

# The TOOL SHED

NUMBER 73

SEPTEMBER 1992



A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

## Edwin Hahn, Wilkes Barre, Pa. Planemaker (1847-1924)

by Stephen M. Zluky

Collecting tools and especially planes has been a very interesting hobby for me for the past twenty years. Since I was born near Wilkes Barre and travel there often to visit family and friends, it was logical for me to become interested in the planes manufactured in that area by Jacob Siegley and Edwin Hahn.

On weekends, as MarKay and I rummaged through garage sales, flea markets, antiques shops and auctions, I began to find a number of planes manufactured by Edwin Hahn. Also through a local picker, I was able to purchase Edwin Hahn's Bible and an original advertising letterhead for his iron bench planes (Figure 1). These planes are generally found throughout northeastern Pennsylvania; it seems that Hahn developed a good local market for his planes.

Listed as a carpenter in the Wilkes Barre Business Directory in the early 1900's, Hahn

resided in the South Wilkes Barre area very close to Jacob Siegley. According to Roger Smith in Patented Transitional and Metallic Planes In America - Volume I, the relationship between the two is unknown. However, Hahn must have purchased Siegley's leftover bench plane stock and jigs and patterns when Siegley's patent expired and began to manufacture his own line of bench planes. Many of the planes are probably Siegley planes with Hahn blades or a mixture of Siegley - Hahn parts. Edwin Hahn is listed as a planemaker in the 1908 Directory and continued to make planes until 1918.

The Hahn manufactured planes have a birch or maple handle or knob, a checkered handle and a corrugated bottom. The plane blades are stamped *Edwin Hahn, manfr. Wilkes Barre, Pa.*

*continued on page 4*

*Wilkes-Barre, Pa., ..... 19.....*

*Mr.*



TERMS:—30 Days.

TO EDWIN HAHN, DR.  
MANUFACTURER OF  
IMPROVED ADJUSTABLE IRON BENCH PLANES

109 MOYALLEN STREET.

All Shipments F. O. B. Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Figure 1. Hahn Advertising Letterhead.



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 through June 30. Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer: Helen Whelan, 38 Colony Court, Murray Hill, NJ 07974.

CRAFTS of NJ meets at the HOST Masonic Lodge, High Bridge. 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 1 P.M.; meeting is at 2:00.

#### THE TOOL SHED

Published five times a year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Editor: Stuart Shippey, 251 Hillside Ave., Chatham, NJ 07928-1732. Articles, especially about New Jersey tools and trades, are encouraged and may be sent to the editor. Text can be hand written, PC ascii, *Word Perfect*; FAX 201 301-9780.

#### Dues Reminder !

Is this your last *TOOLSHED*? It will be if you received a dues reminder last July and have not yet sent \$10 to Helen Whelan.

At right, Barret Dalrymple's Dairy Collectables Displayed at the June CRAFTS Meeting

#### Crafts Picnic - September 13

Another year has flown by. Where did it go! Did we really have a summer this year with so few days over ninety and it's August? Our annual outing again will be held at the Brady Camp on Sunday, September 13 beginning at 10 am.

Everyone enjoyed the displays exhibited last year, and we do hope to see more shown this year. If you have a folding table to bring, it will fit along the walls of the dining building nicely. We may need the other tables for eating. Last year's attendance was over 175.

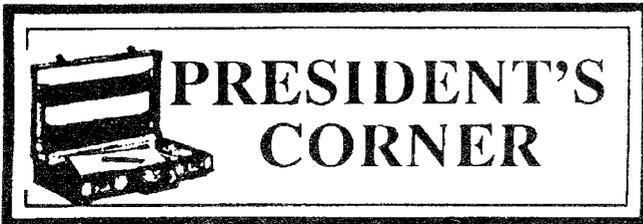
Reservations must be made if you wish to eat at the picnic, no walk-ins. This allows the caterer to be prepared for those who sign up. Besides eating and a few tools, we will also have games for children and adults. If anyone wishes to do a demonstration (dog show), please let me know. Last year's was a real hit.

Start looking for and cleaning that most beautiful item, most unusual, unknown, and ugliest tool. Bring it along and you could win a prize. There will be a best display award for table displays (men and women), provided we have enough displays. A mini-auction will be conducted after lunch; only one item per member.

If there are any questions give a ring.

Ken Vliet 908 439-2085



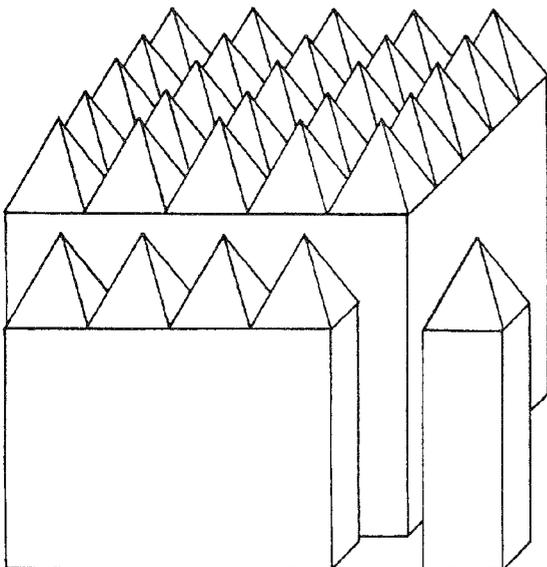


It's hard to believe that the summer is ending! Isn't it supposed to be the same length as winter? I hope you all found some tool prizes to warm your hearts on the long evenings to come.

I did. The Lee Donnelly auction yielded a most unusual chamfer plane, in the form of a jack with one side jutting out at a 45 degree angle. It's only been reported in print once, to my knowledge, by Philip Stanley in an old Plane Talk. I imagine it was intended to cut the chamfer on the edges of cornice moldings, in place of the spring plane. Resting the angled side of the plane body on the workbench holds the cutting edge at the proper angle.

Herb Kean's sale in Andover netted me several European planes, which I find interesting, as well as some from New Jersey. So did Carl Bopp's sale in Audubon. LaHaska produced four almost unused E.Danberry (New Brunswick, NJ) planes. I came home from a Barry Hurchalla auction with a set of ten Japanese planes in the form in which they were once supplied to the craftsmen there: a body with the throat roughed out and a blade which had to be fitted to it.

Every summer has to produce a tale of the big one that got away. At the same auction, a shoepeg plane was offered. I chased it, but another *CRAFTS*man wanted it even more than I did. These planes served to make the



wooden pegs that shoemakers once used to hold soles and heels on the shoe. The plane has multiple V-grooves in the sole, with a blade to match. The sketch shows their product. A slice of wood is cut across the grain, of the same thickness as the length of the pegs desired. The shoepeg plane cuts fine V-grooves on its face, then is used at right angles to the first cut to produce a set of pyramidal points. The shoemaker's knife splits off a row of these as a strip, then splits individual pegs from the strip.

One that didn't get away was a tool at the Alex Farnham auction: a toted plane type body with two knives mounted vertically, protruding from the sole one behind the other. The stock had a pair of square mortices that undoubtedly held a plow-type fence at one time. It seems reasonable to assume that it was made as a veneer splitter, or slitting tool for thin material. It gave me a good reason to try my hand at making a plow fence to fit it.

Speaking of the Donnelly auction, Mary Jane Donnelly has asked me to thank all of the many *CRAFTS* members who worked to make the auction a success. She tells me Lee would have said affectionately "ya done good!". We received many favorable comments on the hall (the Elks hall on Route 31 just north of Flemington). We couldn't get it for our 1993 auction, but it has been booked for the 1994 auction.

Officers and Board members re-elected at the June Business meeting thank you for your confidence. Remember that it is YOUR club, and we are glad to have your comments and suggestions; and even happier to have your help in Club activities.

Welcome to new *CRAFTS* members Stephen Behrmdt (Exton, PA), Weldon Bell (Pennington), Anthony Bisogno (Englishtown), Charles Bonanno (Suffern, NY), Richard & Gale Butterfoss (Pennington), Thomas & Lolla Chadwick (Bozeman, MT), William Cullen (Staten Island, NY), David Grant (Port Murray), Paul Hale (Liverpool, NY), Pete & Donna Hathaway (Weston, CT), Ken Johnston (Denville), Richard & Mary Kappeler (Oyster Bay, NY), Mr. & Mrs. Larry Lederer (Quakertown, PA), George & Virginia Lemoine (Wilmington, DE), George & Barbara Lott (Chalfont, PA), John & Joan MacIntosh (Seaside Park), C. Robert & Pauline Manby (Stamford, CT), Jim Marsh (Mendham), Walter Melvin (Little York), Samuel Mirenda (Glassboro), Steve & Ruth Morey (Tuckerton), Donel Moss (Perkasie, PA), Paul & Dolores Myers (Hopatcong), Robert & Marie Newkirk (Elmer), Greg & Debbie Price (Mount Royal), Mario Rodriguez (Warwick, NY), Len Rosenberg (Port Washington, NY), Jack & Billie Schloerb (Randolph), Michael Stieglitz (Yardley, PA), E. Thomas Willet (Worcester, MA), Andy & Maggie Worthington (Stroudsburg, PA), and Peter Yuschak (Cranford).

## Edwin Hahn - Planemaker continued

### Chart of Hahn Planes

Number	Length & Width	Blade Width
2	9 1/2" X 2 3/8"	2"
3	9 3/4" X 2 1/2"	2 1/8"
4	9 3/4" X 2 5/8"	2 1/4"
5	14" X 2 3/8"	2"
6	14 3/4" X 2 1/2"	2"
7	12" X 2 1/4"	1 3/4"
8	18" X 2 3/4"	2 1/4"
9	19 5/8" X 2 5/8"	2 1/4"
10	21 1/2" X 2 3/4"	2 1/4"
12	23 1/2" X 3 1/8"	2 5/8"
14	23 3/4" X 3 1/8"	2 1/2"
16		
18	27 7/8" X 3 1/8"	2 3/4"

Some of the planes are stamped *E. Hahn* at the heel of the plane. The planes have lateral adjustment levers, a single iron and many parts are very crude such as caps and the screws for the knobs and handles were made from nails. I have found three styles of caps: a very crude handmade one, a plain cap from a #18, and an adjustable double plate which was Hahn's improvement from a #2 plane (Figure 2).

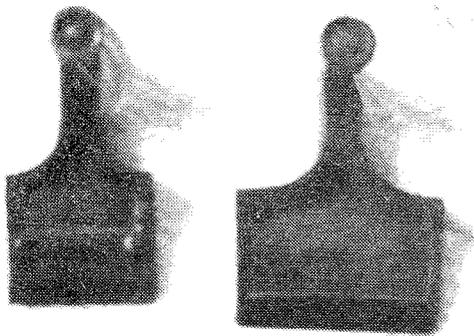


Figure 2. Left, Adjustable Double Plate Cap from No. 2  
Right, Plain Cap from No. 18 Hahn Plane

Hahn's planes can be found in a number of sizes. Included in the chart are the number sizes and blade widths that I have been able to find. I believe that a #16 was manufactured but I have not been able to acquire one. Therefore, I have no dimensions for it. Surprisingly, just a few weeks ago, thanks to Steve Orbine and Joe Hauck, I acquired a #18 which is the longest iron bench plane I have seen. The plane made its way to Piscataway where a local picker found it.

For further information of Hahn Planes check Patented Transitional and Metallic Planes In America - Volumes 1 and 2 by Roger Smith, excellent resources that should be in every plane collectors library. Finally, if there are any other Hahn plane collectors who would like to share some information I would be happy to hear from you.

\* \* \* \* \*

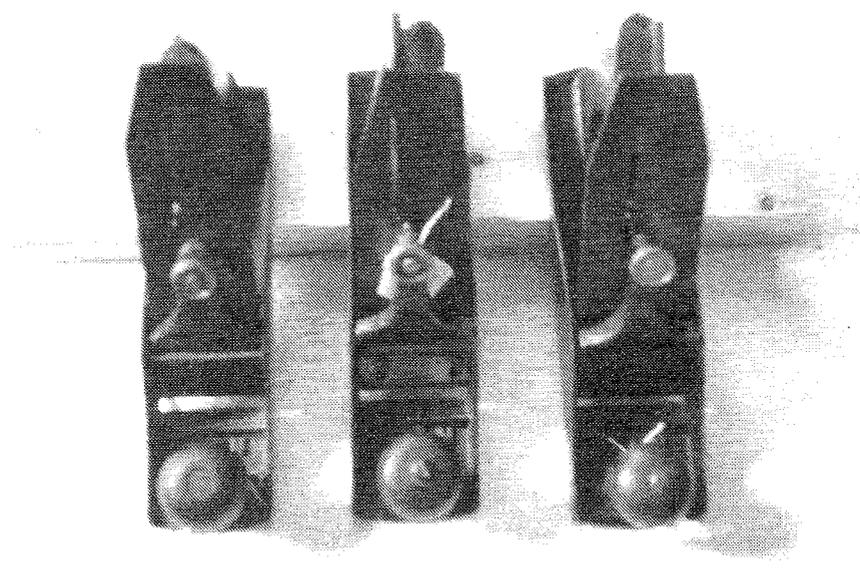


Figure 3. Nos. 2, 3, 4 Hahn Planes.

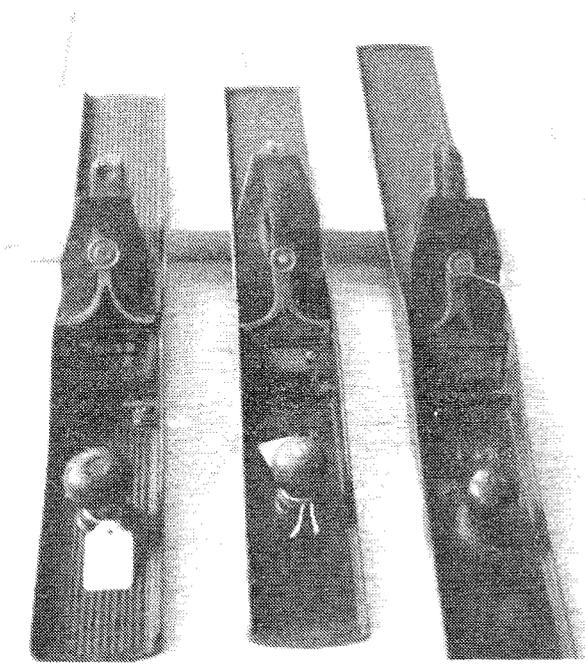


Figure 4. Nos. 5, 6, 7 Hahn Planes

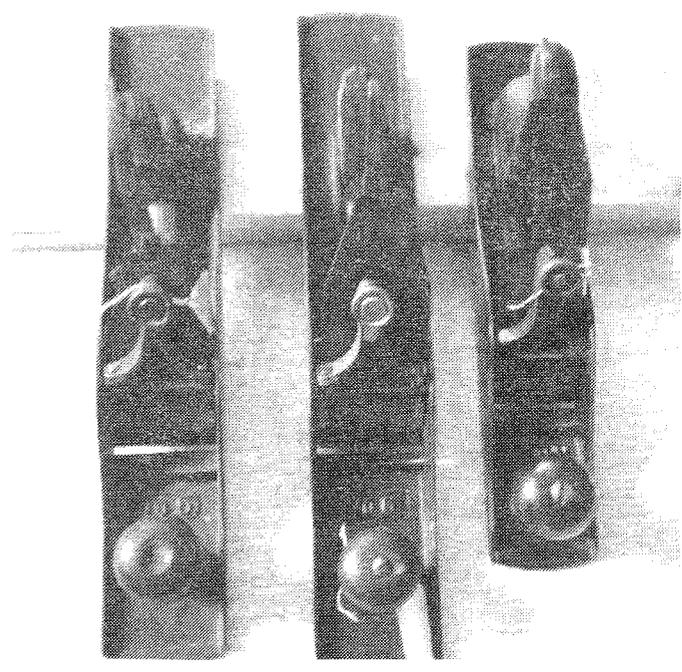


Figure 5. Nos. 8, 9, 10 Hahn Planes

## BIG TREE LOGGING

by Herbert P. Kean

Of all the early American industries that I can think of, few have the mystique and the lore of logging. And the most intriguing tales of this trade are those describing the *Big Trees*. Technically, *Big Trees* are *Giant Sequoias*, indigenous only to central California. But to most people, any tree over 4 feet in diameter is a big tree. So this treatise will include big trees in other areas, particularly those in the *Fog Belt* of Oregon and Washington.

I worked the camps of the Pacific northwest in 1948. I was told that except for gasoline saws replacing 2-man crosscuts, and diesels replacing mules and oxen, it wasn't very different than 100 years back. You couldn't prove it by me; as far as I was concerned those first few days couldn't have been any tougher - no matter what century they were in.

I saw no *Paul Bunyan* characters with muscles bursting through their plaid shirts. Most of the loggers were slim, wiry, untiring Scandinavians who had migrated from the logged-out forests of Wisconsin and Minnesota. It's true they were tough, and had their share of bar-room brawls, but they followed orders during the workday better than military personnel. Routine was important, because every crew depended upon the one preceding it; and every member in a crew depended upon the others for performance and safety. The rule of no talking in the mess hall not only provided efficiency (meals were in shifts), but helped instill uncompromising discipline.

Logging in the big trees took a lot more thinking and planning than standard logging. One of the biggest considerations was the protection of the bottom or *butt* log (usually 60 feet long). The tree had to be dropped in a manner that prevented it from splitting. In rocky areas, a *bed* of criss-crossed saplings were sometimes



cut to cushion the tree where it fell. This led to the concern of whether the tree would drop in the exact spot or not. Wind was critical, and if it was blowing in an unfavorable direction, the operation was delayed until it changed. But when they finally went at it, that 150 to 250 foot tree laid down a foot or two from the mark!

A flare-out of the tree at the ground line (butt swell), was natural to most of the larger trees, and it forced the fallers to work 5 to 10 feet off the ground on springboards stuck into the tree as platforms. It was tricky up there, as most of the time the

man at the power end of the chain saw couldn't see or hear the man at the opposite or *stinger* end. If hand signals were not possible, the powerman had to idle down so communications could be shouted back and forth. There were two touchy operations that the fallers had to get right, and that's what all the shouting was about:

1) As the saw progressed into the backcut, the tree ended up standing on a vertical hinge of wood. A gust of wind in the wrong direction at the wrong time could *sit* the tree down on the saw and bind it. To prevent this, a series of wedges were driven into the cut to keep it open even under adverse conditions. The slightest feel of binding made it necessary to stop sawing and set the wedges deeper.

2) When the hinge was narrow enough to allow the tree to fall, it was important that it was the same thickness all the way across, or the tree would not fall true. To accomplish this the fallers had to constantly know the number of inches left to cut on each side. The closer they got, the more the shouting. When cracking sounds were heard, they knew they had only seconds left to get the hinge right. If they made it too thin, the tree could kick back and destroy

the saw (and possibly the sawyers). If they left it too thick, it might split vertically all the way up the butt log, destroying thousands of board feet of lumber. If it was cockeyed, the tree would drop off target and might break up.

I'm sure the reader can visualize the danger at the moment of fall: getting the heck out of there. If you were working on the ground, it was not too bad (the tree took a few seconds to make its downward trip). But, if you were 10 feet in the air on springboards, it was a different story. I'm happy to say I never worked on the boards.

The most prestigious (and highest paid) logger in the woods was the *topper*. As chief of the rigging crew, he climbed about 100 feet up the tree, with spurs and a waist loop, and cut off the top (which was about 3 feet in diameter at that point). Topping was sometimes used to allow a tree to be lowered by rigging, to prevent breakup on impact. However, most of the time its purpose was to end up with a *spar* tree to rig the skyline to. The *skyline* (a 3 inch diameter cable) ran about half a mile or so down the mountain to the 60 foot tower of the *skidder* (a giant winch) mounted on a railroad car. All the logs within 100 feet of each side of the skyline were moved down the line by the skidder. At the tower, they were boom-loaded onto flatcars and were sent off to the mill.

To move the logs, they had to be *choked* or wrapped with a 30 foot cable that had an eye loop on one end. This loop was picked up by the main hook coming down from the block-and-fall that ran off the skyline. I can remember times when we couldn't reach all the way around the girth of the log with the standard 30 foot choker, and had to call for the special 50 footer!

The 200 foot swath that resulted from the operation was repeated again right next to it, until the block was logged out. This style of logging was called clearcutting. It was done in a big patchwork effect to allow for natural reseeding, or it was totally wiped clear and reseeded by hand. Either way, it wasn't a pretty sight. But there is evidence today that it did work.

Almost all the communication in the woods

was accomplished by men who were called *whistlepunks*. They were usually disabled from a woods accident, and sat on top of hills where they had a clear view. They telegraphed all messages down to the skidder, and then a train whistle was blown (in code) that alerted all the crews to what was going to happen.

The crews came through each area sequentially, and never were in each others way. First the *toppers* and *riggers*, then the *fallers*, then the *swampers* (they cleared the branches), then the *buckers* (they cut the tree into logs), then the *gophers* (they dynamited holes under the logs for the chokers), and finally the *choker-setters* and *hookers* (they readied the logs for the trip down the mountain).

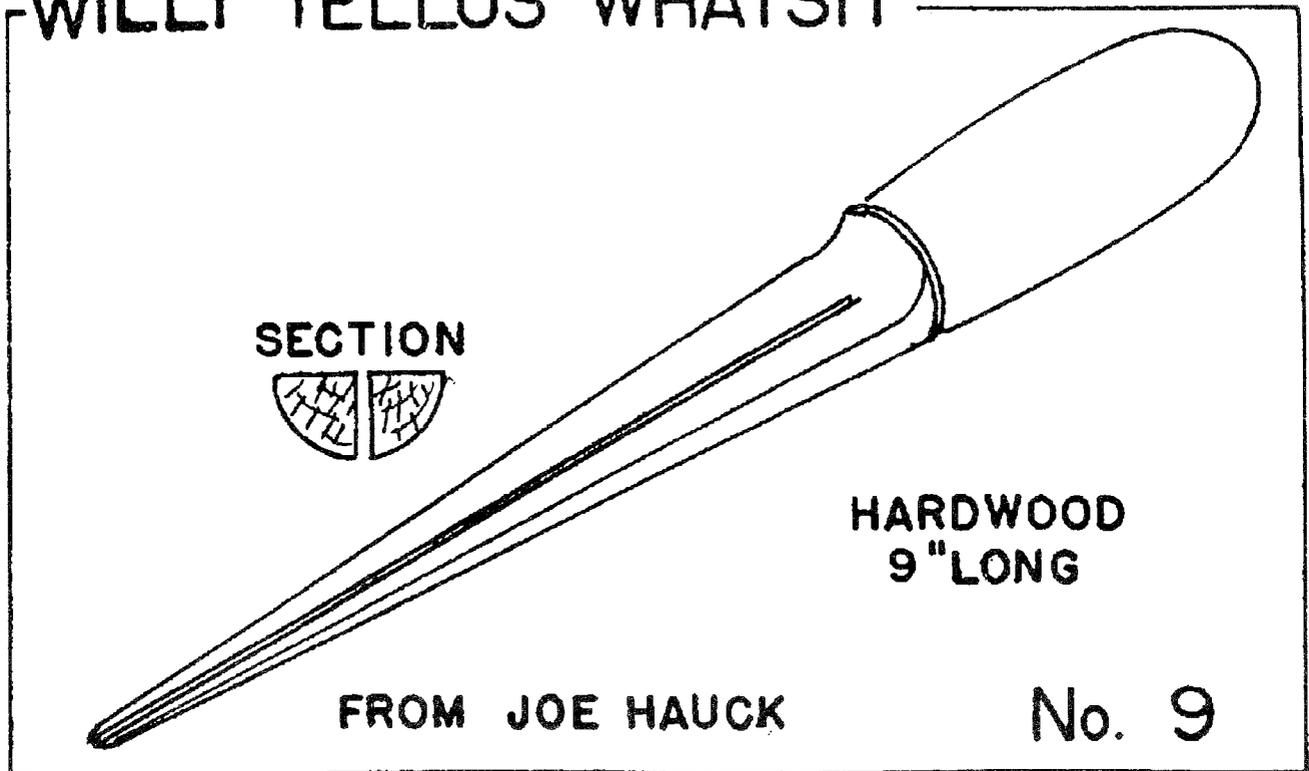
It was a rule in the camps where I worked (*Weyerhaeuser*) that belts and pantcuffs were taboo. Suspenders and a ragged tearline at the bottom of your pants were required. If you considered the fact that most of the crews had to work 10 to 15 feet in the air (on the occasions when the fallen trees crossed over each other), you realized that a lot of jumping went on. Even though everyone wore *corks* (spiked boots), you still needed fluid motion when you jumped, and suspenders gave you that.

The ragged cuffs were a little more difficult to understand. If you jumped and fell, and your pants caught in a branch on the way down, a cuff would hold you solid and turn you upside-down, and you'd land on your head. However, ragged edges would rip all the way up, and you'd land on your feet. Whether you accepted this explanation or not, the first thing you had to do upon entering camp was to tear off all your cuffs. I thought it was merely a way of showing who were the *tenderfeet*, but the old-timers had ragged cuffs too.

The entire operation was not as glamorous as the movies made it out to be, but it was much more effective and a heck of a lot safer. I would say that some of the jobs in the big trees were the toughest, but most interesting, of all the trades and harvesting jobs in this country. At least that's the way it was in the 40's.

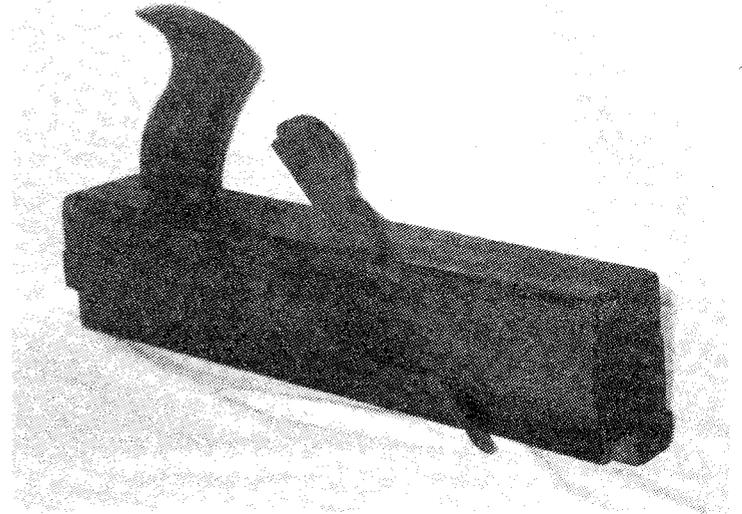
\* \* \* \* \*

# WILLY TELLUS WHATSIT



## Another Rare New Jersey Plane Surfaces by Louis Schmidt

Recently, I acquired a groove plane (simple plow plane) made by John Frace of Newton, New Jersey. Those of you familiar with New Jersey tool makers/-dealers will probably realize that this is only the second plane with this *four star* imprint found to date. This plane also has an additional imprint from the *A. Howland & Co.* of New York, the significance of this is that John Frace is now confirmed as a hardware dealer and not a planemaker. The additional imprint also makes it possible to approximately date the two Frace planes as being manufactured between 1869-74. They were undoubtedly made by convict labor in the Auburn State Prison.



## CRAFTS Calendar of Events

Sept. 13 - Crafts picnic

Sept. 25 - *TOOLSLED* deadline

Nov. 8 - meeting at High Bridge



by Peter Junger © 1991