

The TOOL SHED

NUMBER 65



FEBRUARY 1991

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

A TRIBUTE TO HARRY O'NEILL

by Herb Kean

Most people hope that when they are 78 years old they have the zest for life, and the physical capacity to enjoy it, that Harry O'Neill did. Harry was an individual that you came away from, feeling uplifted. He trusted people, but was still not an easy mark. By building his own business in Jersey City, he had to know the ropes.

He was a paradox of talent. Although a precision patternmaker by trade, he was still quite good at creative endeavors, such as cartooning and advertising. Of all his qualities, the one enjoyed by most, was his delightful optimism. No matter what went wrong, his eyes would still twinkle and he would give you reasons why it didn't matter that much. At auctions, he never complained when he lost a bid; nor did he alibi when he went too high on one. But he had guts! When something was truly wrong, he would get his "Irish" up, and stand up front in the fight.

He was a compulsive worker. Aside from helping to organize CRAFTS and holding the vice president's office for many years, look at what he did for the club each year: coordinated the meeting rooms, negotiated the hotel space for the auction, took care of the insur-



Harry with his Banjo

ance for all activities, did the artwork on the flyers, stored and helped "lot" the auction tools, made the wooden signs, did all the advertising for the auction, chaired the Whatsit committee---just to name a few. His efforts in the tool world were not restricted to CRAFTS. He displayed parts of his collection at various museums; he demonstrated his machinery at woodworking shows; and he performed during holidays and ceremonies by cutting tiny animals

on his pedal jigsaw for the children. Harry left no one out of his life.

His tool collection was as diversified as the man, but his first love was primitives and machines. They peaked his curiosity and he would sometimes buy a piece solely because he couldn't figure out how it worked. His biggest interest was in patternmaker tools and tools from New Jersey makers. When it looked as if that historical New Jersey toolbox (with the 13 Kings) was going to a bidder in the midwest, he kept the bidding going until the box was safely in his barn in New Jersey. His principles demanded that he do so. To him, principles and honor meant more than money.

There are not many of his kind left these days. Godspeed good friend.



Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society
of New Jersey

President _____ JOHN M. WHELAN, Murray Hill
Vice President _____ JOSEPH G. HAUCK, Lebanon
Secretary _____ BARBARA FARNHAM, Stockton
Treasurer _____ HELEN WHELAN, Murray Hill

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 ten dollars for the membership year of July 1 to June 30. Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer: Helen Whelan, 38 Colony Court, Murray Hill, N.J. 07974.

The Tool Shed

Published five times a year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Coeditors: Frank W. and Mary Alice Kingsbury, R. D. I, Box 316, Glen Gardner, N.J. 08826. Articles, especially about New Jersey tools and trades, are encouraged and may be sent to the editors.

Guest Speaker

DANA SHERMAN ON FEB. 3

CRAFTS of New Jersey will hold its 3rd meeting of the 1990 to 91 season on February 3 at the HOST Masonic Temple (note change in name) in High Bridge. Following the Tailgate Tool Swap and Sell time, a most interesting program will begin at 2:00 P.M. sharp. It will feature Dana Sherman's skill, and the tools he uses for timber framing. As additional drawing cards, he also demonstrates throwing axes and the use of a two-person 6' 6" crosscut saw. (He may even need you as a volunteer.) Don't miss this opportunity to hear an E.A.I.A. speaker.

SPEAKER'S PROFILE DANA SHERMAN

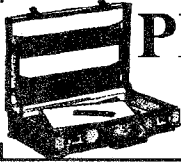
Our speaker, Dana Sherman, is a Vocational Instructor for the New York, Division of Youth. He is a member of E.A.I.A. and is one of their guest speakers. As such, he is actively involved, demonstrating the shaping and fitting of timbers. He gives his father credit for teaching him such skills as hand hewing. (He also is a consultant for a barn mover.) Dana utilizes tools (froes, a boring machine and axes) and methods of the past. He appears at the Living Museum, an 1890s village at the Altmont Fair, Altmont, N.Y., each year (one of the largest fairs in New York) the 3rd week of August. In fact, he is often on the road, mostly in New York, giving demonstrations at fairs and meetings.

As an additional feature, Dana has acquired some throwing axes made in New Zealand. They could add some thrilling moments!

Dana Sherman and his wife, Mary, live in Delanson, N.Y. (formerly on the Delaware and Hudson railroad where a roundhouse was located. The town's name is a contraction of the D & H. It is about 60 miles west of Albany). They are the parents of three grown children; a 25-year-old son who is a carpenter, and twins: a son who is a military policeman in Panama and a daughter who is a professional baker (her specialty is entitled "Death by Chocolate").

* * *

As at previous meetings, we will complete the afternoon with your "What's It?" Don Wallace will lead us in this interesting and educational activity.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Those of you who couldn't make the November meeting missed a fine presentation by James Rendi. Jim apparently liked us as well as we liked him, as he is now a member. If you missed it because of the change in date, my apologies. In particular those are owed to Ted and Vicki Groke who had hoped to get to their first regular meeting since their return from the Marshall Islands.

SHIPPEY HONORED

Dr. Frederick A. Shippey was honored at the meeting for his long service to CRAFTS. Fred was one of the founding members, and has been a Director and Program Chairman since the beginning in 1977. He was presented a plaque in acknowledgement of this long and outstanding service.

In addition, Fred was named as the first recipient of the Harry O'Neill Award. Steve Zluky established the custom of outstanding service to CRAFTS by presenting the honoree with a tool chosen to reflect his interests. We will continue this, but the name has been changed from the President's Award to the Harry O'Neill Award in fond remembrance of one who personified dedication to the Club's interests.

Fred was one of the first investigators of the significance of spring marks on wooden planes--the scribed marks which indicate the angle at which the plane is to be held in use. He was awarded a wide Mockridge and Francis molding plane with prominent spring markings.

In addition to his official duties for the Club, Fred has been perhaps the most prolific contributor to the TOOL SHED, with twelve

major articles. He is no stranger to authorship, having added many works to the literature of his vocation.

After using his carpentry skills to work his way through Syracuse, he added divinity studies at Yale, a Ph.D. from Northwestern and further study at the University of Paris and Yale. An ordained minister, he followed several pastorates with acceptance of the post of Superintendent of the Department of Research and Surveys in the Division of National Missions of the Methodist Church. This was followed by a professorship at Drew. Since his retirement, he has been organizing much of the data

accumulated during his career. The decision that this required his full attention led to his resignation from official status at CRAFTS. We will miss Fred's unflinching cheerful presence at Director's



Fred Shippey and his Awards

meetings and the many contributions he made to the Club's operations.

GREGORY WELSH A DIRECTOR

At the Director's meeting of December 2, Greg Welsh was appointed to fill the term vacated by the loss of Harry O'Neill. Greg is well known to all of you involved with our Auction, as he has helped enthusiastically in the set-up and as runner. He has (Continued on next page)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER (continued)
cheerfully accepted other tasks for the Club. You will remember the fine presentation he made with Ken Vliet on the lore of, and the making of, the Pennsylvania long rifle. This drew on his experience as an instructor in the use of black powder rifles and as a maker of fine guns.

Aside from the associated interest in gunsmith's equipment for wood- and metal-working, he has broader tool interests with special affection for fine rules. In addition to CRAFTS, he is a member---a working member---of E.A.I.A. and MWTCA. Greg is a plant engineer with Chubb and Son in the work-a-day world. He and his wife, Barbara, make their home in Tewksbury Township.

BY-LAW AMENDMENT

You all received copies of the by-laws, with proposed amendments, with last June's TOOL SHED. These were voted upon and accepted at the June business meeting. Because of an un-anticipated delay, the revisions were mailed two days short of the twenty day notification period required by the old laws. Bill Gustafson has requested that the amendments be voted upon once more at our next annual business meeting, which will be next June. If you have any questions on these, I will be glad to answer them. Jack Whelan

TOOL AUCTION

SATURDAY, APRIL 6 - 10 A.M.
HOLIDAY INN, CLINTON, N.J.

UPDATE

The lists are in and the tools are arriving, as well. As usual, there are plenty of interesting items, especially wooden planes with names like D. LINES, WHEATON, STALL, LAIRD and NAPIER. There are also a fair number of nice primitives. I could use a few more high quality STANLEY tools and patented planes. A good goosewing would be nice too.

At the February meeting I will be giving out posters and flyers for you to distribute in order to publicize our sale. Good places for these are antique shops, centers and shows, as well as other auctions. Post offices & train stations are also good places because of the high volume of people that go there each day.

A final reminder---the February meeting is the deadline for the delivery of tools for the auction. If this is a problem, call me (236-2072) or Steve Zlucky (534-2710) to arrange for shipping. Joe Hauck

Don Wallace requests that you bring a WHATSIT to the February 3rd meeting. Don has been appointed to conduct the WHATSIT portion of each meeting and is very flattered to be Harry O'Neill's successor.....hoping to retain the good humor, friendly spirit, informed insights and interest that Harry brought to these sessions.

So bring all the WHATSITS you have; even the oldies that have never been identified. This time, however, if you are absolutely sure you know a tool's identity or function.....write it on the owner's card at the WHATSIT table before the meeting and sign your name to your comment. Just don't dare to be wrong.

TOWARD MORE REWARDING TOOL COLLECTING

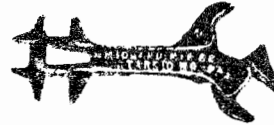
by Robert Fridlington

Over the last decade or so, tool collectors have been able to enjoy a number of first rate books dedicated to their favorite subject. These works have expanded tremendously our knowledge of antique tools and their makers, but they seldom have had much to say about the collecting experience itself. Little time and space has been devoted to how one begins or develops a collection, how one goes about satisfying that strange and all-absorbing urge to acquire, possess and enjoy these artifacts of our past. This oversight has now been remedied with the appearance of a handsome new volumeCOLLECTING ANTIQUE TOOLS.

The authors of this work, Herbert P. Kean and Emil S. Pollak, are old friends to many readers of these pages. Each is a well known collector and each speaks with considerable authority. Herb Kean is also a sometime tool dealer and one of the country's leading tool auctioneers. A founding member of CRAFTS, he has been a director of that organization from its beginning and is a frequent contributor to the TOOL SHED. Emil Pollak is the editor of PLANE TALK and, with his wife, is the author of the authoritative A GUIDE TO AMERICAN WOODEN PLANES AND THEIR MAKERS (2nd ed., 1987). Emil has served as a director of the Early American Industries Association, and he is presently a director of CRAFTS.

This is a guide through the thicket of collecting, written from the viewpoint of a collector and drawing on the combined experience of the authors. It is aimed primarily at the novice, but the book contains something for almost everyone. It is all here: how to find

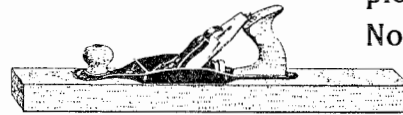
antique tools; what determines their value; tips on cleaning and restoration; how to display tools; books to read; clubs and organizations to join; pitfalls to avoid; and much, much more. Their aim, the authors say, is "to make your



collecting as rewarding and problem-free as one can in a book."

The book devotes most of its pages to descriptions and photographs of more than seven-hundred tools. The vast majority of these are woodworking tools, though a few of other types have been allowed in. They are organized under six headings---boring tools, edge tools, planes, measuring tools, saws, and "other" tools ---and then are divided into subgroups. The selections run the full range, from commonplace (a ball-peen hammer, sawsets, caulking irons, pipe wrenches) to the beautiful and expensive (an Ultimatum brace, an 1872 Millers Patent

plow plane, a Stanley No. 196 curve rabbet).



All of the descriptions are clear and uncomplicated, and several of the longer ones---those that deal with historical development or variations---comprise informative mini-essays (See, for example, "Primitive Brace," pp. 9-13, with four photos and one drawing). The style is consistently fresh and direct, and the text is enlivened with sprightly detail. Despite the wide scope of the work, there are no significant omissions.

Special mention must be made of the pictures in this volume. The large, 8 1/2" x 11" pages contain some 292 line drawings and photographs of tools. The drawings, particularly the

(Continued on page 7)

chairs at a time to one customer. Wills often listed each type of chair and how many of each.

WINDSOR CHAIRS

James Rendi, our speaker at the November 11th meeting, showed us, by means of his excellent slides and actual examples of his workmanship, a great variety of Windsor chairs, settees, and stools, . From the simple lines of the Loop Back and the Continuous Arm Windsors to the Sack Back and more stately Comb Back, the emphasis was on the beauty of their design. For this reason they are simply painted in a variety of colors.....green, red, black, dark brown, etc.....of milk paint to penetrate the cells of the wood. Sometimes a "museum finish" such as red over green is used and then rubbed to show through.



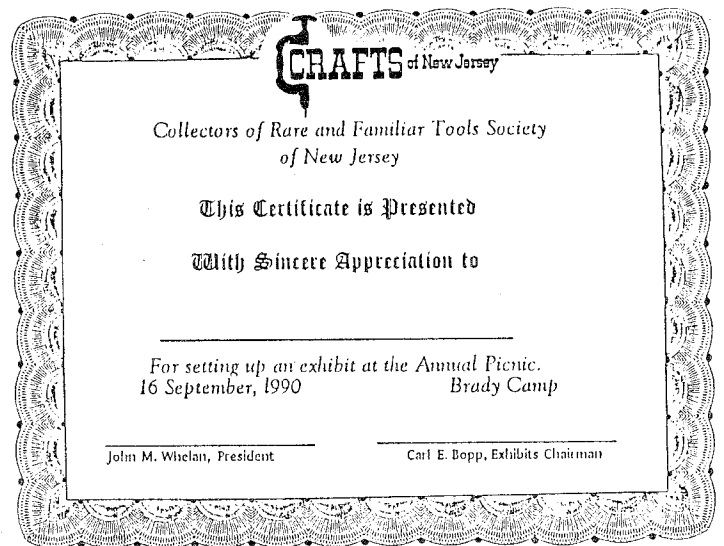
James Rendi with Loop Back & Comb Back Windsor Chairs

The Windsor chair is proclaimed to be the only chair that will last 200 years and still remain tight in the joints. The methods of construction were perpetuated by oral tradition, never written down. Even the craftsmans names did not appear on the chairs until later when they were being shipped up and down the coast and canals. It was not unusual to sell 20 or 30



James Rendi's Tools & Case
Also a Spindle & Blunt Arrow Leg

* * *



How would you like to receive a certificate like this? It could be presented as a token of appreciation from CRAFTS of New Jersey for those members who take the time and effort to assemble an exhibit at the 1991 CRAFTS picnic. A similar certificate is given to exhibitors at the E.A.I.A. and the Mid-West Tool Collectors Association annual meetings. If you are interested, register your opinion with our president, Jack Whelan or with our Picnic Chairman, Ken Vliet.

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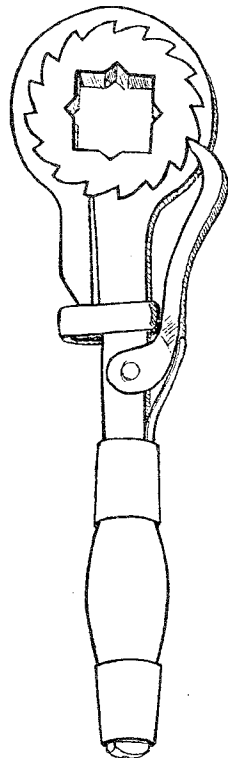
THOSE AMAZING WRENCHES

by Frank W. Kingsbury

Beautiful to behold, this neatly constructed ratchet wrench, is 9 1/4" long x 2 1/2" diameter with a 1" square opening. It has a polished wood handle with a 1" ferrule at each end of it and an iron nut at its tip. A forked arm is kept in place by the pressure of the steel spring at its lower end. Its forked tips engage the 16 points of the ratchet wheel. The wheel itself has a 1/4" wide groove around it to accommodate the 1/4" hinged-at-the-top (by a swivel pin) circular enclosure which is an extension of the handle.

The 3/8" x 1 1/8" (side view) x 5/8" guard, that encloses the handle and the extension of the hinged side of the enclosure, may be slid down, the enclosure opened, and the ratchet wheel removed in order to reverse it. Thus, if the points of the ratchet wheel are pointing clockwise, the nut will be turned counterclockwise and vice versa.

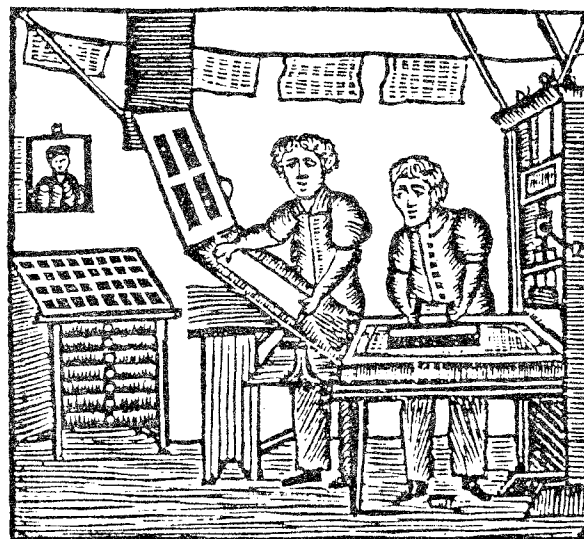
This rare ratchet wrench is illustrated by a photograph in *ANTIQUE & UNUSUAL WRENCHES* by Alfred Schultz (pp. 18, 19) with the comment: "Tap wrench. No information". My wrench has no print on any surface. Because it is so well made, perhaps it was later patented or appeared in a catalog. If anyone has such information, please let me know.



REWARDING COLLECTING (Continued)
the schematic of various planes, prove once again the old cliché about the worth of a single picture as they transform the almost unexplainable into the easily understandable. The photographs are outstanding. Except for the knock-out cover, they are all in black and white; but every one is clean and sharp and crystal clear, showing the smallest detail.

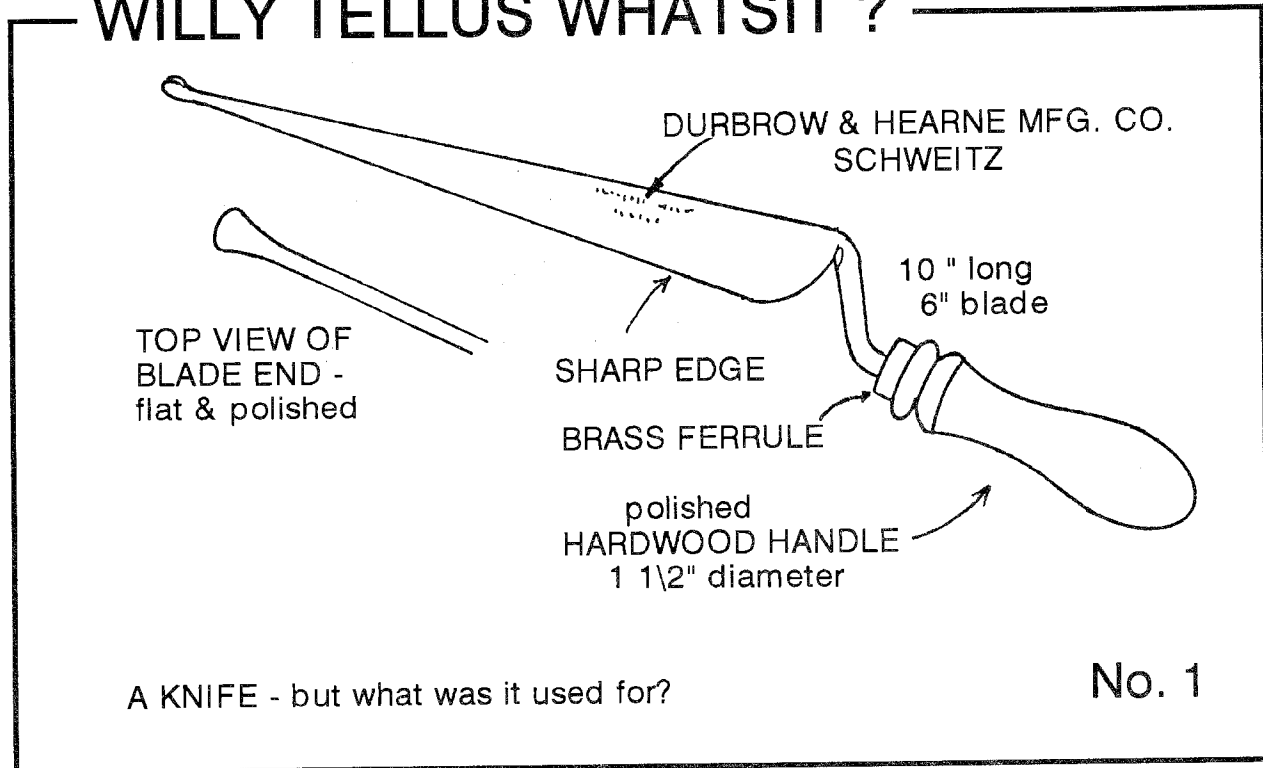
The authors have succeeded in doing what they set out to do: They have produced a complete and comprehensive guide for the collector. The book will undoubtedly add many new recruits to the existing ranks, and it can be read for pleasure and profit by anyone with a curiosity about antique tools. And the book will not just sit on the shelf. Once you have dipped into this cookie jar, you will want to keep on nibbling.

Herbert P. Kean and Emil S. Pollak.
COLLECTING ANTIQUE TOOLS.
Morristown, N.J.; The Astragal Press,
1990. Pp. 201. Illustrations and index.
Smyth-sewn soft cover. Price: \$24.95.
Order from The Astragal Press,
One South Street, Box 338,
Morristown, NJ 07963-0338.



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WILLY TELLUS WHATSIT ?



COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 3rd--CRAFTS Meeting High Bridge. "Timber Framing" by Dana Sherman.

FEBRUARY 9th--Three Rivers Tool Collectors, Pittsburg, PA

APRIL 6th--CRAFTS Tool Auction at the Holiday Inn, Clinton, N.J.

APRIL 7th--CRAFTS Meeting at High Bridge. "Japanese Tools" by Henry Lanz.

APRIL 12th & 13th--Missouri Valley Wrench Club, at Davenport, Iowa.

JUNE 2nd--CRAFTS Meeting at High Bridge.

JUNE 12th to 15th--E.A.I.A. Annual Meeting at the Landis Valley Museum & Eden Resort Hotel near Lancaster, PA.

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DEADLINE for the TOOL SHED articles, letters, advertisements, pictures, etc. is MARCH 4th.

CRAFTS of New Jersey meets at the HOST Masonic Lodge in High Bridge. Take Interstate 78 to the Route 31 exit at Clinton. Go north on Route 31 two miles to the second traffic light at the High Bridge exit. Turn right and go about 1/2 mile to Dennis Avenue on the left. Turn and go to the Masonic Lodge. Tailgate Sales in the parking lot begin at 1:00 P.M. Meeting at 2:00.