The TOOL SHED

No. 34 November 1984

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

THE HOLDFAST OR VALET

by Raymond R. Townsend

The Hold Fast is a very important bench tool. Both the English and French refer to it as the Valet, probably from the fact that it serves or attends.

It is said to have been known and used by the Romans. Figure 1 is from a Medieval painting showing a workman planing a piece held by the Valet.

Figure 1

Moxon, 1677, goes into detail and defines it "...to keep the Work fast upon the bench, whilst you either Saw, Tennant, Mortess, or sometimes Plain upon it...."

Roubo, the French 18th century cabinet maker, shows the interior of a Paris cabinat-maker's shop with three workers at separate benches using the Valet for sawing and mortising (Figure 2). It is interesting to note that he does not show a vice on any of these benches, yet he does describe and illustrate one in his plates. They appear to be used for planing, cross-cut and rip sawing, and mortising in preparation of wood pieces for cabinet work. Each bench is also equipped with a bench stop or claw.

He goes into detail and describes the Valet as an iron tool "to fix the work on the bench in a firm and stable manner...."

In Figure 3, the stem 1 is ordinarily 18 to 20 inches long, with some as much as two feet. The curve is from

[Continued on page 4]

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NOVEMBER 18 MEETING AT EAST JERSEY OLDE TOWNE

The next meeting of CRAFTS of New Jersey will be held on Sunday, November 18, at East Jersey Olde Towne in Piscataway. This will be the last regular meeting of the organization to be held at the Olde Towne location.

The meeting will begin with the parking-lot "Swap & Sell" at 1:00 p.m., with the formal program beginning promptly at 2:00.

The afternoon's program will feature not one but three speakers, each a master craftsman: Charles Granick, Herb Kean, and Dominic Micalizzi. The trio will collaborate on a lecture/demonstration entitled "Cleaning and Restoring Old Tools." Will the purists ask for equal time?

After the old tools are cleaned and restored, Harry O'Neill and Don Lipsey will superintend the "Whatsit?" session. (On the subject of "Whatsits?", see Pop Rivet's plea elsewhere in this issue.)

As many of our readers know, the CRAFTS membership voted overwhelmingly to hold our future meetings at Clinton Historical Museum Village in Clinton, N.J. So beginning in February, the meetings will be held at the Education Center of the Museum Village.

Clinton is located on I-78, just a few miles south of High Bridge, where the CRAFTS Spring Auctions are held. In

[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

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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.

[Meeting, continued from page 1]
the next issue we will provide a map. Most of our members undoubtedly know how to get there, but we will include specific directions.

The Education Center at the Museum Village is an excellent facility, with a carpeted, air-conditioned meeting area that seats approximately 150 people—so the days of the standees will soon be over.

The parking arrangements will be somewhat different from what we have been used to; but the area for tailgate sales will be consolidated, which will be an advantage. No more running back and forth across the parking lot to spend your money. Everyone is convinced that CRAFTS will benefit enormously from the move.

The last three meetings of the year will be held in these new surroundings. These meetings will feature programs of great interest:

February 3: Roger K. Smith, "Patented Transitional and Metallic Planes in America: New Findings."

April 14: Harold E. Fountain, "Stair Building: Tools and Techniques."

June 9: Charles and Walter Jacob, "Using the Stanley 55 Plane."

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CRAFTS BIDS A FOND FAREWELL TO EAST JERSEY OLDE TOWNE

The November 18 meeting of CRAFTS of New Jersey will be the last one held at East Jersey Olde Towne, which has been the Society's home for the last seven years.

On December 4, 1977, the first meeting of CRAFTS was held in the Jeremiah Field Homestead, where we were welcomed by the late Dr. Joseph H. Kler, founder of East Jersey Olde Towne. The group continued to meet at that site for the next three years.

On April 4, 1981, the meetings moved down the road to Olde Towne proper and into the partially restored Indian Queen Tavern, where they have been held ever since.

Over these years CRAFTS has had an especial friend in Miss Marjorie Kler, the Executive Director of Olde Towne. Her many kindnesses and her assistance are deeply appreciated.

We end this seven-year association with a great deal of regret, but our increased membership has made the move imperative.

To Marjorie Kler and to East Jersey Olde Towne, we extend our thanks for the warm friendship and many happy memories.

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THE TRAVELS OF MR. DUROCHIA

Every once in a while we have occasion to mention James P. Durochia, a member who at one time lived in Westfield.

When Jim joined CRAFTS back in 1979, he became our 100th member. He basked in his celebrity status only a short time, however. After attending a single meeting, he was transferred out of state.

Since that time he has bounced around the country some—first to Colorado and then to upstate New York—but he has kept in touch and never let his membership lapse.

We just received a note from Jim, with another change of address. He now is living in South Carolina. But he likes it. It is another opportunity, he says, to explore for tools in a new area.

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JOHN TAYLOR & CO.'S

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	12 in the set. Assorted to 1	1½	2	9 in the set. Assorted to 1½	2 in.
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LONG CAST STEEL PARING CHISELS,...		250	338	200	250
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	1/16	1/8	3/16	1/4	5/16	3/8	7/16	1/2	5/8	3/4	7/8	1	1 1/8	1 1/4	1 3/8	1 1/2	1 3/4	2	2 1/4	2 1/2
CHISELS.	88	92	94	98	100	104	108	113	129	138	150	175	219	244	268	300	381	450	568	663
GOUGES.		106	113	117	119	125	131	138	146	163	175	200	250	284	313	350	450	550	684	788

CAST STEEL FIRMER GOUGES, beveled inside (except middle sweep) to 1 in., 6 cts., to 1 1-2 in., 13cts., to 2 in., 20 cts. per doz. extra.

Long Cast Steel Paring Chisels and Turning Chisels and Gouges.

	1/8	1/4	3/8	1/2	5/8	3/4	7/8	1	1 1/8	1 1/4	1 3/8	1 1/2	1 3/4	2	2 1/4	2 1/2
PARING CHISELS,	163	175	181	194	213	238	263	313	375	425	475	525	600	725	875	1025
TURNING CHISELS,		138	156	168	188	213	244	268	300	350	388	438	513	638	813	1033
" GOUGES,		150	175	200	225	275	300	356	419	475	538	613	738	900	1025	1225

LONG CAST STEEL PARING GOUGES.

To 1 in., 100. To 1½ in., 125. To 2, 175 per doz. extra to Chisels.

Worcester, Mass., May 1st, 1857.

(From the Collection of Dr. Robert Cameron)

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THE FOUR-SIDED DOVETAIL

At a "Whatsit?" session at one of last vear's meetings someone showed a block of wood that was apparently dovetailed on all four sides. It was identified by several members as a piece of joiner's whimsey; but the explanation left many in a state of confusion.

Carl Bopp found the following explanation in Audels Carpenter and Builders Guide #1 (1923).

First make the dovetail joint as shown in Figure 1. Then, with joint assembled, cut block down so that ABCD will be changed in form to section 1234. The appearance of the block after cutting to this smaller section is shown in Figure 2.

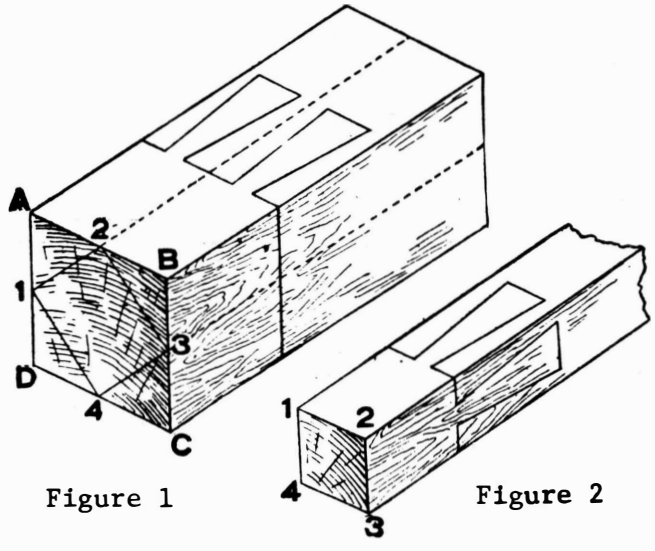

Figure 1 Figure 2

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[Continued from page 1]

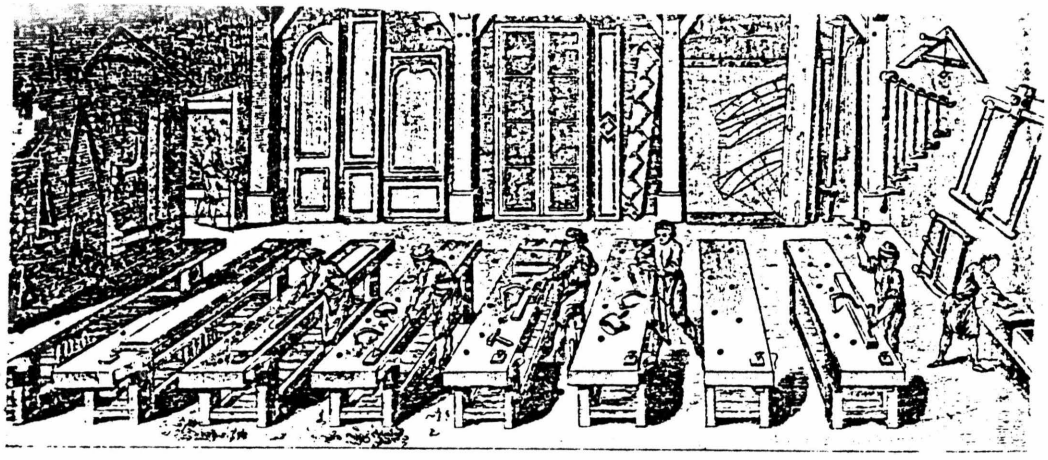

Figure 2

nine to ten inches long. From the head g to the foot k it thins gradually in such a way that the end is only about 1/6 inch thick, which renders it more resilient and eases the pressure. The curve of the head is carefully made so that it grips at the end of the foot and not in the middle, which would "press less and damage the work." It is pressed and stopped on the bench by striking on the head g with a mallet and loosened by striking the head in the opposite direction from the side i to raise it. He considered a better way was to strike on the stem below the bench at the side l. He stressed the importance of keeping the foot clean so as not to mar the work and of cleaning it with a square file. He illustrates a bench (Figure 4) with the holdfast.

Holes for holding the valet are placed at different positions on the

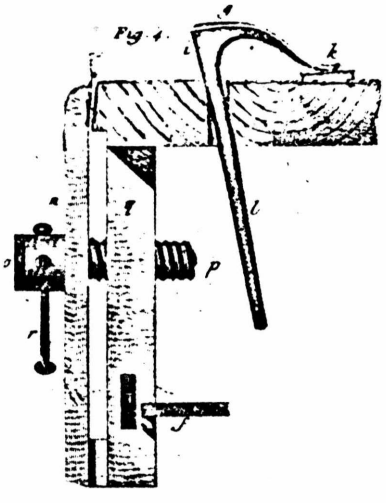

Figure 3

Figure 5

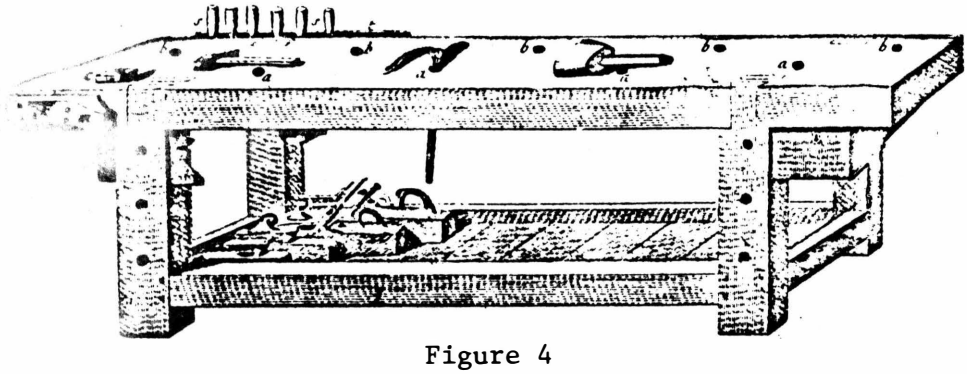

Figure 4

bench and must be slightly larger than the diameter of the stem. Note in Figure 3 the slanting position of the stem.

In Figure 5 he shows one of the legs with holes for the holdfast and one in position.

I do not recall ever seeing a holdfast in an antique shop. Nor do I recall seeing any which would be considered factory made. The local blacksmith could easily make one to any size.

A later development from the holdfast is illustrated in Figure 6. The necessary pressure on the work is obtained by means of the screw b, which meets the rod c and transfers the pressure to a through the medium of the pivot d.

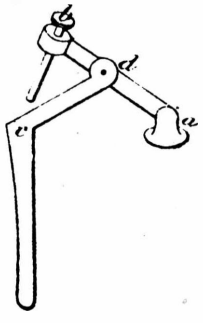

Figure 6

Mercer illustrates three holdfasts. One has an extension above the stem and the curve; another is almost a straight angle.

Does any member have one in his collection that he believes is factory made or unusual?

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ERRATUM

In the September, 1984, issue of the Tool Shed (No. 33) there was an omission in the text of Frederick A. Shippey's article, "A Tool Anybody Can Understand."

On page 8, second column, the third paragraph from the bottom of the page lists the various sizes of wooden hand screws. In this list a "17" should have been included in the series between 16 and 18.

The addition of the "17" brings the total number of wooden-hand-screw sizes that Shippey has identified to seventeen.

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LECTURE SERIES ON NEW JERSEY RURAL INDUSTRY

The Clinton Historical Museum Village is presenting a series of lectures on rural industry in 18th and 19th century New Jersey. The series is funded by the New Jersey Committee for the Humanities.

"Rural" did not always mean agricultural. Eight different scholars of New Jersey history will discuss industry as a factor in the development of the rural landscape.

Although the first two lectures have already been given (and the third conflicts with CRAFTS November meeting), their titles have been included in the following listing in order to give a picture of the scope of this outstanding program.

All of the programs but one will be on Thursday evenings at 7:30. The single exception is Edward Rutsch's lecture on lime kilns, which will be on a Sunday at 3:00 p.m. The lectures will be held at the Education Center of the Clinton Historical Museum Village.

The complete series is as follows:

Oct. 25: Peter Wacker, Mill Placement in N.J.'s 18th and 19th Century Landscapes.

Nov. 8: Carter Litchfield, Early Linseed Oil Mills of N.J. and Pa.

Nov. 18: Edward Rutsch, Lime Kilns and the Rural Landscape. (This lecture will be at 3:00 p.m.)

Dec. 6: David Mudge, Two Industries in the Rural Landscape: Paper and Iron.

Jan. 17 (Snowdate, Jan. 24): Brian Morrell, Pathways of Industry: The Morris Canal and the D & R Canal.

Jan. 31 (Snowdate, Feb 7): Ellen Denker, Common Goods: The Work of N.J.'s Redware Potters.

Feb. 14 (Snowdate, Feb. 21): Hugo Freund, The Chairmaking Industry: Styles and Techniques.

Feb. 28 (Snowdate, Mar. 7): H. L. Lefferts, The Human Dimension of Rural Industry: Labor and Technology.

Admission is $1.00 for adults and 50¢ for senior citizens and students. Refreshments will be served.

The Museum is located at 56 Main Street, Clinton, N.J.

For further information call the Museum at (201) 735-4101.

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POTTERY

When I was director of Clinton His torical Museum, I was fortunate enough to meet James Mitchell, who was Curator of Decorative Arts at the State Museum in Trenton. He is now Director of William Penn Memorial Museum in Harrisburg, Pa. Mitchell opened a door for me, and I became very interested in pottery.

I had about 15 pieces at the time. When he had a pottery exhibition at the tate Museum, I became hooked. I started collecting in have more than 75 pieces—not only salt glaze, but yellowware, Bennington, ironstone, redware, spongeware, and Rockingham.

My favorite is salt glaze, but I can't afford to buy that anymore because the price has become too exorbitant for my pocketbook.

Let me give you a little information on pottery.

Glazing or "glassing" is a method of making earthenware impermeable. Glazes are selected according to their compatability with the clay body in relation to firing temperature. There are lead base, ash, salt, manganese (brown and black), Albany slip, and color glazes.

Saltglaze is formed on the vessel in a different manner than glazes on other types of pottery. The glaze materials are suspended in water, and the object is dipped into the solution, dried, and fired. It is fired in a kiln. At the right moment in the firing cycle (known only to the potter), ordinary salt is dropped or shoveled into the fire.

When the salt comes in contact with heat, it chemically changes into soda vapor and hydrochloric acid. The acid fumes off and the soda reacts to the stoneware to form a thin layer of soda glaze on the surface of the ware. This process is often repeated three or four times until the potter feels the proper glaze has been achieved.

One color that survived this treatment was blue, made from cobalt oxide. This provided the decoration—flowers, boats, animals, birds—that you see on saltglaze crocks, jars, jugs, and mugs.

These vessels come in all shapes and sizes: quarts, gallons, ovoid, globular with tapered neck and bases (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

In the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century jugs in New Jersey, southeastern Pennsylvania, and New England were ovoid and globular in shape. After 1850 they became cylindrical or straightsided (See Figure 2). Other utilitarian pieces were pitchers, poultry fountains, and the like.

Redware, the oldest type of American-made pottery, was made from red terra-cotta clay. New Jersey's Amboy clay was considered one of the best. Redware is low-fired, usually with a clear lead base. I have ten pieces of redware—"pye" plates, jugs, jars, an ink well, a bean pot, etc.

When you get into the fancy, painted and incised redware, you are talking hundreds of dollars. Because redware is fired at such a low temperature (1700° F), it can be glazed in many colors: yellow, browns, oranges, whites, reds, and greens.

Well-known is the Pennsylvania slip decoration with sgraffito, where

the design is cut through one layer of clay into another of contrasting color. They are now reproducing them, so be careful.

Figure 2

Yellowware is clay found in New Jersey and Ohio that is fired to an attractive yellow. Early in the 19th century, potters cast such earth into bowls and pitchers. In the late 19th century they were making mixing bowls and nappies, and they were casting in molds that provided figured exteriors. They also combined the yellowware with bands of white, blues, and browns, and they made such items as molds, custard cups, rolling pins, serving dishes, and "pye" plates.

Spongeware is a whiteware or stoneware decorated in blue, green, or brown by using a sponge as an applicator (See Figure 3). This is also reproduced today, but the old is usually heavier than the new.

Stoneware is made of clay, which, as opposed to earthenware, vitrifies when fired. Vast amounts of stoneware were produced in the 19th century. It is usually decorated in blue and manganese (black, brown) because of the temperature when firing. You see it mostly in crocks or jugs—but occasionally you can be lucky and find a flask or an inkwell. In the middle of the 19th century stamped and incised decoration and Spencerian handwriting became popular. Molded stoneware began to appear in such forms as covered butter crocks, mixing bowls, chamber pots, pitchers, and footwarmers—all basic pieces. These were glazed in white, yellow, green, and blue.

Figure 3

If you are interested in reading more about pottery, get these books from your library: New Jersey State Museum, "New Jersey Pottery to 1840"; William Ketchum, Jr., "Early Potters and Pottery of New York"; William Ketchum, Jr., "American Antiques"; Donald Webster, "Decorated Potters and Their Wares"; and Robert J. Sim, "Pages from the Past of Rural New Jersey."

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ATTENTION DEALERS!
LIST TO BE PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY

CRAFTSman Christopher Storb of Hellertown. Pa., wrote us asking if we could publish a list of dealers who are members of CRAFTS.

This was such a good idea that we immediately sat down to compile such a list for inclusion in this issue. Then we had second thoughts. We would undoubtedly leave someone out. Moreover, we concluded that such a list should include more than simply the name and address. The solution was to put the burden on the dealers.

The list will be published in the February issue. Any dealer-member of CRAFTS can be included on it by providing the following information.

Your name. Name of your shop or business. Address or location (directions, if helpful). Specialty (if applicable). Any other information that might be appropriate (such as hours).

Just jot the information down on a card or slip of paper and send to:

Robert Fridlington
8 Keith Jeffries Avenue
Cranford, NJ 07016

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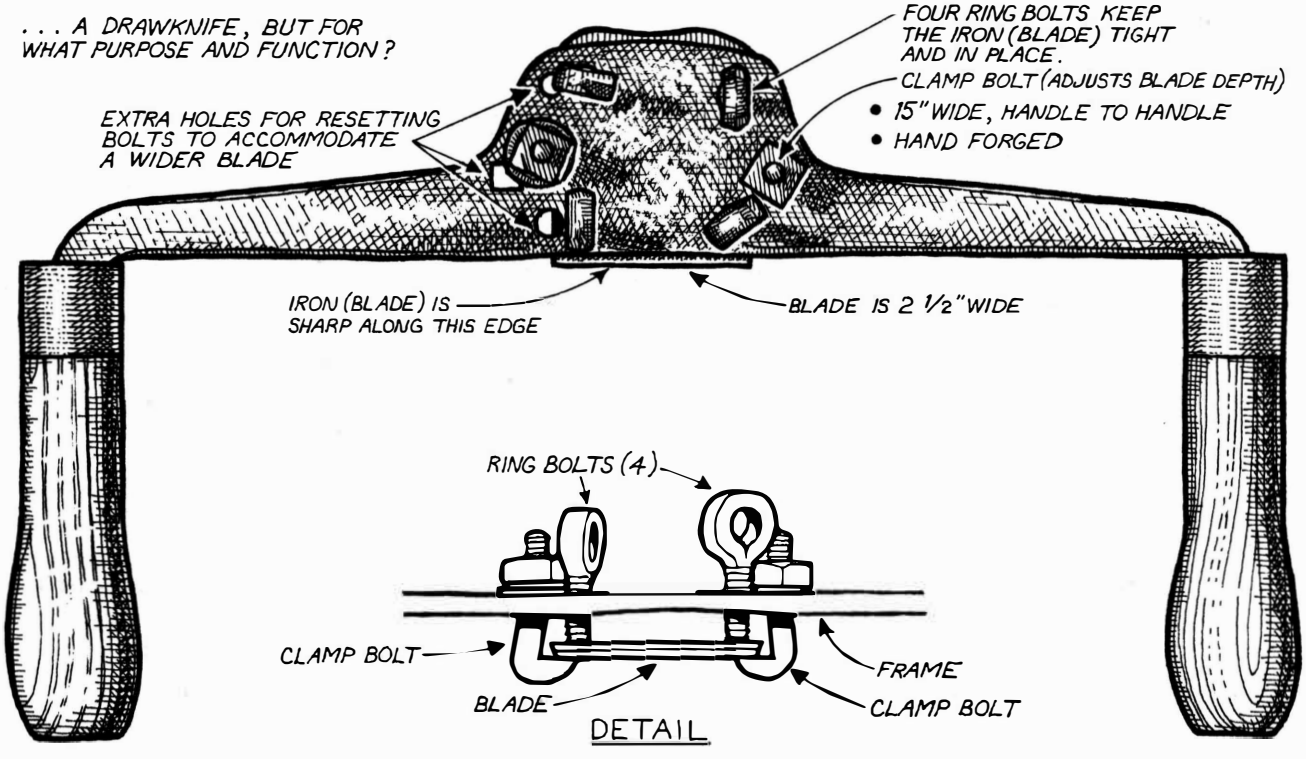
Pop Rivet's What's It? No.16

by LARRY FUHRO

Here's one from Bob Fridlington, Cranford, N.J.

. . . A DRAWKNIFE, BUT FOR WHAT PURPOSE AND FUNCTION?



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GADGETS · DOOHICKEYS · THINGAMAJIGS · AND WHATCHAMACALLITS

WHAT's IT? WHAT'S IT?

Pop Rivet, who is always on the lookout for "What's Its?," suspects that there are many hidden away in members' [illegible], half-forgotten.

Pop asks anyone who has a good item to bring it to the November meeting and give it to his friend and collaborator Larry Fuhro. Larry promises they will receive tender, loving care while in his possession.

If he doesn't get some good ones soon, Pop threatens to publish another patented tool, just to get the "What's It?" purists all excited.

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DO YOU COLLECT APPLE PARERS?

Mr. John A. Gray of Etobicoke, Ontario, collects antique, cast-iron apple parers that were made between 1850 and 1900. He has about 85 different ones in his collection and about 25 that are for trade or sale.

If there are any members of CRAFTS who also collect apple parers, he would like to get in touch with them to exchange information and discuss their mutual interest.

His address is: Mr. John A. Gray, 29 Golf Valley Lane, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada M9C 2K2.

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