The TOOLSHED

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How The Blacksmith Shaped His Day and Ours

By Don Wallace

Bill hook, brush bill, brush hook, hand bill, hedge bill … call it what you will, but the brush hook was used on the farm to clear out the underbrush from the fields or to harvest twigs and stems. "Used widely for cutting and laying hedges, faggoting and chopping kindling in every cottagers back yard. The bill hook's great versatility is shown by its ubiquity in the woodland trades where it is used for felling, cutting, shaping, rinding, cleaning and for sharpening small underwood poles." This according to R.A. Salaman, in his "Dictionary of Woodworking Tools", they were, each and every bill hook, made by a blacksmith.

Don Wallace

The blacksmith in Aton made his most popular and useful shape repeatedly, so that all the townsmen had the same particular pattern or shape. Over in Beton the townsmen and their blacksmith favored a shape that was different. As in Ceton, a blacksmith made still another shape. So that when the king called all these serfs to battle, they showed up with their most effective hand-to-hand combat weapon…their bill hook. They formed and were organized into companies "A", "B", or "C", etc., not because of the alphabetical nature of my artificial town names; but, because they were illiterate, they formed behind the man who held their bill hook shape into the air for them to "guide-on".

When they were slow in forming up, this guide-on fellow grew weary; but being intelligent as well as illiterate, he used his bill hook to fashion a pole which he then stuck into its handle and held it high without stretching or straining. This aspect of weary labor, or laziness in our human nature has been responsible for much of our technological progress. He also found that it made an even better weapon by

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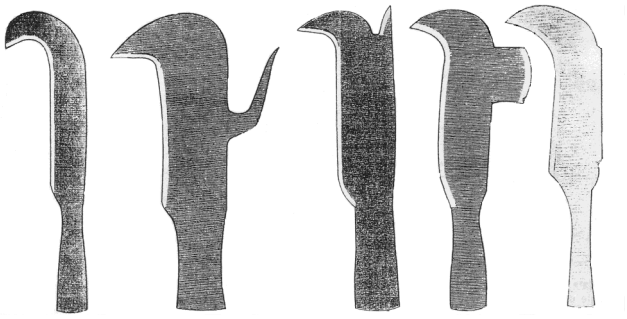

A few of the many different styles of bill hooks.

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June - 4th - CRAFTS Meeting

Troy Boyer - Horn Comb Making

HOST Masonic Lodge - Highbridge, NJ

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of New Jersey

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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.

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CRAFTS WEBSITE
www.craftsofnj.org

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

NEW MEMBERS

Ridgeley Hutchinson, Lambertville, NJ
Jere Hoover, E.Stroudsberg, PA
Danny Birnbaum, E.Orange, NJ
Bob Valich, Santa Rosa, CA

Some members may have errantly received a dues notice if they paid during the past CRAFTS auction. Sorry for the confusion, as the paid up memberships have now been accounted for and transcribed into the computer. Thank You

President's Corner

Wow has it been a busy springtime tooling! The CRAFTS auction started the month of April off with a bang. The weatherman forecasted rain. Yet when I arrived at the Elks parking lot at sunrise, members were setting up tables and fine tools were put out for the small crowd. Within an hour the parking lot was filled and the tailgating was in full swing with many a fine bargain. I took a break from wheeling and dealing and headed inside to check out the auction setup. I was curious to see how James Travis was doing with our new computer setup for the auction. He said it was ready and had already test run the system in a mock auction. It may have taken an extra minute to log in this year but now you are in the system and check in next year will be brief. Sitting next to Herb Kean at an auction is always an experience, and his analysis of the auction bidding early on is insightful for setting up bid strategies. After a slow start prices started to pick up with surprises springing up now and then. I bid often but won infrequently as competition from other collectors and dealers was keen. Finally it came time for the best in show and I really wanted it. The Micalizzi's "Ultimatum" plow plane is an awesome plane and I thought maybe I could add it to my collection. I was one of the main bidders on it but dropped out. I than again came back to become the under bidder but could-n't close the deal. The high bidder, who also purchased Dominic's beautiful ivory plow plane, is a lucky tool collector to have two such fine pieces of New Jersey craftsmanship in his collection. I just hope that the correct information gets out as to their origin and Dominic gets due credit.

Two weeks later I found myself in Nashua New Hampshire. I arrived Thursday afternoon and the tailgating was slow at first but had its surprising moments. The best part of the early arrival was a chance to relax and talk with fellow tool collectors. A dinner with friends Thursday evening with oversized margaritas was delightful. As usual the Donnelly Auction was competitive. I was hoping to win one or two of the rare braces being offered but was surprisingly only the under bidder on many. I was happy that the auction allowed me to win many fine saws for my collection without the competition that the braces imposed.

Auctions aside I have found some time to focus on CRAFTS spectrum of endowments. We have offered three different endowments to young "CRAFTS" persons. An allotment of $500 was given to the North Jersey Craftsman Fair to purchase awards for high school students entering a judged exposition. Often CRAFTS members are judges in this fair. Also $500 from the Micalizzi's Endowment has been given to a student at the Morris County School of Technology graduating from the Woodworking Program. In like manner another graduating student from the Northern Burlington Regional High School Metals Program has been awarded $500 from the Micalizzi's Endowment to help their pursuit working in this field. These students deserve our congratulations and I am sure our monetary support of their endeavors will be appreciated. These are the future CRAFTS members.

Included with this issue is a book on CD by Eric M. Peterson. Eric has kindly allowed us to distribute it free of charge to our members. If you do not want the CD or already have a copy, pass it on to a fellow tool collector. It should be easily loaded from any computer but read the "Read ME" file on the disc first. Thank you Eric it is a scholarly accomplishment that I find myself often going back to study.

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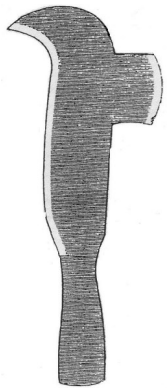
keeping his adversary at a greater distance. The guide-on in today's rifle-toting army is a small flag on a staff carried by the trooper at the right-front rank position in the marching company.

This phenomenon of organizational efficiency and combat proficiency was soon formalized into the pole arms and shafted weapons such as the lance, halberd, spontoon, pike, falchion, and bills used in ancient armies of the past. The armorer who made them was the most highly skilled and respected of the blacksmiths who so specialized. Check out our own brush bill pictured here.



Now if you should think that I have re-written a little history here, please tell me how it really did happen, then, prove it, and I will believe your version. There is a plaque on the wall in the Armor Collection on the second floor of the Philadelphia Museum of Art which inspired this insight. Pierre Terjanian is Associate Curator of Arms and Armor there, and was most cooperative in helping me to acquire copies from the books he selected to demonstrate the pole arms in their great and wonderful assemblage of arms and armor. Some of those shapes look just like your average brush hook, even going so far as to call one category of pole arms "Bills".

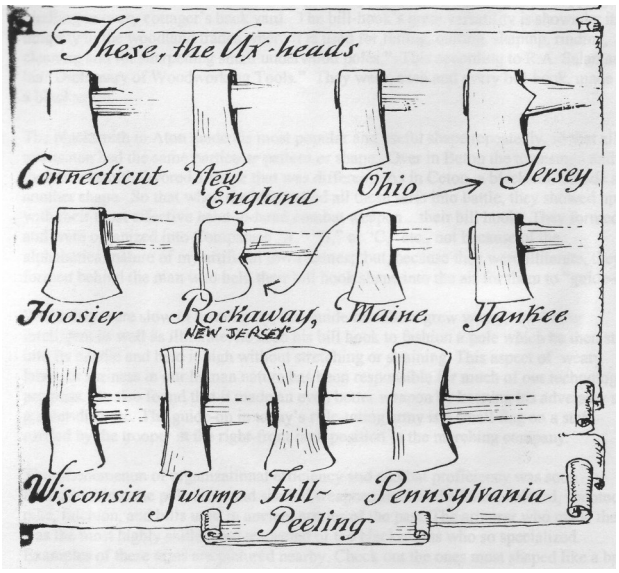
However, several other types of tools were also called "bills", such as a "mill bill", a two-sided edge tool on a wooden handle used to dress a miller's grindstone. We display several mill bills that hang on our Hammer Collection panel near the south wall's western window in the Museum Cellars (at the Historical Society of Haddonfield's Greenfield Hall).

This same tool/town/company identity phenomenon has occurred in the blacksmiths' making of axes and ice tongs. The user of a certain pattern of felling ax or ice tongs swore that his was the best; therefore, the most popular of these shapes (axes pictured at right) had been perpetuated into the twentieth century. Today ice cubes are made at home or are delivered in plastic bags…the whole process is automated and untouched by human hands.

The felling axe, too, has been manufactured by a few remaining tool makers and is now made totally of steel (even its handle in some hatchet cases). There is no longer just an edge of steel forge-welded into an iron base in order to make a more durable edge. The iron and the labor required then cost less than the steel. The axe makers had developed into another blacksmith specialty during the 1800's. Factories employed blacksmiths to make the products on drop forges and more advanced machines. The mass production and marketing of these factories took on the names of larger regions and states for their favorite model identities. The axe had long ago become the most important tool in America's development. The blacksmith, "The King of Toolmakers", not only made his own tools, but the tools of all the other trades too. The shoeing of horses was almost the last of the blacksmith's specialties sustaining his trade to the end.

Imagine to my surprise, just a few years ago, upon entering a small toolmakers shop on Orchid St. in the Frankford section of Philadelphia to see a man working in the center of the room routinely making cold-chisels. These are the edge tools of the plumber and iron-railing installer who must set their products into and through hard, dry concrete steps or floors. I don't think the man even considered himself a blacksmith, but there he was with a small gas forge and a simple anvil putting a sharp edge on a piece of hexagonal iron stock then dipping it in oil or water to harden the cutting edge. So maybe the trade is not yet dead, just routinized and hidden from view. It also lingers regularly around the race tracks; so to the extents the trade is still alive, but virtually invisible now in the USA. Perhaps it flourishes in China?

There is a corps of blacksmiths making iron artworks. Some are hobbyists and others making a living at creating beautiful shapes. There is a Potomac Blacksmith's club that meets in rural Maryland. You should attend a "Spring Fling" weekend with them where they "blow" the anvil high into the air to let you know it's



Examples of Regional axe heads. This illustration is from "American Barns and Covered Bridges" by Eric Sloane

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The D'Elia Antique Tool Museum in Scotland, Connecticut

by Elton W. Hall

The collection of tools, implements, and mechanical devices has always been one of the most engaging activities of members of the Early American Industries Association. This is no abnormal pursuit. From the hunter-gatherers of the earliest era of mankind to those who will spend this evening bidding on eBay, we have been a species of collectors. We originally collected as a means of survival. In recent times our reasons for collecting have broadened to every conceivable reason, and some are not sure why they collect. They just do. Some are passionate, purposeful collectors. Others are simply opportunists. Some are driven by intellectual curiosity, others because they like having stuff around. Some are born collectors, others come to it comparatively late in life. But whatever, whyever, however, and whenever a collector takes up his or her interest, the time inevitably comes when he or she must consider what is to be the disposition of the collection. Here there are not nearly as many choices. Basically, there are four. It can be sold, given away, or bequeathed, and there are many ways in which each of these may be accomplished. The fourth alternative is to simply ignore it and let your executors worry about it. Through most of these options, in one way or another, the collections are redistributed for others to own and enjoy. In most cases this is a good thing, for collections need material for their growth, refinement, and reconfiguration. Occasionally, something extraordinarily unusual and wonderful happens, when a collector has an important collection together with the imagination, means, and good will to ensure his collection's preservation for all of us to see, study, and enjoy. Such is the case with the new D'Elia Antique Tool Museum in Scotland, Connecticut (Figure 1). Andrew D'Elia (Figure 2), a member of the Early American Industries Association since 1972, has had a long interest in tools and particularly in woodworking planes. Born in New London,

Figure 1 (top). The new D'Elia Antique Tool Museum in Scotland, Connecticut.
Figure 2 (above). EAIA members Andy D'Elia and Bill Curtis inspect one of the many cases at the museum.
EXCEPT AS NOTED, ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

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Connecticut, he graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1958 and began a forty-year career in the paperboard packaging industry. While working in Leominster, Massachusetts, he lived in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, where he bought and restored an eighteenth-century house. He also met Roger Smith (Figure 3) and Ken Roberts, who encouraged his interest in tools and taught him much about them. At a tool sale, he found and bought his first plane, an E. B. Jackson crown molder from Newfane, Vermont. It had a profile that nearly fit a molding in Andy's house. If the hook were not already set by then, that did it. There were other EAIA members who helped and encouraged him as his collecting knowledge and experience began to develop: Herman Freedman, William Hilton, John and Paul Kebabian, and Thomas Relihan. He focused on planes, with a particular interest in patented planes. During the course of thirty years' effort, he has assembled a truly notable collection including a broad representation from the earliest known American makers to about World War II, comprising a great diversity of style and purpose. Within the collection lies an important concentration of patented planes.

In 1982 Andy founded Atlantic Packaging, his own company in Norwich, Connecticut. This allowed him and his wife, Anna Mae, to return closer to his native place, and they bought another eighteenth-century house in Scotland, Connecticut, a charming old town east of Willimantic. They restored and renovated the house, which is not far from the center of town, surrounded by stone walls and gardens with woods beyond.

Scotland has been largely overlooked by twentieth century economic developments. The benefit of that is that it has remained unspoiled by modern development and retains much of its colonial period charm. The downside is that there is not much of a tax base, and the town doesn't have a great deal of money to provide services and amenities to its citizens. A few years ago, there was a need for a new library to replace the town's six-hundred-square-foot room in the town hall. A proposal was made to convert an old firehouse into a library, a relatively inexpensive but not very satisfactory solution to the problem. The D'Elias became aware of the proposal, noted its shortcomings, and made a suggestion of their own.

Figure3. Roger Smith happily surrounded by patented planes. Roger encouraged Andy in his early collecting

Andy had been thinking about his collection, which had grown to a considerable size and importance. The collection was eminently worth preserving, but creating a standalone museum presents problems that go far beyond the provision of bricks and mortar to house it. There are issues of security, maintenance, staffing, and programming, both immediately upon opening and over the long term.

There didn't seem to be an existing museum that would be an appropriate repository for the collection and could make a permanent commitment to its care and exhibition. Combining a museum with another sympathetic facility would solve or ease many of the problems.

The D'Elias made an offer to the Town of Scotland of providing funds for the construction of a new library building that would include a room dedicated to the exhibition of the D'Elia tool collection. The offer was gratefully accepted, and plans for the new building went forward. The town owned a parcel of land on Brook Road that had adequate buildable space for the library, was adjacent to the new firehouse, and diagonally across from the elementary school. It was partially surrounded by wetlands, which would provide space for nature trails. The firm of Schoenhardt Architects, Inc., of Simsbury, Connecticut, was engaged to design the building. In the spring of 2005 the handsome new building was completed, and the occupants of the library and museum began moving in.

Design and construction of the building was funded by the D'Elia Foundation. The Town of Scotland manages the Library, and the museum is controlled by the D'Elia Foundation. From a lobby inside the main entrance, patrons of the library proceed straight ahead into the reading room and circulation desk. Visitors to the museum turn right into a handsomely finished room providing a thousand square feet of exhibition space. A restroom accessible from the lobby is available to both organizations as well as a conference room of the left side of the lobby.

Upon entering the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum, one receives the full impact of the collection. Approximately twelve hundred planes are exhibited in twenty-five handsome oak cases with glass doors and shelves (Figures 4–7). The room is finished with simple, restrained elegance. Over each window is a stained glass

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Figure 4. One of about twenty cases in which the collection is displayed. Note also the framed tool advertisements that are also part of the collection.

Figure 5 (below). There are several octagonal cases that hold some of the collection's highlights including the Knowles jointer (in the center of the case) and the gunmetal no. 50 Miller plow plane, which has an interesting patent history.

Figure 6. A group of transitional planes is displayed at the top of a group of oak storage cupboards.
Photograph by Roger K. Smith

Figure 7 (below). On the upper shelf are three Wing Taber patented planes dated February 28, 1865. Below them are three Worrall patented planes dated May 27, 1856.
Photograph by Roger K. Smith

panel illustrating some of the landmarks of the collection. Andy selected the subjects and had the windows made for the room by Architectural Stained Glass of Brooklyn,
Connecticut, (Figures 8, 9 and front cover). Otherwise, the décor simply provides an appropriate setting without competing with the collection. The display cases are well-lighted with as little obscuring of the objects as possible. Mirrors on the back give an additional view (Figure 10). The molding planes have their noses elevated by special stands made from walnut harvested on the D'Elia property. This allows a better view of both the maker's mark and the profile. Each plane is accompanied by a caption providing the basic information.

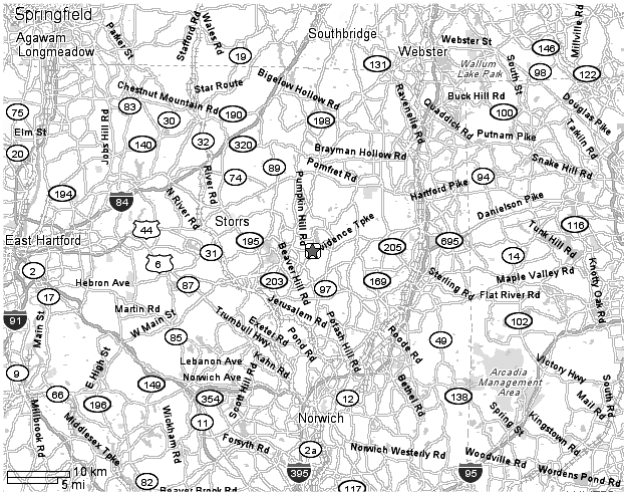
The D'Elia collection of planes is remarkably comprehensive. While the concentration is on patented
planes, that group is put into the context of the whole history of planemaking in America from the early-eighteenth century up to World War II. Francis and John Nicholson and Cesar Chelor are all nicely represented.
The planes are grouped in the cases according to a number of themes. Early planes are together. Then there are a number of trades or processes represented. For example, all the different planes necessary for making window sash are in a group. Because the D'Elias came from Connecticut, he had a special interest in Connecticut-made planes, so those planes also have a case.

The collection of patented planes must be among the most extensive ever assembled. It is little wonder that Roger K. Smith, the leading authority on patented planes in America, and Andy D'Elia have been natural allies in its development. While the collection includes many of the great, not to mention the greatest, rarities (Figure 11), there are also the more common but in some ways more important contributions to the advancement of plane design and development. Moreover, some patents are represented in great depth. There are no less than eighteen different variations on the Wing H. Taber patent of February 28, 1865. During the years following the Civil War, there arose in the United States a patent mania. Huge numbers of patents were issued for all sorts of things, whether or not they were useful and without regard to whether they were ever likely to go into production. Brokers bought and sold patents, often hounding inventors for an option to buy any patents they might be granted. In principle, a patent protects the rights of an inventor to exclusive use of a new device he has created or an improvement on an existing device. When you think of it, a plane is a simple tool, a means of holding a cutter in a constant position in relation to the material it is to cut. How much room for improvement is there? A glance at the D'Elia collection or Roger Smith's two volume *Patented and Transitional Metalic Planes in America* (published by the author, 1981, 1992, suggests that the answer is, "a lot." But the rush to the patent office was more complex than that. Certainly there were useful inventions and improvements, but there were other reasons for obtaining a patent. A carefully worded patent could enable a manufacturer to circumvent someone else's patent. A patent was a helpful marketing tool, as it impressed the customer that there was something special about the item making it more desirable than the competing article. A patent was a marketable document in itself regardless of whether the invention it protected would ever go into production. An inventor might have neither the means nor even the intention of manufacturing his invention, but he could sell the patent to a manufacturer who

The entrance to the Scotland Library and the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum.

Plan Your Visit
The D'Elia Antique Museum is located at 21 Brook Road, in Scotland, Connecticut, in The eastern part of the state. It is easily accessible From the major interstate highways that cross Connecticut. (See maps below.) The museum is Scheduled to be open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from the first Saturday in May to the last Sunday in September from 10 A.M.to 4 P.M.Admission is free. Visit the museum's Web site for more information <www.deliatoolmuseum.com>.

On Sunday, May 7, EAIA, NETCA, and ATTIC will hold a joint meeting at the museum, beginning at 7 A.M.with tailgating in the adjacent firehouse parking lot.The museum opens at 9 o'clock, and at 9:30, Andy D'Elia will give a brief talk about the collection. He will be joined by one or two of his collecting associates who have special knowledge of the collection. For more information, visit the EAIA Web site <www.eaiainfo.org> or call 508-993-9578.



The museum is located in southeastern Connecticut.

Figures 8 and 9. Architectural Stained Glass of Brooklyn, Connecticut, designed the stained glass windows in the library.

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wanted only to eliminate the possibility of competition for his own product. Others bought patents on speculation in the hope of turning a profit through manufacture, franchising, or resale. Writing the specification for a patent became an exacting task in order to avoid infringement of an existing patent while securing the broadest possible coverage for the item it was protecting. A new specialty of the law came into being for writing specification and negotiating their way through the patent office.

An invention did not have to be any good to get a patent. It just had to be different in some way. One can see in the D'Elia collection examples of how planes that made significant advances in plane technology became successful and spawned imitators, who more through the literary skill of their patent attorneys than their own inventive genius obtained patents. Or perhaps they only applied for patents and did not receive them. Or perhaps they merely marked their tools "Pat. Pending" without even bothering to apply.

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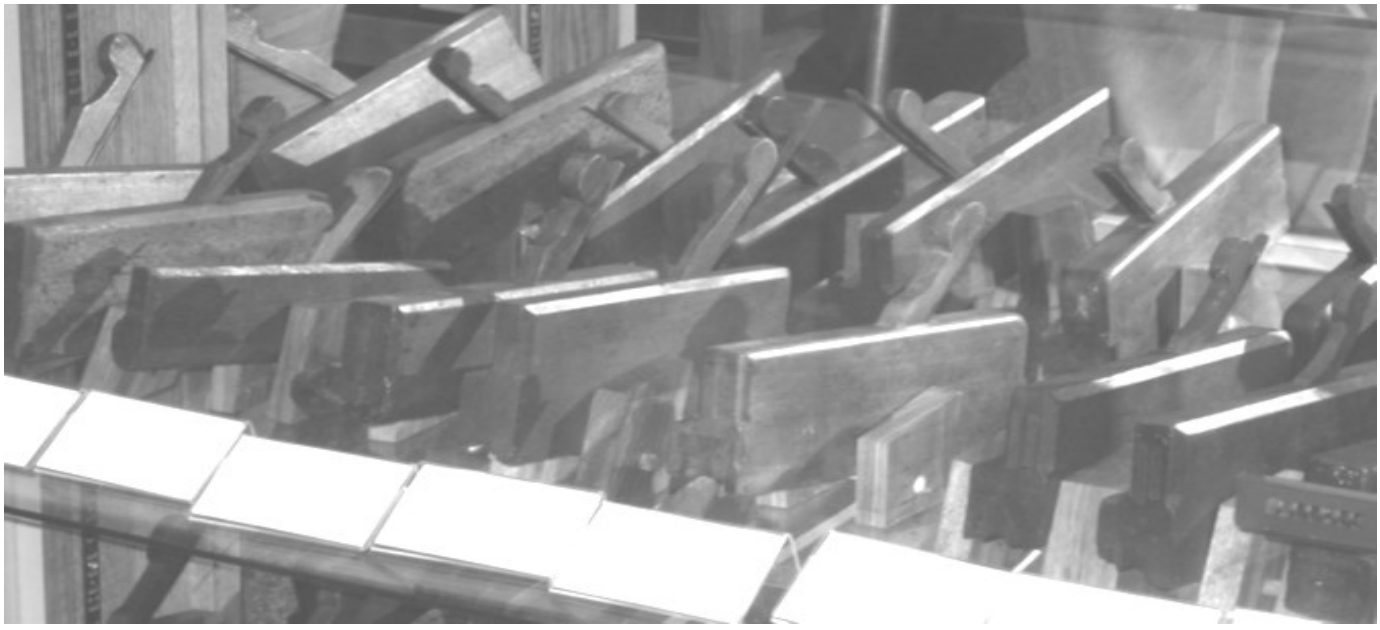

Figure 10. The backs of the cases at the museum are mirrored and the planes—such as these early-nineteenth century examples—are displayed to allow close inspection of details by the visitor.

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Figure 11 (above). The Louis Rodier planes, two of the many gems in the collection. Inset shows the planes as displayed in the museum with the related patent drawings.

Photograph of Rodier planes courtesy Martin J. Donnelly Antique Tools.

As a fellow in the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture many years ago, I marveled at the quality of workmanship exhibited in the superb collection of furniture assembled by Henry Francis duPont. So, too, did the collection of architectural woodwork gathered there to provide settings for the decorative arts show the extraordinary ability of its creators. Paneled rooms, doors, cornices and other moldings, and window sash, sometimes with curved as well as straight pieces, became objects of my admiration, as did the skilled tradesmen who produced them. My knowledge of tools was limited. Had I known what the carpenters and cabinetmakers had to work with, it would have made their achievements more comprehensible, albeit not a bit less admirable.

Planemakers had to know about changing fashions in architecture, interior design, and furniture. They had to up-date their products to enable those who used the tools to produce what their customers wanted. As moldings and window sash became lighter and more delicate in the early-nineteenth century, for example, the planemakers had to change the profiles of their products to follow these changing tastes.

The foregoing are examples of the kinds of things one can learn from the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum.

There are many more. The opportunity to see so many planes together in one room, where you can study them, go from one to another, and compare them, will enable visitors to gain in a relatively short time an understanding of this particular aspect of the mechanical arts that would otherwise require decades of research, study, and travel. Andy and his family and all who have assisted him in building this collection have provided the tool world with a remarkable new amenity. It is a great gift to all who are interested in American material culture, the history of the mechanical arts, and the woodworking plane in particular. May the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum enjoy a long and useful life.

This article originally appeared in The Chronicle of the Early American Industries Association, 59, no. 1 (2005). Reprinted with permission.

Jeffrey M. Fiant's Windsor Chairs

Presentor at the April meeting By Dave Nowicki

Whether it's a comb-back, bow-back, fan-back, with a continuous arm, knuckle arm or short arm no other chair has been so accepted than the Windsor chair. It's comfortable, light weight and strong which is why it's been so popular for more than two centuries.

Jeffrey M. Fiant

Jeffrey Fiant, a Berks County Pennsylvania chair maker, provided a fascinating insight into how Windsor chairs are constructed. Jeff made his first chair at 17, as a senior high school project, and soon after began making chairs full time. For the last 26 years he's been building them in the styles common to the 1760 – 1790 period. Windsor chairs originally were made by country craftsmen and were not considered "high style" like those of Sheraton and Chippendale and were designed robustly for continual use both indoors as well as outside of the home. In fact, many have lasted for more than 200 years. The seat, arm and spindle styles on these early chairs varied according to maker and can help identify the region of the country they originated from. For example, seats from Pennsylvania chairs were larger than those from New England due to the differences in the physical size of the population.

Several different woods are used in each chair. The seats are Poplar, a wood common to Pennsylvania. According to Jeff, the color of the poplar makes a big difference in its workability. Light colored wood is harder to work than the green or purple shades common to poplar. Jeff makes his legs from hard maple and now orders his leg stock as 2" dowels rather than in long planks. It's cheaper and saves the time he used to spend readying the stock for the lathe. Hickory is the wood favored for the arms but sometimes he uses oak for a continuous arm chair. Both are steam bent for the particular style. I was surprised to learn that much of the steam bending for Jeff's chairs is not done in his shop but is sent out to a company that specializes in steam bent wood products. Hickory is used for the spindles because of its flexibility. And it's this flexibility in the spindles that helps give the chair its longevity. Spindles must be turned from straight stock which is flattened immediately before the lathe turning begins.

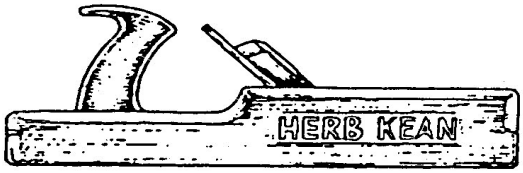
Here Jeff shapes a seat with an adz

When it comes to the tools used in the construction of his chairs, Jeff was adamant that the hand tools he uses are for specific jobs and are far faster than power tools. Through the years he's tried many different tools and has settled on a gutter adz to shape the seat and an inshave to scoop out the seat. The holes for the spindles are drilled with an auger bit and tenons are made with a tenon cutter mounted in a brace. Power tools are not shunned where they make sense, this is a business after all, and all but the spindle holes are drilled by eye using a power drill. Jeff no longer uses a travisher for final seat finishing, instead a pneumatic sander performs that task.

To finish a chair Jeff uses two basic finishes: a single color oil base paint, usually dark green followed by a coat of paste wax and an aged/distressed finish consisting of individual coats of red, mustard yellow and a black wash coat all sanded to expose the different layers at the appropriate wear points.

Two of Jeff's chairs, a knuckle arm bow-back and a child's comb-back.

The finished chairs that Jeff brought with him to the April CRAFTS meeting are beautiful and are a testament to his skill as a true craftsman.



Kean Kuttin's

déjà vu

It's been a while since the talk of how to restore or refinish has come on the scene in the tool world. Some years back it was quite the rage, with some pretty drastic differences of opinion. But, as things in life become more mature, the heat of arguments seem to mellow, and common ground is usually found. I'm thinking that's how it is now between the "fix-it-up" and the "leave-it-alone" guys.

I was fairly one-way about it years ago. To me a tool had to be functional to be worthy of my collection. And I wanted it to look good also. I did give ground on 18th century stuff, or a very expensive piece, but that was all. Today, you could say that I have definitely mellowed. There are a few pieces that have a taste of history about them that I won't touch, even if they don't work or look ugly. Not many, I'd have to admit, but just enough to break the firm rule I once had.

On the other hand, I have finally convinced some of the museum people to make the piece functional, if it is to properly display its usage. I don't put a shine on these pieces, and I will readily admit that a shine is not necessary. But, if it is a working piece that a craftsman would be proud to own, and was usually kept in excellent condition, then perhaps a slight shine where the hand would have burnished it, is proper.

Then of course there are the tools that actually look better with a shine. And the majority of people that buy them want the shine. The English have a way of shining things that you could go blind looking at. I have always felt that it was slightly overdone. But they sell very well, shined "to kill". So they can't be totally wrong.

I still like to French polish some tight-grained wood to give it that fine furniture look. And the majority of collectors (with the possible exception of the purists) love it. I have learned not to do this on a piece that depends upon its primitive ancestry to be a valuable collectible.

I can understand why some collectors want a piece "unfooled around with". It's because some of the fix-it-up guys screw the piece up with their unprofessional restorations. I try to keep it to the original look of what a prideful craftsman would have kept it at. To me, that gives it its rightful respect.

I have even learned to tolerate the dull oxidation of brass that comes with age. And moreso, if it has the highlights of hand wear. (It's called the Granick syndrome.) But with the cheaper more common pieces, I just hit them with some tripoli on the buffing wheel and listen to the oohs and ahhs.

Over the years, and usually in some degree of jest, I have been prodded for the use of the belt sander, the wire wheel and the buffer. I will never give them up, because each has its place in restoring, and each must be used with some modicum of respect for the history of the tool. Grinding or sanding away important patina or contours of the piece is obviously not in the best interest of the tool historian. But taking off layers of schmutz or heavy rust is definitely OK in my book.

I'm sure that this treatise will be greeted with some boos from the dyed-in-the-wool purist. So be it. I still think we functionalists have them greatly outnumbered. However, I would be happy to relinquish my column space to those purists who wish to present their views --- (as screwy as those views may be).

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mealtime! Their talents are incomparable and some have introduced blacksmithing into a third-world South American community.

Although the spreading Chestnut has also disappeared from these parts, the blacksmith's spirit still shapes the world we live in. His make-fix-or-repair anything attitude rests in the souls of our mechanic's, machinists, and engineers. In this throw-away and fantastic plastics society our efforts to preserve these old ways is our way of honoring their good works and healthy spirits so that our children and grandchildren might understand what they did here.

The technology education that every academic child needs today starts right here where our old tools represent the history of technology. As you know, a true technology education is not just about information and computers. There are many other important technologies as well. The blacksmith's tools, his products, and the stories we tell about them will help to shape our children's understanding and serve as their guide.

You may have noticed that this academic child and his computer both had some difficulty with an inconsistent hyphen. "The steady evolution of the language seems to favor union: two words eventually become one, usually after a period of hyphenation." So I will let it stand as written in order to demonstrate the transitions in history. My computer even capitalizes at will! Let the Editor sort it out!

Bill hook	bill-hook	billhook
Brush bill	brush-bill	brushbill
Brush hook	brush-hook	brushhook
Hand bill	hand-bill	handbill
Hedge bill	hedge-bill	hedgebill

Madison, NJ - On Sunday, June 4th, the Museum of Early Trades & Crafts welcomes tool expert, Herb Kean.

A long-time collector of antique tools, Herb Kean, will give a fascinating lecture on antique tools and the various processes to restore them. With his vast knowledge of tools, Herb has written many articles and books on the subject, including Restoring Antique Tools and Tool Tales. He has also written the section on tools for The New Book of Knowledge and has appeared on the History Channel. Herb is a member of numerous antique tool groups and is acknowledged by museum, library and educational institutions as an authority on antique tool restoration.

For information call 973-377-2982 ext 10
www.metc.org.

TOOL EVENTS 2006

June 4th - CRAFTS Meeting 1PM HOST Masonic Lodge
Highbridge, New Jersey www.craftsofnj.org

June 15-17 M-WTCA Spring National Meeting
Rochester Civic Auditorium
Rochester, MN
Hollis Feeser (507) 282-3175

July 7 - 8 Martin Donnelly Antique Tool Fair and Listed Auction Withington Auction Estate
Hillsboro Center, NH
www.mjdtools.com

August 4 - 5 Martin Donnelly Antique Tool s Listed Auction
Avoca, New York
www.mjdtools.com

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: 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

Anna Rokita always draws a crowd when she demonstrates her antique apple peelers. She recently presented to middle school students during their Antique Tool Day.