The TOOLSHED

NUMBER 151

April 2008

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Wooden Compass Planes

By John M. Ross

The compass plane is basically a smoothing plane which is curved from toe to heel. It is used for shaping curved surfaces, for example, on furniture, barrels, boats and carriages. A compass plane cannot form a curve of greater curvature than its own sole; probably this is the reason why the shape of the sole is not a true circular arc but is more curved between the toe and the mouth.

Most compass planes are seven to ten inches long and coffin shaped, as the regular smoother. Many appear to have been made by reshaping the sole of a smoother, which results in a more open mouth and leads to a greater chance of tearing the wood fibers. This probably accounts for the numerous examples found in flea markets where a patch has been let into the sole to tighten the mouth. The front of the mouth always bears the most pressure and wears faster. (Ref. 1) An added difficulty is the changing grain direction in forming curves, which causes greater chipping or tearing and requires reversing the direction of the cut when working the other side. (Ref.2)
One look at the writers' collection of compass planes shows a wide variation in styles which can be categorized a fixed or adjustable. Variations in the fixed style involve a means of imposing the quality of the cut and/or extending the useful lifetime of the plane. The adjustable types involve the use of some sort of mechanism to match more closely the curvature of the sole to that of the curve being worked.

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Figure 1 shows three basic compass planes. On the left, a regular plane most suitable for general work; to the right, a craftsman – modified plane with a handle, possibly for working less accessible surfaces as found in coach work, and above, is a reverse (concave) sole used, for example, to smooth the outside surface of wooden pulleys. Some later plane makers, such as Wm. Marples & Sons offered matched pairs of convex and concave compass plane specifically for coach makers.

Fig. 1 Three basic compass planes

One obvious improvement is to strengthen the body using a more robust material such as boxwood, lignum vitae or rosewood. Alternatively, reinforcing the sole with steel or brass offered greater wear resistance and enabled use of a tight mouth. Use of a skewed iron, though rarely found, does facilitate

(Continued on page 3)

April 6th- CRAFTS Meeting
HOST Masonic Lodge—Highbridge, NJ
Speaker: Richard Ryder
Coffin Making and Undertaking

Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society
of New Jersey

President……..……BOB GARAY, Hopatcong
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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: Jim Bode, P.O. Box 372 - Claverack, NY 12513 (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

Jack and Rosemary Macqueen, Glen Gardner, NJ
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Ken Walters, Livingston, MT

President's Corner

Finally the winter is over. Don't get me wrong I somewhat enjoy the winter - well at least I put up with it. I have to admit after seeing all the weather related events happening around the country this winter, I think we had a pretty good winter here in New Jersey. I ran into many old acquaintances down in the basement this past winter. Cleaning the dust off the collection is a great way for one to enjoy the hobby of tool collecting. As I sorted thru the collection I often came across a tool I just about forgot I had. Cleaning them off and re-studying their characteristics, I often find something intriguing I had not realized before. The way my memory is going in another couple of years I can discover the same tool all over again. I spent some time culling out the collection selling many earlier acquisitions on eBay. I found the tool market strong especially overseas as the weak dollar offers a chance for foreign bidders to compete.

During those cold blistery nights I also found some time to do some research on antique tools. My favorite book from this winter is "*From Logs to Lumber*", by Dale Butterworth and Tom Whalen. It is an outstanding reference book on the many log rules of the New England area. I had some interest in this area and was lucky enough to have spent a day with Dale many years ago. This visit gave me a taste of log rules and inspired me to search for them. My family vacations at Lake Winnipesaukee, New Hampshire unearthed some great rules and calipers. While reading this book I would often run down to the basement to double check a rule pertaining to a new bit of information just gleamed from my reading. I will be giving a book review on this reference book in our June Tool Shed.

Now that Spring is officially here it is time to get back to the best part of tool collecting - the hunt. Flea markets will be abuzz soon and tool auctions are just around the corner. The CRAFTS Auction is shaping up and our Auction Manager tag team of Greg Welsh and Steve Zluky have been spending their winter making sure we have an outstanding event. It is planned for the first Saturday in May, so get your spring cleaning done in April so you can escape for a day full of antique tools. Hope to see you there.

(Continued from page 1)
cross-grain work.

Taking a hint from the early English mitre plane, use of a boxwood plug at the front of the mouth, fitted with a vertical mortise, resists wear and can be driven down periodically to restore any wear at the front of the mouth..

The most common form of an adjustable compass plane – and quite often the only example – is the T-front compass, in which an adjustable toe stop, often in boxwood or ebony, is inserted in a vertical dovetail in the toe and held in position by a screw. A similar variation used an internal iron step near the toe, adjusted by a brass thumb screw or a slotted screw from the top.

A much rarer example by Gabriel (London, 1770-1796) has the entire front section of the toe adjustable by a brass screw stop. (Ref. 3)

Salaman noted that T-front compasses were difficult to use effectively (Ref. 4) and many of the following variations would seem to be craftsmen's attempts to improve upon the basic design.

A simple development for a more robust tool was to introduce a T-front adjuster into a solid boxwood body. Another variation was to incorporate the T-front with a boxwood plug at the front of the mouth

Fig. 2 T-front adjustable compass with mouth plug

Fig. 3 Mathieson Double Adjuster Compass Plane

(Fig. 2)

One unique innovation was to combine the T-front with a second adjuster an equal distance behind the mouth (Fig. 3) as offered by Alex Mathieson &

Fig.4 T-Front Compass with Adjustable Flexible Rear Sole

Son (Glasgow 1855 – 1870).

Still more T-adjuster variations have been found with the adjuster located at the rear, and an obvious variant, having adjusters at both toe and heel. Yet another variation was the incorporation of a T-front adjuster with a flexible steel sheet attached behind the mouth and adjustable at the heel. (Fig. 4)

About the only additional variation possible would seem to be a full flexible sole capable of defining the desired curvature. Examples using a flexible wooden sole are known. These include introducing horizontal cuts into the plane body from each end (Ref. 5) or by the addition of a flexible secondary sole

Fig.5 Compass Plane With Secondary Flexible Wooden Sole

as illustrated in Fig. 5.

A similar example was reported earlier by Richard Starr (Ref. 6). A different approach using a pattern makers plane having six interchangeable soles of different toe to heel contours was illustrated by Rob-

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)
erts (Ref. 7).

The ultimate example was the full spring steel sole attached to the plane mouth and adjusted at

Fig.6 Fully Adjustable Flexible Steel Sole

each end. (Fig. 6)

This technique was incorporated into metal Stanley planes from 1880 and used for over eighty years.

Many categories of wooden planes include compass types. Coopers, in addition to the concave version, also used a two dimensional convex (round-both-ways) plane called a Stoup, used for finishing the inside of barrels.

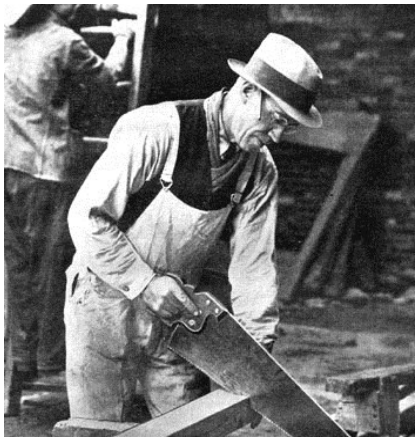
A number of sash planes were needed for circular work for forming moldings on circular carriage windows, ovals, arched windows and fanlights. On a smaller scale a variety of luthiers, violin and instrument makers needed curved profiles. None of these have been found which have means of adjusting the curvature, except for occasional T-front rabbets both in regular and miniature sizes.

The author thanks his son, Adrian C. S. Ross for the photography.

References:

1. John M. Whelan, The Wooden Plane, The Astragal Press 1993, p. 156.
2. Michael Dunbar, Antique Woodworking Tools, Hastings House, NY, 1977, p.129.
3. Jane & Mark Rees, The Tool Chest of Benjamin Seaton, TATHS 1994, p.134.
4. R. A. Salaman, Dictionary of Tools Geo. Allen & Unwin, Fifth impression 1982, p.315.
5. Kenneth D. Roberts, Wooden Planes in 19th Century America, Volume 1, K. Roberts Publishing Co. 1978, p.207.
6. Richard Starr, Chronicle of E.A.I.A. 30(4) 55 (1977).
7. Kenneth D. Roberts, idem p.268.

The Carpenter's Tools



"Twas only a kit of carpenter's tools
We were chancing off that night.

The man who owned the tools was there
A carpenter whose hair was white.
To draw the stubs until the winning share
Would place the tools within another's care.

Aye! Only a kit of tools you say
Objects of metal hard and bright.
No! We chanced off something else that day
Something that didn't seem just right.

All the labor of yesteryear.
Homes that they built for those in the past
Of service come to an end at last.
Leaving his heart, his head, his hand

In a chest of tools, this white-haired man.
To end his days in a home for them
Whose years of service were at an end.
The sad look on that aged face

As each number shortened the space.
Of time when he must bid farewell for good
To old friends of his, of metal and wood.
He had used them for years, they were always there.

'Twas awfully sad, the whole affair.
Like playing pitch with an old man's soul.
Pushing him on to the final goal.

Into the sidelines and out of the race
While a younger man takes up his place.

The tools of his trade, the hammer and saw
It struck me with wonder and something of awe.
As we laughingly shout and loudly cry
To see who the winning share did buy.

How stupid of us, we were such fools
To think we were chancing off
ONLY CARPENTER'S TOOLS"
- Julius Frerich

William McNiece—Sawmaker
Part 2—by Wiktor Kuc

A friend of mine, Frank Brickhouse, sent this story to me to publish on my website (www.wkFineTools.com). The saw is in his possession. My thanks go to Frank for providing this story.

My recent handsaw find contains a mystery. It is marked, J. D. Rodgers & Bro. 4098 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, Cast Steel - Warranted. Who was J.D. Rodgers & Bro.?

J. D. Rodgers & Bro.
4098 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, PA

The saw was listed on eBay as a Wm McNiece saw because the handle hardware had the patented saw handle clamp by Wm. McNiece. The hardware information is Wm. McNiece, Phil'a Pa. Pat. Apr. 18, 82.

I assumed the saw blade to be a Wm. McNiece due to the information provided by the seller. The seller's description stated the only visible blade markings were the words Philadelphia and Cast Steel Warranted. W. McNiece was a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania saw maker. I reviewed the W. McNiece history provided on this website (wkfinetools.com) and decided to ask the seller a question concerning the screws that attach the clamp. The seller assured me the screws were original.

I was the only bidder. I waited in excitement for the saw to arrive... The saw was disassembled for inspection and cleaning. The blade was cleaned and the blade markings became visible by using the method I have made available on this website.

J.D.ROGERS & BRO 4098 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, Cast Steel - Warranted

The saw is marked J.D. Rodgers & Bro with a patented Wm. McNiece saw handle clamp. I provided pictures to confirm that all parts are original to the saw. Howard's wood soap and feed-n-wax wood preserver were used to clean and protect the handle.

This is very interesting saw and I suspect it is unique. It has very nice example of the Saw Handle Clamp, patented by William McNiece - Patent 256,493 - 04/18/1882. The unique information is that the maker of this saw, J. D. Rodgers & Bro - 4098 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, PA, is not listed in any reference material available to us.

In attempt to find more information about J. D. Rodgers & Bro we contacted Carl Bopp, well known researcher and frequent contributing writer to EAIA's Chronicle magazine (and a CRAFTS member). Carl was generous enough to spend time and provide us with very well documented information. Here is an excerpt from email we have received:

Wiktor, I know I would not sleep well until I checked out that saw mark, so today I went and looked them up. This is what I found. The Philadelphia directories that I checked were 1874, 77, 78, 82, 83, 89, 94 and 1899.

- Boyd's 1874 business directory," Rodgers Brothers (George C & Jacob D Rodgers) hardware 4048 Market". [This is the only time George C. was listed.]
- In 1877 under Hardware and Cutlery "Rodgers J D & Bro, 4074 Lancaster Av". [No hint of Brothers name but J D is now first so I don't think it is George C. Note they are now on Lancaster Ave.]
- 1878, "Rodgers J. D. & Bro. (Jacob D. & John G. R.), hardware, 4074 Lancaster Av". "Rodgers Jacob D. (J. D. Rodgers & Bro), 4074 Lancaster Av". "Rodgers John G. R. (J. D. Rodgers & Bro), 4074 Lancaster Av". [The store and both brothers are at 4074 Lancaster Ave.]
- 1882 under Hardware and Cutlery "Rodgers J. D. 4098 Lancaster Av". [Now at 4098 Lancaster Ave. The, & Bro., was not listed but I think it should have been.]
- 1883 "Rodgers J. D. & Brother (Jacob D. & John G. R.), hardware 4098 Lancaster Av". [Both brothers are also listed as living at 4098 Lancaster Ave.]
- 1889, "Rodgers Jacob D. hardware, 641 Preston" "Rodgers John G. R., hardware, 4111 Lancaster Av". [They are not together any more.]

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Conclusion

28" Skew back Rip Saw. 5 1/2 ppi, Apple Handle no nib. Patented handle clamp and no medallion.

- 1894, "Rodgers Jacob D, hardware, 4406 Lancaster Av and 641 and h 641 Preston". [A second store and his house were at 641 Preston.] "Rodgers John G R, hardware, 4113 Lancaster Av, h 412 Westminster Av.

1899, "Rodgers Jacob D, hardware, 4406 Lancaster Av, h 811 N 41st". Rodgers John G R, hardware, 4111 Lancaster Ave, h Haines Port NJ". [Note he moved to New Jersey not far from where I live.]

The library I used does not have a full set of Philadelphia directories so I could not fill in the missing years but you can see the saw was made -1882, 1883 - by William McNiece who is also in those same directories. McNiece was doing the same as Disston, putting anyone's name on the saw that would buy a set amount.

The saw was made in 1882 or after because the patent was in 1882, and before 1889 when the Rodgers brothers were not together any more.
Hope this helps.
Carl Bopp

Simultaneously, we also consulted with Philip Baker and he identified J. D. Rodgers & Bro as a hardware company in Philadelphia, ca 1875, (also) Rodgers dealt with McNiece saws. Philip Baker is a well known tool collector and avid researcher of the American saw making industry.

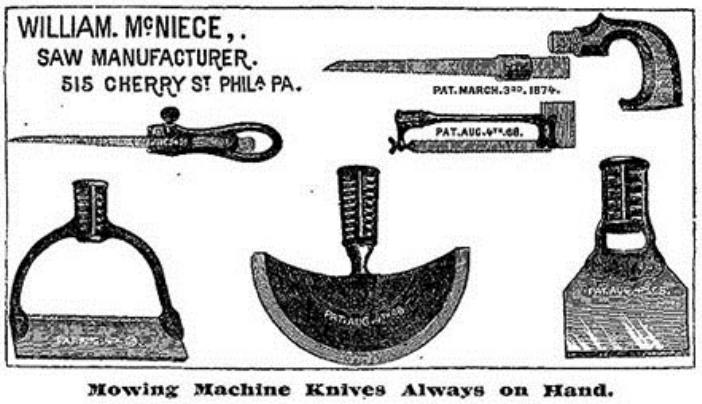
I would like to express my great appreciation to Carl Bopp and Philip Baker for being attentive to these questions. Thanks much! WK.

At this point we realized that this saw was most likely made by William McNiece for J. D. Rodgers & Bro. Hardware Store.

The face of the clamp is stamped W.M.McNiece, Phila. PA Pat Apr 19, 82

The information presented here reflects the state of our current knowledge about William McNiece, his business and the tools he made. We realize that this study is not complete. We intend to continue our research and information gathering. We would appreciate any additional information that you might have. Please contact us at wiktor@wkFineTools.com.

The back of the clamp with decorative scrollwork

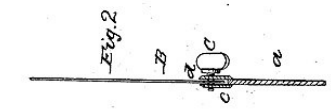


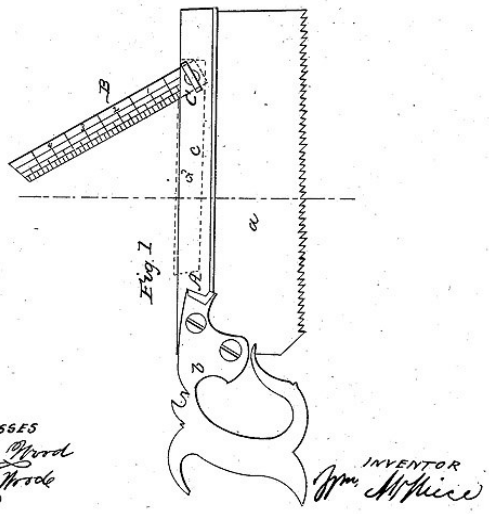
Advertising from the 1882 - Pennsylvania State Gazetteer and Business Directory

W. McNIECE.

Combined Saw, Square and Bevel.

No. 23,531. Patented April 5, 1859.





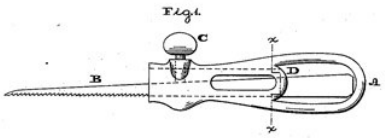
WITNESSES
John Wood
Horace Wood

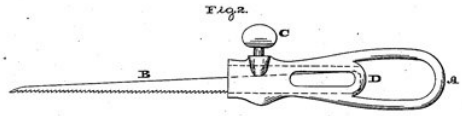
INVENTOR
Wm. McNiece

W. McNIECE.

Adjustable Saw-Handle.

No. 216,800. Patented June 24, 1879.





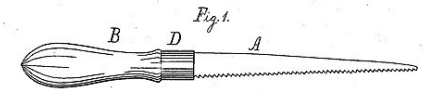
Witnesses:
Jo. P. Grant,
H. F. Kischer

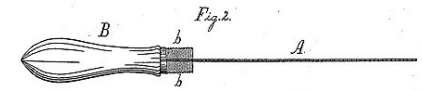
Inventor:
Wm. Mc. Niece,
by John A. Briesen Sons
ATTORNEY.

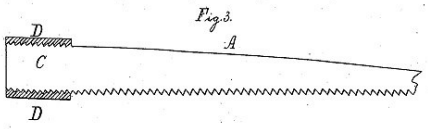
W. McNIECE.

Tool-Handles.

No. 148,232. Patented March 3, 1874.







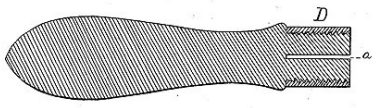


Fig. 4.

Witnesses:
Jo. P. Grant.
J. H. Witherington

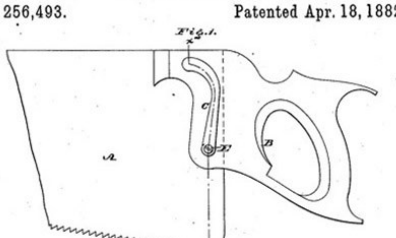
Inventor:
Wm. McNiece
by John A. Briesen Sons
Attys.

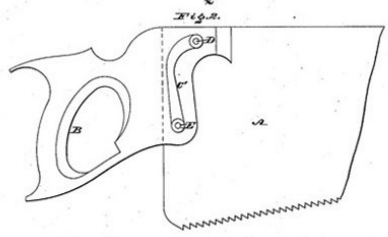
(No Model.)

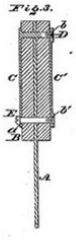
W. McNIECE

SAW HANDLE CLAMP.

No. 256,493. Patented Apr. 18, 1882.







WITNESSES:
Jo. P. Grant,
H. F. Kischer

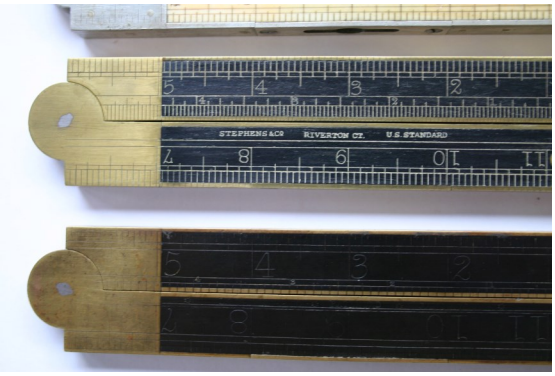
INVENTOR:
Wm. Mc. Niece
BY John A. Briesen
ATTORNEY.

The Final Word RE: STEPHENS Combination Rules

By Greg Welsh

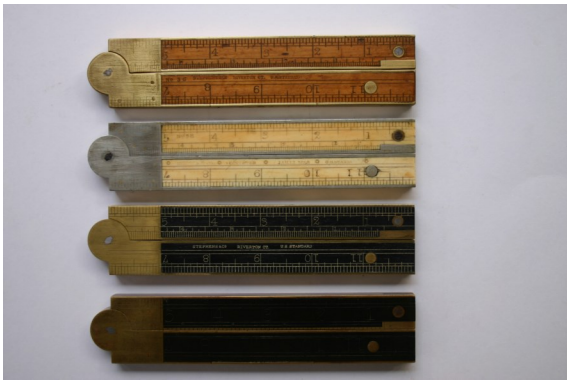
For the past few years there has been some discussion about whether L.C. Stephens, or Stephens & Co. ever made Ebony No. 38 Combination Rules. Every rule that I and some other members of CRAFTS have examined that were said to be Ebony turned out to be Gutta Percha, an early hard rubber based material.

Recently there was a Stephens & Co. No. 38 Combination Rule offered on eBay. Thinking that if I could get what I assumed would be another Gutta Percha Rule cheaply enough I could resell it in the future and make a few bucks.



At the top is the Stephens Combination rule in ebony and the bottom is the rule in Gutta Percha

When the rule arrived it was apparent immediately that it was different from the Gutta Percha rule that I already had. There was apparent grain and a very black color to the rule. I removed the level cover plate and tested a spot with a hot pin. No burnt rubber odor or melting of the material. This is the only confirmed Ebony No. 38 that I have seen.



Stephens combination rules: in boxwood, ivory, ebony and Gutta Percha

The Gutta Percha rules that I have seen have all had a very smooth polished appearance and the color is a dark greenish brown. Also the stamping does not seem to be as deep as in the wooden or ivory versions.

If you can add anything to this conclusion please send me an email at: glwelsh@earthlink.net

2007 CRAFTS SCHOLARSHIP, NORTHERN BURLINGTON REGIONAL SCHOOLS

By
Joshua Kavett

The 2007 CRAFTS scholarship went to Kristian Morris. I selected Kristian because of his work ethic. I had Kristian for Metal Tech 1 and 2; and he also completed several Agriculture Mechanics courses. I conferred with the Ag teacher, and we both were unanimous in my selection. Kristian is the type of kid who could not get enough time in any of the shop courses. All of his grades were tops. His work ethic was such that he would do anything requested or required, and more.

Kristian is now attending Pennsylvania College of Technology, Williamsport, Pa. on a scholarship sponsored by Caterpillar Equipment Company. He is receiving training in diesel mechanics, with a job guaranteed upon graduation at Cat. Kristian used the money provided by CRAFTS to purchase the required tools.

When told of my selection, he was both surprised and thankful to CRAFTS. I could not think of a more deserving student.

The Auction Sparklers - Saturday May 3rd

Mother of Pearl covered Transitional w/Scrimshaw
By Dominic Micalizzi

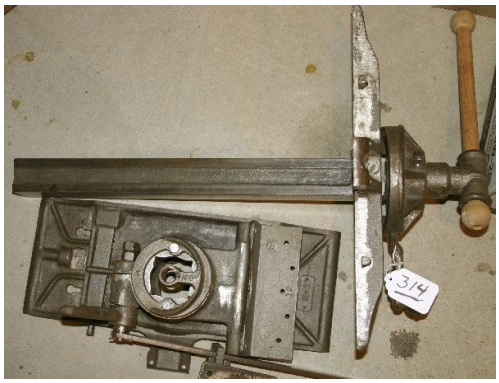
Stanley 10 1/2 Tilt handle Carriage makers plane

Millers Falls Adjustable
Beam Boring Machine

Spiers rosewood stuffed Smoother

Bow Drill by L.Brandt without the usual
crack in the ivory

Stanley No. 1



1 of 3 Emmert Pattern Makers Vises

Metallic Plane Co. Jointer

Piano Makers Brace by
Wm. Johnson

Crafts Auction

This is just a sample of the more than 540 Lots to be auctioned.

Saturday, May 3rd at the Flemington Elks Club located on Rt. 31, in Flemington, NJ.
Just north of the Flemington Circle (intersection with Route 202)

There is no buyers premium.
7% NJ sales tax will be collected for all sales without a sales tax exemption form on file with CRAFTS of NJ.

The preview will begin at 7:30am the auction starts at 9:30.

Tailgating will begin when the first dealer arrives.
This year, there will be a $10 charge for each dealer space.

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The February Meeting - Broom making with John Warren

by Dave Nowicki

John Warren has been making brooms since he was in junior high school in 1974. It started as an Eagle Scout project but grew into a passion which has lasted for over 30 years. When the colonists landed in New England they searched for suitable plant products to make brooms but the plants commonly used in broom making didn't grow in New England. That is, until Benjamin Franklin, while in France, sent his sister some seeds from the broom corn plant. The rest is history, as they say, and the New England round broom was developed. Round brooms were the norm until about 1870, when the Shakers developed the flat broom, and used five to six rows of stitching to keep it flat. Broom making was one of the first cottage industries and especially useful to the farmer who's land wasn't very fertile. He could grow broom corn and trade or barter the brooms for the things he needed. From the nineteen thirties to the fifties, Hamburg, PA was the broom capital of the East. There were nine broom factories in that small town, which produced fourteen to eighteen train car loads of brooms each week. In 1950 there were twenty seven thousand people involved in the broom business in Pennsylvania alone. Today, there are only 54 companies in the US making brooms.

Broom corn grows from eight to fourteen feet tall, with the exception of a hybrid developed by Dr. Sam Moyer in NJ, which grows only three feet tall. It looks exactly like sweet corn except that it doesn't develop an ear and only has a single tassel to each stalk. As a matter of fact, it's said that some farmers who grow sweet corn in fields with roadside access will plant several rows of broom corn along the roadside where the earless broom corn will disguise the sweet corn, keeping thievery to a minimum. There are seventeen varieties of broom corn and it must be harvested by hand. John grows four to five acres of broom corn each year and harvests about four hundred pounds per acre. In the mid-west they get about seven hundred pounds per acre. The difference is due to the warmer conditions in the mid-west. John's harvest isn't enough to get him through the year so he has to buy an additional four to five hundred pounds which is imported from Mexico. There are only three countries that commercially produce broom corn, Argentina, Mexico and what used to be known as Yugoslavia. In 2001, due to the bird flu scare, all imported broom corn had to be dyed to identify it and all of the seeds had to be removed before it could come into this country. Seeds used to be removed with an iron, comb like device eighteen to twenty four inches in length. It was discovered that by bringing the dye temperature up to just below the boiling point, the seeds fell off the stalks and floated to the surface, eliminating the combing process.

The Left-handed Kicker with a Squirrel Cage attachment

The machines that John uses to make brooms are mostly from old broom shops that long ago retired them from active service. The two machines that he brought to CRAFTS are known as a "kick-wheel", or kick winders, made in the nineteenth century. The one used in his demonstration is known as a left-handed wheel kicker with a squirrel cage attachment. John has eighteen kick wheel machines in his collection. Except for the nylon stitching, our forefathers used cotton, the materials used in John's brooms are accurate reproductions of those made a hundred years ago. The product line consists of four types of flat brooms, round hearth brooms, which are very Harry Potter like, a wisk broom and a long thin light broom called a Cobweb Getter. Last year John made more than eight thousand brooms.

This was a very interesting and enlightening presentation. John sells his brooms at a few hardware stores, and at Farm and Craft demonstrations throughout Eastern Pennsylvania. I purchased one and have to say that it's far better than those the big box stores sell or the plastic ones found at the grocery store.

If you'd like one of John's brooms or have any questions about broom making, you can email him at www.countrybrooms@aol.com

Kean Kuttin's

PATINA

If there is one word that will start a spirited conversation amongst antique tool collectors, that word is patina. The classic definition of patina is: "an incrustation, usually green, produced by the oxidation of old bronze". It makes no mention of oxidation on other materials. A later definition allowed that the oxidation might occur on a substance other than bronze. Webster shows that the word is pronounced with the accent on the first syllable. Most modern usage, particularly in the collectible world, accents the second syllable. The club PATINA is a good example of this.

Unfortunately, there are those that describe any vintage finish (no matter how dirty or foreign to the piece) as "patina". In most cases it is merely to hide the fact that the piece is not in good condition. In other cases its just a lack of knowledge. I'll never forget a plow plane that had bird droppings on the fence, and about a half-mile thick dirt and grime over the rest. It was proudly presented as having a "grand old patina". There are very few sellers today that would go that far.

I have always liked the definition of a proper look for old tools as : *"Antique tools should be in the same condition today as they were a hundred or more years ago in the hands of a prideful worker."* Remember, tools were made to be used, and a craftsman that used his tools every day or so would never allow them to become rusted. In fact the mere use from the oil in his hand and other oil and wax that he worked with would prevent the rust. It's true that some slight oxidation might occur on the metal to give it a fine grayish tint. But, dark black iron on the sides of a Stanley No. 5, or worse yet -- rust and pitting. NEVER!

Some of the japanning might chip off where it was struck accidentally or worn. But would it be flaking and rusted? NEVER! Some of the varnish on the wooden parts could easily be worn off through usage, but usually the constant hand movement replaced the original finish with a rubbed sheen. But would it be covered with rot or mold? NEVER!

So how do some tools get into the condition that I call deplorable, and that some collectors excuse as patina? The answer is that they were discarded and laid in a cellar, a barn or some other damp place for many years. Any tool that has this crummy look has been abandoned from its rightful place in the world and is crying to get back. The last indignity this tool should suffer is to lay in someone's collection "untouched". And even worse is to have its owner excuse that awful mess by calling it patina.

Some collectors will restore the tool to look as it did on the bench of a prideful worker. This might mean brightening the japanning with oil, or polish; cleaning and waxing the wood; sharpening the bit; making all parts smooth-running; and even filling checks and chips. Some of these operations are purely aesthetic and would not usually be done by the original craftsman, but some are necessary to bring the tool to life and have it function properly.

Those that grind the bare metal, scrape and repaint the japanned metal, hi-polish the brass etc. are shooting for a market other than serious collectors. Even so, working tools are better in that condition than the ones that look like they are ready for the scrap heap.

Before someone tells you that your ugly, rusty tool should not be touched, make sure that he is not saying that because he doesn't know how to do it. It's work to restore, and it's much easier to just claim that it should be left alone.

There are times when restoration is questionable. That is when a rare piece is not fully described somewhere. In which case the restorer might accidentally add or subtract something important. If one is patient enough, sooner or later he will find the information needed and the restoration can be done correctly. Today, the best restorers refurbish a valuable tool only for the characteristics that the craftsman that used it would have wanted. Other lesser tools, can be cleaned up for aesthetics or for use.

Those collectors that care about the look and function of their antique tools should never arbitrarily succumb to the cry of "Don't touch it", or brag about a filthy piece as "untouched". Not if they are proud of their tools being representative of pieces as they were years ago in the hands of a prideful worker.

The TOOL SHED

CRAFTS of New Jersey ◆ P.O. Box 372 ◆ Claverack, NY 12513

TOOL EVENTS

April 4-5 - Brown's 32nd International Antique Tool Auction,
Radisson Inn Camp Hill, PA
www.FineToolJ.com/Browns

April 6th - CRAFTS Meeting 1PM HOST Masonic Lodge
Highbridge, NJ

April 18-19 - Martin Donnelly Antique Tool Auction
Holiday Inn Everett Turnpike Nashua, NH
www.mjdtools.com

May 3rd - CRAFTS Auction - Flemington Elks Club,
Rt. 31 Flemington, NJ
Just north of the Flemington Circle (intersection with Rt. 202)

May 18 M-WTCA Albany, NY Area Tool Meet, Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Mass. Jim Bode 845-505-8665
jim@jimbodetools.com

May 28 - 31 EAIA 75th Anniversary Celebration
Albany, NY www.EAIAinfo.org

June 12 - 13 M-WTCA 40th Annniversary Spring National Meeting
Bayfront Convention Center/Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel, Erie, PA
Ron Pearson 814-833-3299 cell 814-440-5698
Mark Eastlick 814-734-7818 cell 814-490-9357

WANT ADS

Must sell my entire tool collection. Hundreds of tools in good clean condition. Call Art Gatti---973-374-0554---for appointment.

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

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

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