The TOOL SHED

No. 26 April - May 1983

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

THE MATCH PLANE

by Raymond R. Townsend

The match is described as "a small stick of combustible material furnished with some very inflammable combustion, and used for producing fire."

In England the square wooden "sticks" were made by cutting with special knives, and the round ones were cut by a perforated steel plate.[1]

In Germany a special plane was used, the Match Plane (Zundholzehen-Hobel). Chambers (1890) writes of these planes: "The various ornamental forms of the German match-maker, who excel in this manufacture, are produced by planes, the irons of which are so constructed as to plough up splints of the form required. These are usually made of soft kind of pine-wood—that of Abies pectinata is preferred in Austria and Germany—of which vast quantities are yielded by forests of upper Austria."[2]

Figure 1

The Weiss & Sohn Catalog (1873) offered a match plane, No. 385, approximately 10 inches long (Figure 1). The guide strip can be seen along the sole of the plane.

Also offered and illustrated in the same catalog were 12 different sizes and shapes of Match Plane Irons (See Figure 2).

This plane was first brought to my attention by Frank Sahlmann, of Erie, Pa., who has one in his collection. At the time, we were not aware of its purpose. Sahlmann's plane is shown

(continued on page 4)

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EMIL POLLAK TO SPEAK AT APRIL 10th MEETING

The next meeting of CRAFTS of New Jersey will be held on Sunday, April 10, at East Jersey Olde Towne in Piscataway.

The meeting will begin with the "Swap & Sell" at 1:00 p.m. The formal program will begin at 2:00.

The speaker for the afternoon will be Emil S. Pollak of Mendham. The title of his talk will be "American Wooden Planes and their Makers." Emil and his wife Martyl are the authors of A Guide to American Wooden Planes and their Makers, which was published in March.

Copies of the book will be available at the meeting. Although the list price is $15, it will be offered to CRAFTS members at the special price of $12.50. A review of the Pollaks' Guide is on page 6 of this issue.

Emil asks members to bring to the meeting any planes with unlisted makers, and he will try to identify them. He will also be happy to try to determine when and in what part of the country a

(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 _____ BARBARA FARNHAM, Stockton

Treasurer _____ JOHN M. WHELAN, Murray Hill

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 seven dollars for the membership year of July 1 to June 30. Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer: John M. Whelan, 38 Colony Court, Murray Hill, NJ 07974.

The Tool Shed

Published five times per year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Editor: Robert Fridlington, 8 Keith Jeffries Ave., Cranford, NJ 07016. Contributions, especially about New Jersey tools and trades, are welcomed.

TREGGIARI LIST

CRAFTSman John Treggiari has brought out another illustrated "Old Tools" list, dated March 21, 1983. He will send a free copy to any CRAFTS member, "while they last," upon receipt of a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

John offers some fine tools, and it's worthwhile to be on his mailing list. His address is:

John Treggiari
67 Lexington Rd.
Dracut, MA 01826

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HARRY'S HARDWARE

Harry's Hardware has sent out its 1982 Winter Inventory Catalog (not illustrated). The catalog is issued once a year, with addenda sheets added about four times per year. The address is:

Ruth and Chris Kaldor
Harry's Hardware
Cabot, VT 05647

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(Meeting, continued from page 1)
particular plane was made. That, he concedes, is an uncertain undertaking; but it will provide the opportunity to discuss regional and period characteristics.

Chuck Granick will give the latest information on the April 30th auction, and the meeting will conclude with the "Whatsit?" session.

The final CRAFTS meeting for the current year will be on June 12. The speaker for this meeting will be Mr. Bruce Humphries, whose talk is entitled "Carving Wooden Eagles."

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BACK ISSUES OF PUBLICATIONS WANTED

CRAFTSman Bernard Gordon has been trying for several years to find the following publications in order to complete his collection. He has contacted the various publishers but has had no luck.

He is looking for:

The Gristmill—#10.
The Chronicle—1966: #2, #3, #4.
Iron Horse Catalogs—1971: #1; 1972: #2; 1973: #4, #5; 1974: #6, #7.

If any of our readers have duplicate copies and would be willing to part with them, please get in touch with Bernard Gordon, 160-38 12th Road, Beechhurst, NY 11357.

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THE KING OF TOOLS CATALOG

The King of Tools Catalog, No. 2, is to be published in May, with another offering of fine tools.

If you are not a subscriber and you want a copy, please send $2.00 to:

Dan Comerford
Box 271
Stony Brook, NY 11790

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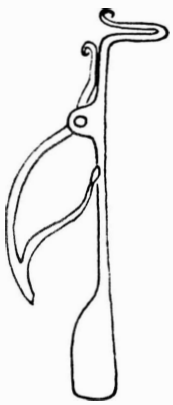
THE DISTAFF SIDE

by Dorothea Connolly

My early lighting interests were sparked by an old friend, William Hulsizer of Clinton, a longtime member of "Rushlight." When I was director of Clinton Historical Museum, he loaned the Museum his lighting collection. He also gave me a copy of Thwing's book on early lighting. I was bitten by the bug and started to collect.

The story of the evolution of lighting is too long to include in this column. But perhaps I can give you just a smattering.

The first lamps were nothing more than hollow stones or shells filled with melted animal fat. Reeds and grasses were used for wicks. With the passage of time, clay was used to make lamps, and they were later made of iron. Pottery lamps used olive oil, and as civilization progressed they became fancier and spouts were added.

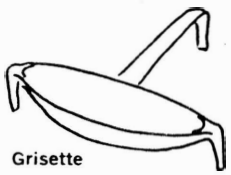


Splint Holder

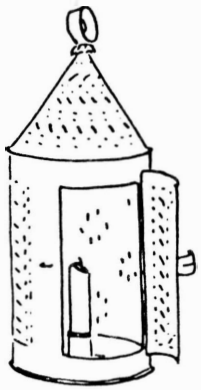
Rushlight Holder

Splint and rush holders became popular, as they were economical and easy to prepare. Splint holders held splint (pitch pine) wood, sometimes called candlewood. It burned best in a horizontal position. I have tried this but find that it releases a liquid and stains the table.

Rush holders use bog or meadow rush, harvested in late summer or early fall. Three-quarters of the bark was stripped, leaving a thin spine of exposed pith. The rush was dried thoroughly and dipped into melted tallow, using a grisset. I use a 9 x 12 cake pan when I make mine.



Grisette



Pierced Tin Lantern

Candles were made from tallow, beeswax, bayberry, spermaceti, and then paraffin. The wicks were made from flax, milkweed, the pith of rushes, and cotton. Candles were hand dipped—and it took 25 to 30 dippings to make them. Later, candle molds of different sizes were used.

I make about 250 candles a year, using both methods. I use 60% beeswax, 40% paraffin and steric acid. The latter

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HOW TO GET TO EAST JERSEY OLD TOWNE

Unless otherwise announced, all meetings of CRAFTS of New Jersey are held at East Jersey Olde Towne in Piscataway, just north of New Brunswick.

To get to East Jersey Olde Towne, take I-287 to the River Road (Rte. 18) exit. Go south on River Road for two miles to the second traffic 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 can't miss it.

(Match Plane, continued from page 1)

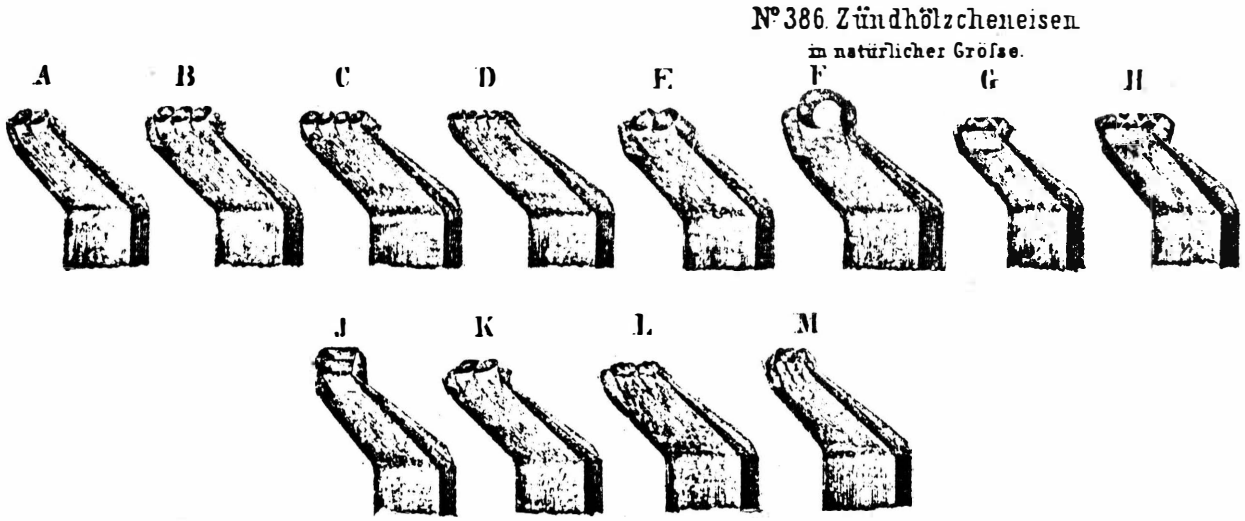

Figure 2. In the following descriptions the sizes are approximate. A-B: two and three openings, round, each 1/6 inch. C-D: four openings, round, each under 1/8 inch. E: two openings, round, almost 1/8 inch. F: one opening, round, 1/4 inch (the largest of the set). G: two openings, rectangular, each 3/16 x 1/16 inch. H: three openings, square, each 1/16 x 1/16 inch. J: two openings, rectangular and mounted one on top of the other instead of side by side, each 1/16 x 1/8 inch. K: two openings, appear to be oval, each 1/16 inch. L: two openings, oval and scalloped, each slightly over 1/16 inch. M: three openings, oval and scalloped, each 1/16 inch.[3]

in Figure 3.

The twin irons of the Sahlmann plane, shown in Figure 4, appear similar to "A" in Figure 2 above and are about the same size. The iron strip that acts as a guide in cutting the splints can be seen in the photograph.

Figure 5 shows a sketch of the iron. "There is a sharp edge on each side of the tubes."

A plane similar to No. 385 in Weiss is illustrated by Wertheim (1869), with an accompanying geometrical view (see Figure 6).

Wertheim describes it as follows: "The Match Plane. . . A B C has a fence a that is placed on the wood block at the start and each continued operation planes off the match strips. When one operation is completed the block is covered with grooves or furrows and it must then be smoothed with a smoothing plane (Schlichthobel) and the

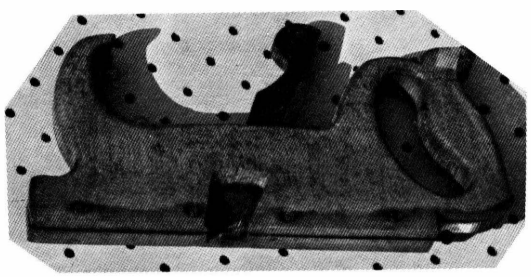

Figure 3: Match Plane
(Frank L. Sahlmann Collection)

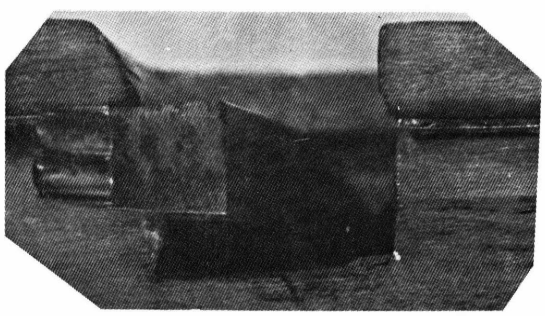

Figure 4:
Bottom view, showing iron.

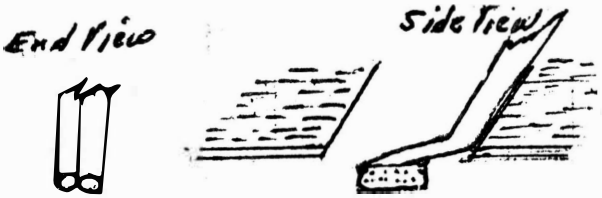

Figure 5

operation began again. The irons must be so placed that the splints come out of the plane sole uncracked."[4]

A. M. Beitler, of Black Angus Antique Mall, Adamstown, Pa., had a match plane and demonstrated its use. He placed the plane in a vise, with the sole up. Taking a soft piece of wood, he pushed it over the iron and produced a perfect strip of wood, quite long.

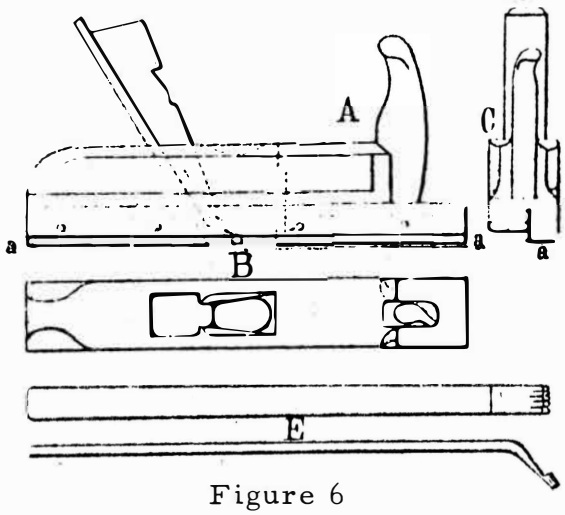

Figure 6

He did not try the reverse, but it is evident that it should work as well. There is no doubt experienced workers could produce quite a number of splints in a day. The plane had a brass guard on the side, close to the iron, similar to an ordinary plane fence.

Sources:

[1]The New American Cyclopaedia. New York, 1866.

[2]Chambers Encyclopaedia, Vol. V. New York, 1890.

[3]Weiss & Sohn in Wien. ATLAS. Osterreichischer Werkzeuge fur Holzarbeiter. 1873. Winterthur Library.

[4]Wertheim, F.R. Werkzeugkunde, zum Gerauche fur technische Leharahstalten. Vienna, 1869. Winterthur Library.

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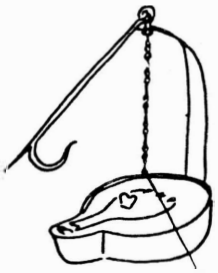
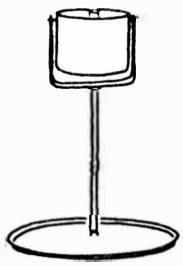
(Distaff, continued from page 3)
makes them burn slower and dripless.

When I entertain, I use only candlelight. This gives the home a glow and warmth that no electric light can duplicate. Besides, you don't have to clean for a party—it's great!

Grease and oil lamps were also used. But believe me, they are messy! And I find them difficult to keep lighted. Among the fat lamps are the crusie, Phoebe, Betty, kettle, Argand and Cardan.



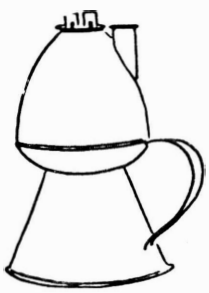
Betty Lamp



Kettle Lamp

Whale oil lamps burned sperm oil or vegetable (olive) oil. They have one or two wick tubes and were refilled by removing the burner. Fonts were made of pewter, as with the petticoat lamp, glass, brass, tin, and combinations of glass and metal.

The burning fluids lamp, used near the middle of the 19th century, was quite dangerous. The burners had from one to six brass tubes, longer than the whale oil tubes, and they usually had caps attached by a chain.



Petticoat Lamp

Burning Fluid Lamp

Lard and lard oil lamps were also used in the middle of the 19th century. The burners can be recognized by the copper tube above the font, which extends well into the oil to act as a heat conductor. The wicks are wide.

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EMIL AND MARTYL POLLAK, "A GUIDE TO AMERICAN WOODEN PLANES AND THEIR MAKERS": A REVIEW

by Robert Fridlington

Emil and Martyl Pollak, A Guide to American Wooden Planes and Their Makers. Morristown, N.J.: The Astragal Press, 1983. Pp. 335. Softbound (Lexitone), Sewn. Illustrations and Bibliography. Price: $15.00. (SPECIAL PRICE to members of CRAFTS: $12.50 ppd.) Order from: The Astragal Press, Box 338M, 1 South Street, Morristown, NJ 07960.

Only a few short years ago there were virtually no authoratative reference works available to the student or collector of American-made planes. Fortunately, that situation has changed. Books by Kenneth Roberts, Alvin Sellens, and Roger Smith have not only added greatly to expanding knowledge of planes and their makers, but they have opened new dimensions for the collector.

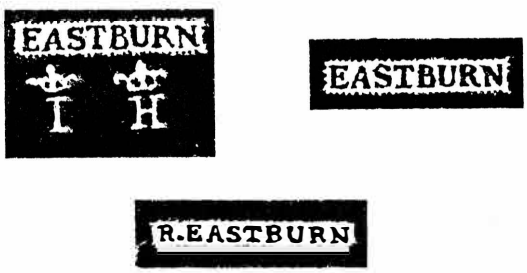
Now make room on the shelf for Emil and Martyl Pollak's "A Guide to American Wooden Planes and Their Makers." This is a book of major importance to anyone interested in the history of tools. But to the collector of wooden planes, it is indispensable.

The Pollaks obviously wanted to produce a comprehensive reference work and, at the same time, a practical, usable handbook. They have succeeded admirably. The book is sturdily constructed, with a sewn binding and a tough, flexible cover, and it is organized for quick and easy reference.

Portions of the work are aimed at the novice collector. Among these are a section that discusses the more common types of wooden planes, with drawings of planes and molding profiles, and a glossary of mostly routine terms, beginning with "Astragal" and ending with "ZB."

There is an interesting essay, entitled "What's a Plane Worth?", that weighs those variables that determine a plane desirability—and its cost. And there is an excellent chapter on "The Wedge," with 46 actual-size outline drawings of wedge patterns used by 29 early makers.

But the heart of the book, which will delight beginners and advanced collectors alike, is the "Directory of Planemakers," 260 pages containing short biographical sketches of some 1300 American makers of wooden planes, ranging in time from Francis Nicholson at the beginning of the eighteenth century to the Sandusky Tool Company in the 1920's.



(From: "A Guide....")

Arranged in alphabetical order, these entries vary in length from a single line to a couple of pages. But what a feast they offer! Some of the names are reported for the first time; and there is previously unpublished information on John Sleeper, Levi Little, the various Waltons, and several other early makers.

The directory also includes about 700 excellent reproductions of maker's imprints, and it often shows different imprints used by the same maker over his working career.

Supplementing the directory is a "Maybe List" of about 250 makers whose names have appeared on planes but about whom "too little is known to

warrant inclusion in the directory."

(From: "A Guide....")

This book will provide hours of enjoyment. Who can resist pulling out all of those obscure old planes and checking on their makers? And who can resist trying to beat the Pollaks at their own game? Imagine the smug satisfaction of finding an American maker that they have somehow missed.

But beyond this, it is going to have a significant impact on plane collecting. It will, undoubtedly, recruit many new members into the fold. And it is going to make everyone an "expert."

The wonderful thing about the printed word is that it democratizes knowledge. The secrets and arcane lore once known only to initiated members of the guild become available to the apprentices.

With this book in hand, I now know as much—well, perhaps almost as much—as the Pollaks. And so will collectors and dealers everywhere. Things will never be the same again.

To sum up, this is an important work for anyone with the slightest interest in the history of tools. If you are a plane collector, it is a must. And to those who take their plane collecting seriously, I recommend two copies: one for the bookshelf and armchair explorations; and one for the car—so you won't leave home without it.

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CRAFTS AUCTION
APRIL 30th

CRAFTS of New Jersey will hold its annual spring auction on April 30, at the L. H. Taylor Hose Company in High Bridge, N. J.

Although the auction is still a month away, the auction committee, led by Chuck Granick and Harry O'Neill, has been busy for several weeks assembling and sorting tools.

The final list for the sale will not be completed for another week or so, but the committee has already selected a large number of outstanding pieces.

Among some of the more attractive items are signed rosewood and boxwood plows, some 18th century planes (including a Grant and an Eastburn), two Marples Ultimatums, a Mockridge and Francis witchet, and ivory rules.

These examples do not even scratch the surface. There will be something for every one, whether beginning collector, advanced collector or user. And each of the lots has been selected by the committee.

Inspection will be from 8:00 to 10:00 a. m. on the day of the auction. This is going to be a good one. Make your plans now to attend!

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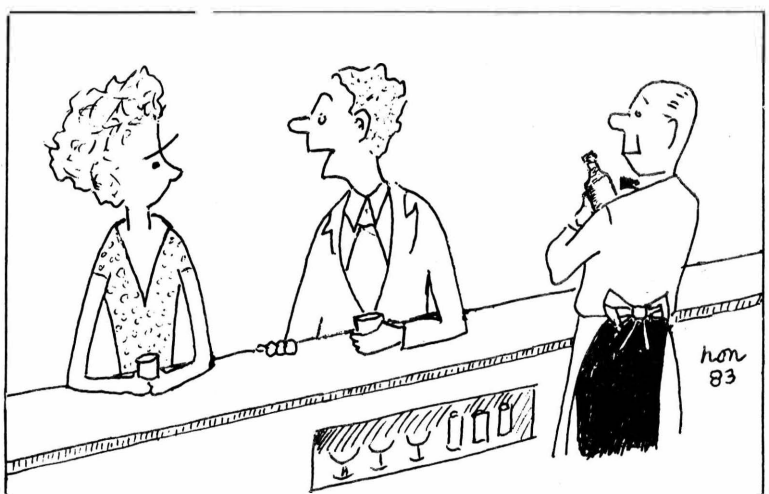
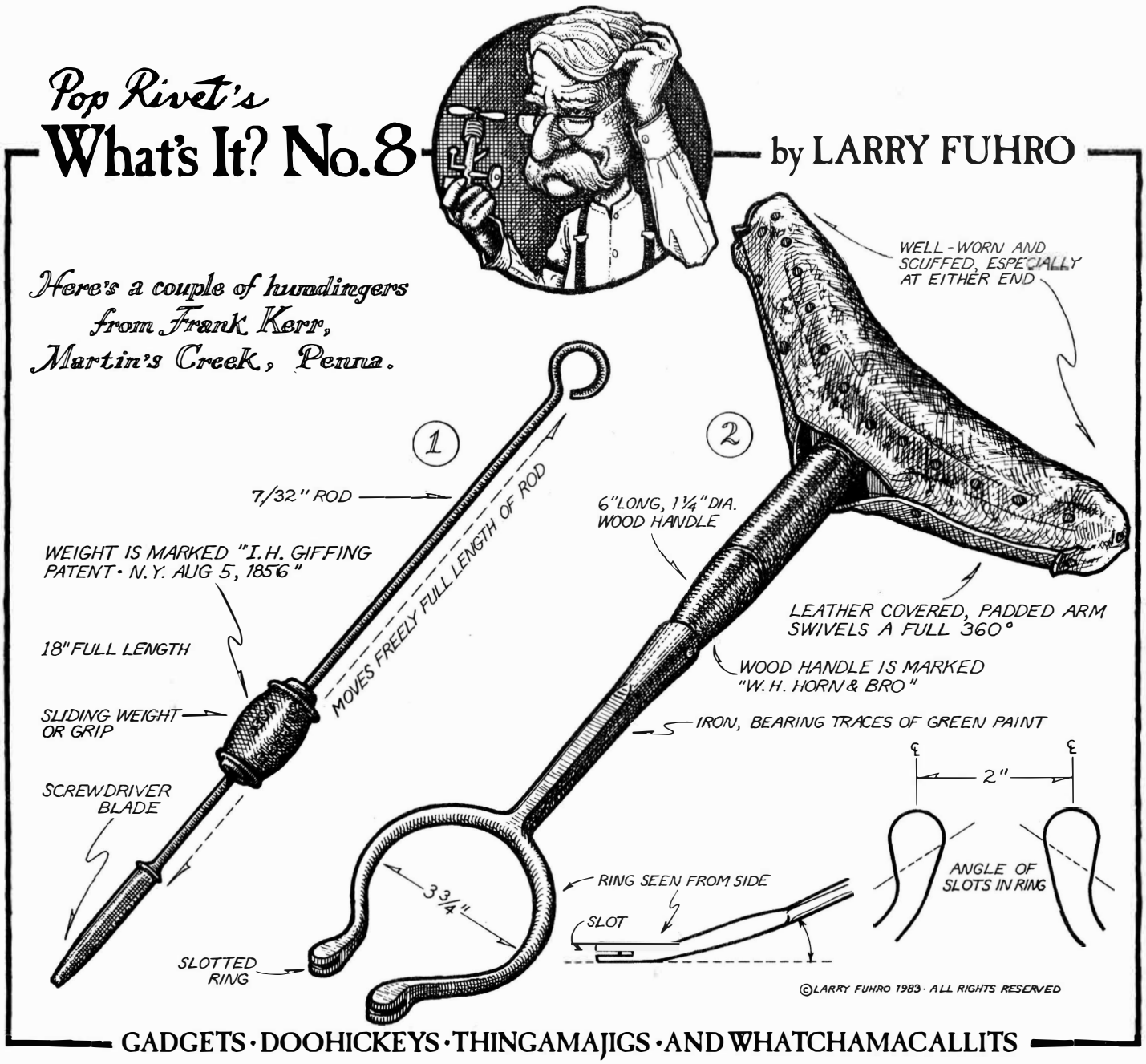


Would you like to come up to my place and see my antique tools?



WHAT'S IT? NO. 7

Pop Rivet's "What's It? No. 7" in the last issue drew two interesting and widely different responses. Harry O'Neill, Annandale, believes that it is a five-pronged dolly, used in washing clothes.

Jonathan Allen, Hopewell, hypothesizes that it is a multiple dibble, used for planting corn. He points out that a hill of corn generally required about five seeds in a pattern about six inches in diameter.

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(Distaff, continued from page 5)

Kerosene lamps were introduced in 1860, and there are many different varieties. Although I do not collect these, I have a few simply to illustrate the history of lighting.

I am now a member of "Rushlight." If you are a collector and want to join, get a member to sponsor you and apply. It is a great organization and has much information to give. If you would like to see the Hulsizer collection, it is now on permanent display at the Clinton Historical Museum, Clinton, N. J.

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