auction 9:30AM at the Holiday Inn 2000 Loucks Rd., York, PA (Route 74 Exit from Rt. 30)

Feb 5th - CRAFTS Meeting 1PM HOST Masonic Lodge Highbridge, New Jersey www.craftsofnj.org

March 10-11 Martin Donnelley Auction Ramada Inn East (formerly Sheraton) Indianapolis, Indiana

March 25th - David Stanley 47th International Auction - England David@davidstanley.com or Ian@davidstanley.com

April 1st CRAFTS Auction and Tool Sale Flemington Elks Club Rt. 12 Flemington, New Jersey Tool Sale at daybreak www.craftsofnj.org

April 7-8 Brown's 28th Auction and Tool Show, Camp Hill, PA ceb@FineToolJ.com

April 14-15 Martin Donnelley Auction Holiday Inn Everett Turnpike Nashua, NH

April 27-29 EAIA Spring meeting Colonial Williamsburg, VA Woodlands Hotel and Suites

WANT ADS

Need help disposing of your tools or home items? Entire or partial house clean-outs available. Call Steve Zluky, (908)534-2710.

Seeking: McKinnon axe of Rockaway, NJ made between 1845 and 1905. Please call Stephen at (732) 682-8236.

Wanted: Petroliana-anything that has to do with old gas stations such as signs, oil cans, gas pumps etc.
Bill Hermanek (631) 360-1216, bhermanek@aol.com

Wanted: Foot powered band saw for collection and to demonstrate. Need not be complete. Have other foot powered machinery for possible trade. Ed Hobbs
(919) 828-2754, hobbsed@portbridge.com

Wanted: Napanoch Axes and other items from Napanoch, NY
Robert Arra (845) 647-1213, homefixer@hvc.rr.com

Wanted: North Bros. non ratcheting screwdrivers, No's. 90 and 95, good plus or better condition, various lengths.
Dave Nowicki (215) 576-5527, dnowicki@verizon.net