The TOOL SHED

No. 17 June, 1981

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

CRAFTS OF NEW JERSEY AUCTIONS TOOLS

by Alexander Farnham

If one intends to collect something which hitherto has not been collected, it is wise to go about it quietly so as not to generate a great deal of interest among others.

This was made clear during two functions of CRAFTS of New Jersey over the weekend of April 4th and 5th. The first event to point out the advisability of maintaining a low profile as a collector took place on Saturday, April 4, when CRAFTS held an antique tool auction at the Taylor Hose Company in High Bridge, N. J.

Until a few years ago there was little or no interest in early New Jersey tools. However, since the formation of CRAFTS of N. J. in 1977 and the publication the following year of a piece I wrote on tools for the book Collecting New Jersey Antiques (William H. Wise & Co., 1978), the prices of these tools have risen steadily.

My own interest in New Jersey tools did not start until my assignment to write about them. At that time I found how scarce they were and how little was known about them. Through my writing I caused others to become interested in tools manufactured in New Jersey and, as a result, created competition for myself.

Of the more than 400 tools sold at the CRAFTS auction only ten were marked by New Jersey makers. The most expensive of these was a combination bit brace wrench manufactured by P. Lowentraut in Newark during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It sold for $80, which is about three times the price one sold for at a CRAFTS auction held two years ago.

The next most expensive New Jersey tool sold was a double sash plane made by Mockridge & Francis of Newark prior to 1869. This plane brought $52.50. It is probable that

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JUNE 14th MEETING TO BE HELD AT EAST JERSEY OLDE TOWNE

CRAFTS of New Jersey will hold its last meeting of the 1980-1981 year on Sunday, June 14, from 2:00 to 5:00 pm, at the Indian Queen Tavern, East Jersey Olde Towne, in Piscataway. As there will be a full agenda, the meeting will begin promptly at 2:00.

The business portion of the meeting will include the annual election of directors and officers and the appointment of the standing committees.

The program for the afternoon will feature Dr. Robert Cameron, of Wyckoff, who will speak on and demonstrate tinsmithing.

The latter part of the program will be devoted to "Whatsit?" identification, and the meeting will conclude with the "Swap & Sell."

For those who have not yet been to our new meeting place in East Jersey Olde Towne, here are the directions.

(Continued on page 2)

CRAFTS of New Jersey

Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society of New Jersey

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

Membership in CRAFTS is open to anyone interested in early trades and industries, and the identification, study, and preservation of tools and implements used and made in New Jersey. Annual dues are five dollars for the membership year of July 1 to June 30. Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer: C. Carroll Palmer, 725 Pemberton Ave., Plainfield, N.J. 07060.

The Tool Shed

Published five times per year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Editors: Larry Fuhro, 417 Bartlett St., Roselle, N.J. 07203; Robert Fridlington, 8 Keith Jeffries Ave., Cranford, N.J. 07016. Contributions, especially about New Jersey tools and trades, are welcomed.

ALEXANDER FARNHAM RECEIVES E.A.I.A. GRANT

The Grants-in-Aid Committee of the Early American Industries Association has awarded CRAFTSman Alexander Farnham a grant of $1,000 for his study of early New Jersey tool makers.

Farnham, who is a Director of CRAFTS of New Jersey, is a frequent contributor to tool and antique publications (his review of the CRAFTS auction appears on page 1 of this issue of the Tool Shed).

In his letter of notification Charles F. Hummel, the Grants-in-Aid Committee Chairman, stated that the Committee believed Farnham's attempt to study "New Jersey tools prior to 1900 focusing on the method of manufacture, the manufacturers' place in society, the tools they made and documenting the comparative rarity of early tools of New Jersey--a state that played an important part in the history of American tools--is a project that clearly relates to the purposes of the E.A.I.A."

Farnham's grant was one of three awarded by the Association.

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ATTENTION BAKERS

All of the cooks and bakers in the membership are invited to bring cakes or cookies for the refreshment table at the June 14th meeting.

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MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

July 1, 1981, begins a new membership year, so it is time to remind the forgetful about dues.

You will save Carroll Palmer a lot of time and effort if you give him your $5.00 dues at the next meeting. If you will not be at the June meeting, put it in an envelope and mail to:

Mr. C. Carroll Palmer
725 Pemberton Avenue
Plainfield, N.J. 07060

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(Meeting, continued from page 1)
To reach EJOT take I-278 to River Road (Rte. 18) in Piscataway. Go south on River Road for about two miles to the second light, at Hoes Lane. Turn right at this light into Johnson Park and East Jersey Olde Towne. There are signs at Hoes Lane for EJOT and the Middlesex County Park Administration Building. You cannot miss it.

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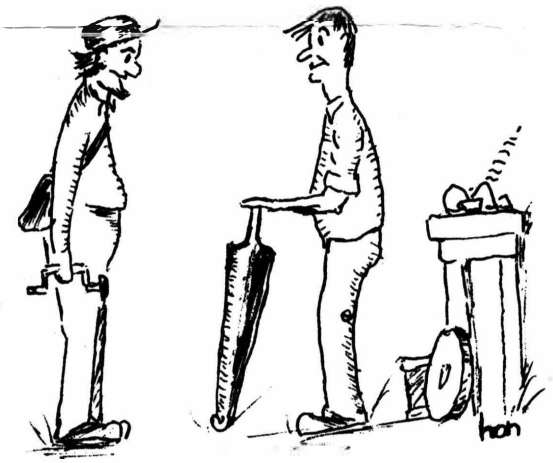

I think it's some kind of shovel. but the hook on the end puzzles me.

THE TAYLOR-WHARTON CO.
by W.A.G.

(To those who attended the CRAFTS auction and were curious about the giant Taylor-Wharton works across the street from the auction hall, the following will be of special interest. — Ed.)

The Taylor-Wharton Iron and Steel Company was founded by Messrs. Allen and Turner in 1742. They chose the High Bridge site because of the abundant timber for charcoal and the available water power. The ore was located under the town.

Later managed by Robert Taylor, the company made shoes for oxen and horses, along with wagon iron, nails, and crude farming implements. During the American Revolution, it made cannon balls.

The Nasmyth hammer, made in Manchester, England, was first imported to Falls Village, Conn., by Horatio Ames. About 1850 it was transferred to the Taylor-Wharton factory, where in 1928 it still stood—a silent monument. It was one of the first steams hammers in America.

With the construction of the railroad through High Bridge, the company began to manufacture railroad stock, and in 1892 it began to produce alloy steels. It also made fittings for the Panama Canal.

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CRAFTSMEN ADDRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Two members of CRAFTS have recently addressed historical societies on tool-related subjects.

CRAFTSman Bill Gustafson gave a talk on March 27 to the Berkeley Heights Heights Historical Society on eighteenth-century house building techniques. Highlighting Bill's talk was a demonstration of how some of his carpenter's tools were used 200 years ago in various stages of construction.

On May 4, Bob Fridlington exhibited tools from his collection and spoke to the Kenilworth Historical Society on antique tools and tool collecting.

In addition, the Cranford Historical Society Museum is currently featuring an exhibition of woodworking and agricultural tools from the collections of Bob Fridlington and Larry Fuhro.

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NEWARK FILE AND RASP MANUFACTURERS
by James Laurent

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the manufacture of files and rasps became a thriving business in Newark, N.J., with at least three firms devoted exclusively to their production.

By 1882 the largest of these three companies was John Ray, manufacturer of files and rasps, located at No. 67 New Jersey Railroad Avenue. The business had been founded in 1843 by one C.V. Wilson, who was bought out by Ray in 1871. Ray employed 35 "experienced mechanics," and all of his products were hand cut.

Another large manufacturer was Johnson & Bro., at No. 1 Commercial Street, established in 1868. The owners of this firm were J.Y. and W.G. Johnson, "who had served their time to the trade in New York State, and spent their entire life from boyhood in the business. Johnson & Bro. employed 30 workmen and produced "files and rasps of every size and variety."

The smallest and the newest of the three companies was E. & L. Kearney, file manufacturers, located in White's Building, Commercial Dock. This firm presumably was established only a short time before 1882, when the two Kearneys, both natives of the city of Newark, took over the file-making business of a man named Schmidt. E. & L. Kearney employed seven "skilled" workmen, and all of the files they produced were cut by hand.

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ANTIQUE TOOL CONDITION

by Herb Kean

Have you noticed how a description of an antique tool is loaded with personal assertions? I have seen pieces classified as "mint" that were downright laughable. In many cases the classifier is dogmatic in his detailing of the various condition categories, even though some of the characteristics border on personal taste.

This tug-of-war between standardization and freedom-of-taste will not be settled easily, but it is time to make a start. This beginning should utilize the opinions of all types of tool collectors, not just the views of the classic museum style collector.

There are two prime areas of contention that should be resolved:

(1) Patina.

I do not subscribe to the theory that patina is sacred!—particularly if it is no more than crust and rust and other disrespect heaped upon the tool as it lay inactive for the past 100 years. There are many of us who feel that the tool should look as it did sitting on the craftsman's bench 100 years ago, not necessarily brilliantly shining and heavily laquered, but certainly without rust, stain, chipped blades, etc.

Why must we be careful not to remove the years of disrespect in favor of allowing the real patina to come up? For those who put a stigma on wire wheels and strippers, let me invite them to a demonstration—one where the correct grit of the emery and the proper softness of the wheel can bring the mellow pewter-like luster back in iron that brings an equally warm glow to the owner!

And who says that the natural wear and toning of wood, built up through many, many years and then buried under paint and crud, cannot satisfactorily be returned? Wood, like iron, has surface memory—and short of completely removing the patina layer (which is much deeper than you think) you can return your tool to the "glorious days of yesteryear" with far less effort and far more reality.

(2) Usability.

Once again two schools of thought clash: the "original only" purist who hardly minds what's missing or what works, as long as what is there is absolutely original; and the "user" who cares mostly for function with little regard for originality. I believe that the bulk of collectors fall somewhere in the middle—i.e., they definitely consider the tool's usability but feel that repairs and replacement parts detract from value.

It is this degree of detraction that has been difficult to standardize. I personally put more emphasis on function, as I collect tools because I like to use them and they tell a story of our heritage. There is no tool in my collection that is not workable or does not at least appear workable. The replacement parts, repairs, etc., were done in a tasteful professional manner similar to the way it would have been done by the craftsman many years ago.

This is the dignity I feel the tool should get. I realize that I may not represent the majority of collectors on this point, but it is the basis of collecting and evaluating that needs to be considered if we are to standardize.

We should classify with terms that we use in every-day conversation—e.g., "good" means GOOD, not considerably worn. If you consider the simple marking system that most of us remember from school, it might provide a basis for grading:

Excellent: 90% - 100%
Good: 80% - 89%
Average: 70% - 79%
Below Average: 60% - 69%
Poor: under 60%

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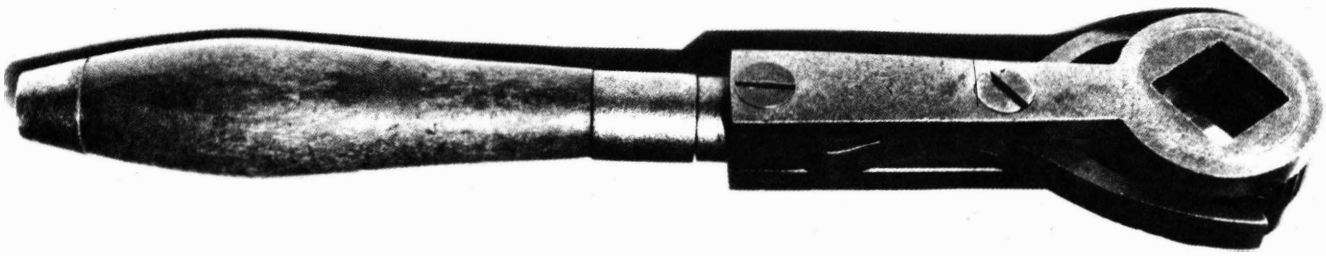
RICHARDSON'S PATENT WRENCH



Two years ago, while vacationing in Woodstock, Vt., Robert Gargiuli picked up the unusual ratchet wrench pictured above at a garage sale. The wrench is 14 inches long, weighs 2 lbs. 14 oz., and is in fine condition.

One of the features that intrigued Bob was the absense of markings on the tool. As it had neither manufacturer's name nor patent information, he decided to track down the wrench's history. But try as he might, he could not find any information, and after a year or so of frustration he gradually gave up.

A few months ago, while working on an unrelated project, Bob was leafing through the pages of an old Scientific American, and there, in the April 16, 1864, issue, was the wrench. Eureka! The wrench was invented by J. J. Richardson of (where else?) Woodstock, Vt.

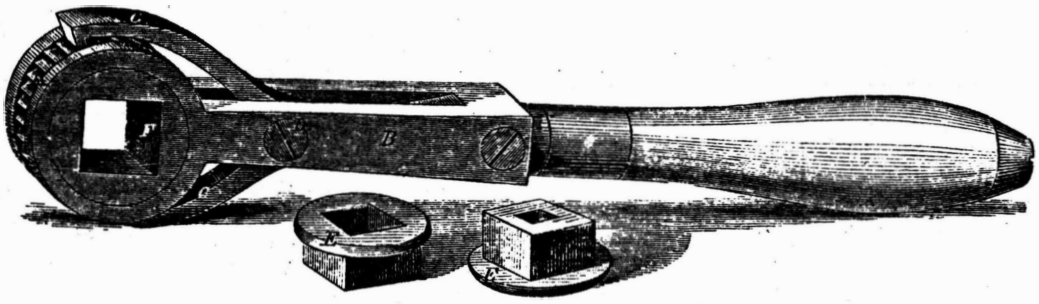
Scientific American's comments about the tool are reproduced below.

The Scientific American.

Improved Wrench.

Machinists and others very frequently experience difficulties in turning nuts or holding bolt-heads so that the nuts can be screwed on them when the same are situated in places where they cannot be reached by an ordinary wrench.

We have illustrated a useful tool herewith by the aid of which nuts, taps, rimmers or any other cutting instruments can be turned without removing the wrench at each stroke. It will be seen that the ratchet wheel, A, is confined between two side pieces, B, between which it works easily, and that there are two pawls, C, which work on the center, D. These have springs inside by which they are kept up to their work on the teeth. By the side of the wrench we have shown two sockets, E. These sockets are made to fit the square hole, F, in the wrench and their inner apertures are cut to various standard sizes, of any shape, either triangular, six or eight-sided, as may best suit the nature of the work to be done. The shoulder on these sockets prevents them from falling through, and when they are to be used they are inserted in the aperture of the wrench. It is obvious to the mechanical reader that when the handle of this wrench is moved back and forth, the pawls engage with the ratchet teeth in one direction and slip over it in another, thus imparting an intermittent revolution to the bolt or nut acted on. When the nut is to be unscrewed the wrench should be reversed or turned upside down. This is a useful tool and can be made available in many cases where a common wrench could not be, and it is in other respects quite as efficient for drilling holes as the wrenches ordinarily used.

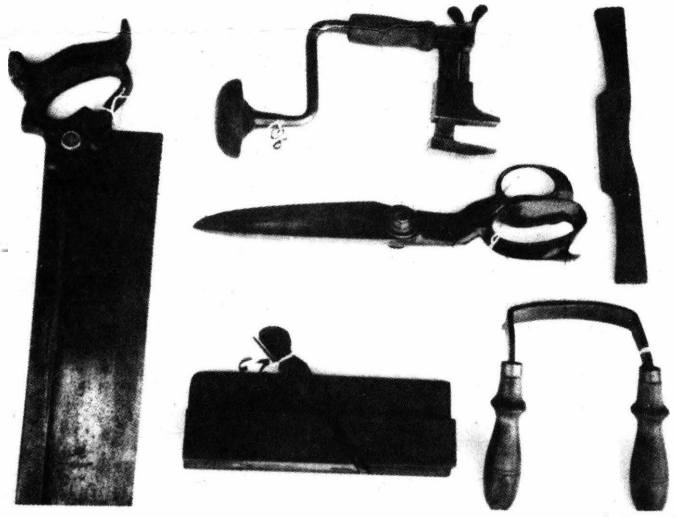


RICHARDSON'S PATENT WRENCH.

This tool was patented through the Scientific American Patent Agency on the 18th of June, 1863, by J. J. Richardson, of Woodstock, Vt. For further information address the inventor at that place. Rights for sale.

(Auction, continued from page 1)
without its mark would have gone for one-third the price.

Other Newark tools sold were a C.S. Osborn flutting iron patented in 1866, $40; a George Wheatcroft spoke shave, $37.50; a John Searing side-bead plane, $30; a P. Lowentraut box scraper, $27.50; tailor shears made by R. Heinisch, $20; and a Richardson back saw with a hole through the blade, $15. Also sold were two S.C. Cook, New Brunswick, N.J., moulding planes for $30 and $22.50. After these prices, even more competition for early New Jersey tools can be expected.



Some Newark, N.J. tools. Clockwise: Lowentraut wrench brace; Wheatcroft spokeshave; Lowentraut box scraper; Searing side-bead plane; C. & W.C. Richardson back saw; and in the middle Rochus Heinisch shears.

Another group of tools for which there was heavy competition were those manufactured by Stanley, which made up ten percent of the lots sold. Among the Stanley planes sold were a #193, which brought $80; a #7C, $75; a Bedrock #607, $70; a #112 scraper plane, $45; a #39 dado plane, $30; and a #3, $27.50. Some other Stanley products sold were a #93 butt gauge, which went for $30, and a shrinkage rule, for $12.50.

These tools were of particular interest to members of CRAFTS since on the following afternoon there was scheduled a talk and display by Charles and Walter Jacob, who own the most complete collection of Stanley products and memorabilia in the world.

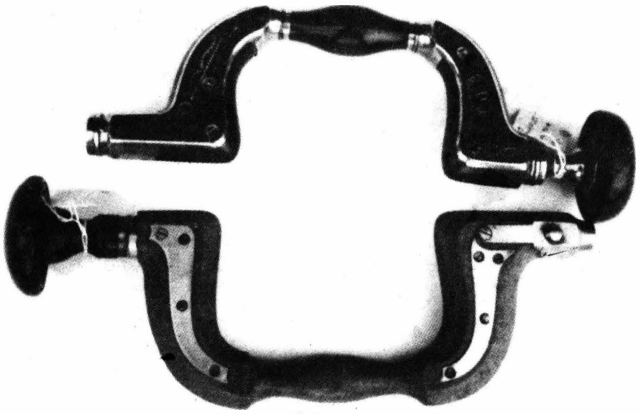
By the 1970's, when collecting Stanley became popular, the Jacob brothers had already acquired a large part of their collection. Today they have examples of about everything Stanley ever made, including toys.

Certainly the Jacob brothers are an excellent example of how to get the jump on other collectors. Now the question is, what tools will prove popular to collect in about ten years? If any reader knows the answer, he had better start collecting them now.

Though a great deal of interest was shown in the Stanley and New Jersey tools, and they brought good prices at the CRAFTS auction, the most expensive tools were those which were the more exotic. The highest price paid was for a Wm. Marples Ultimatum brace of ebony and brass, which sold for $575. Another Ultimatum, not quite so beautiful, brought $375. The next highest price paid was for a rosewood plow plane, which went for $500. A lesser plow plane of boxwood and rosewood went for $200. Some fine panel raising planes sold for prices ranging from $105 to $310. There were several other fine braces sold besides the Ultimatums. Among them were brass plated Sheffield braces, ranging in price from $90 to $140; an early wood brace marked "Weiss & Sohn," $210; and two all metal cage-head braces, $90 and $130.

There were a number of edge tools in the auction, including a shipwright's axe, which was the first lot sold and went for a low $12.50. This seemed to set a price trend for the rest of the axes. The highest prices paid for axes were the disappointing $175 and $150 for the two European goosewings in the sale.

Among the other broad axes the best price was $75 for one marked Douglas. One with Taylor stamped into it went for $45. An 18th century brad axe marked with three names brought only $40, whereas a fairly recent one marked Keen Kutter went for only $2.50 less. A Kent axe by Wm. Beatty did fairly well at $55, and an English cooper's side axe signed Sorby brought $70.



Top: Wm. Marples Ultimatum brace, $575. Bottom: Sheffield brace, $95.

Among the other edge tools sold were a variety of adzes. A gutter adze marked Butcher brought $80, while an unmarked earlier one went for half that price. The two cooper's adzes sold brought $22.50 and $17.50.

Some of the other interesting cooper's tools sold were a rosewood croze, $80; a hoop splitter, $45; a combination howel and croze, $47.50; and a flagging iron, $17.50.

The two mitre jacks sold brought $85 for the small one and $80 for the large. Several small levels and mortice gauges made of ebony and brass brought good prices. The levels ranged in price from $25 up to $47.50, and the mortice gauges from $40 up to $75 for one made by Stanley.

A 60" maple and brass glazier's square went for $180 and a double-hand rail shave for $100. Also sold were some tool chests. A beautiful cabinet maker's tool chest went for $180, while two toy tool chests brought $40 for an early one with not very interesting tools and $50 for one, circa 1930, containing some choice small tools.

On the whole, the prices paid at this auction were pretty much what one might expect. The best tools brought good prices, and the lesser ones went for about what they were worth. Everyone had a good time, including auctioneer Herb Kean and his "apprentice," CRAFTS president Steve Zluky.

The success of the day was due in large measure to the administrative talents of auction manager Chuck Granick, who was ably assisted by Harry O'Neill.

Most important of all, the money raised will help continue the publication The Tool Shed.

(The above article appeared in expanded and somewhat modified form in the June, 1981, issue of Maine Antique Digest. It is reprinted with permission.)

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(Tool Condition, cont'd from page 3)

The hardest part remains, the listing of all possible demerits in terms of percentages—e.g., tip of the tote broken, handle partially cracked, handle cracked clean through, missing screws, replaced irons, warped but usable, warped and unusable, etc. The size and complexity of the tool must also be considered. Compiling such a list is argumentative, but certainly not impossible. It would be educational and probably fun.

I agree with the growing clamor that this be a committee action, sponsored by tool organizations. After enough reports are put together, the combined grading system will provide universal descriptions of antique tools, regardless of who is cataloging them or from what geographic area they are being offered.

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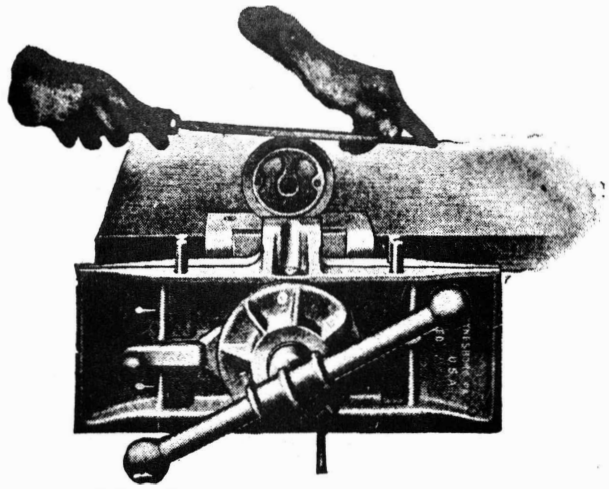
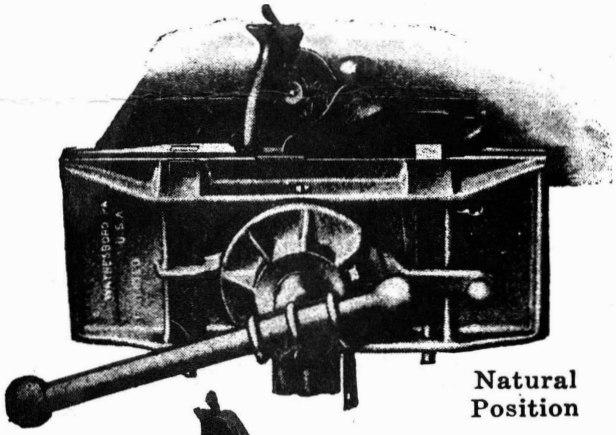
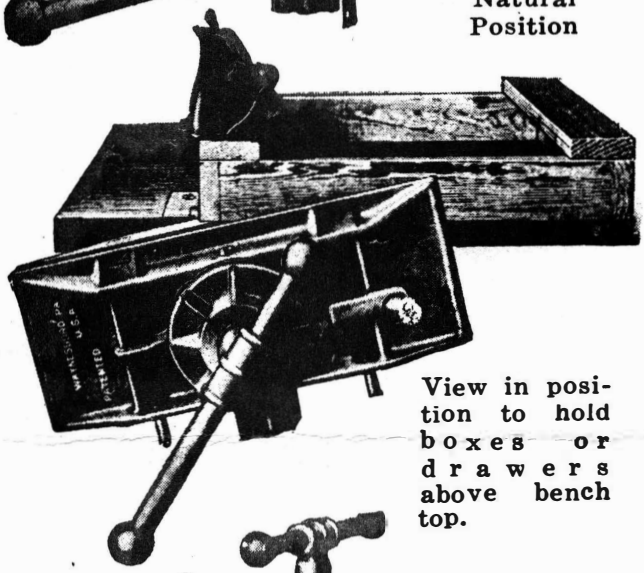
Emmert New Improved Universal Vise



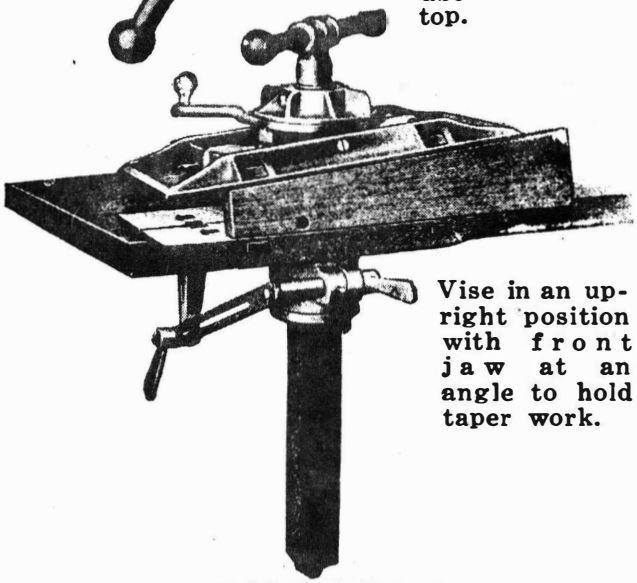
Metal Lined Jaws in Position



Natural Position



View in position to hold boxes or drawers above bench top.



Vise in an upright position with front jaw at an angle to hold taper work.

1—All parts absolutely interchangeable.

2—Easily and quickly handled.

3—Special web construction of jaws gives greater strength by actual test with other vises. Jaws will not spring.

4—Jaws can be revolved in a complete circle and set at **any** point instead of only at fixed stops.

5—Jaws can be revolved without loosening or removing work, as in other vises.

6—Can be adjusted at either end for wedge shapes instead of only one end.

7—Taper adjustment quickly secured by large hand adjusting collar. Can be locked and securely held.

8—Has set of steel faced jaws firmly riveted in jaws for holding metal.

9—Jaws have opening capacity of 15 inches.

10—A flat rack bar clamping thru a slot in center is used instead of a round rod working thru a clamp nut to hold vise at any angle within 90 degrees of bench. This insures more rigid support.

1—Vises are all neatly painted. Attractive in appearance.

12—Fully guaranteed in every respect.

Sizes and Prices

Vise No.	Size of Jaw	Opens	Weight	Price
1	7x18 in.	15 in.	86 lbs.	$40.00
2	5x14 in.	12 in.	56 lbs.	35.00