The TOOL SHED

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From Tree to Highboy

The Cabinetmaker's Skill: The Building of a Tall Chest

by Walter W. Jacob

Once there was a little walnut tree that grew straight and proud. It ate of the sun and the earth' s nutrients, trying to reach the sky in its quest for greatness. But age set in and its time as a living thing came to an end.

This walnut tree was located along the South Branch of French Creek, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Here, among the iron furnace plantations, it had seen history made. Now it was to become a part of history.

In January 1985, when the sap was down, the owner of the land felled the walnut tree. This made better working lumber. He wanted the finest piece of furniture ever known to Americans to be created out of its wood. The Philadelphia tall chest of drawers (also known as a "highboy") is considered the best proportioned and most graceful of furniture and is deemed by most furniture connoisseurs to be the apogee of furniture making.

Figure 1. Completed highboy chest.

The tall chest of drawers is a style that is lean, distinctive and elegant. A masterpiece now, as well as 200 years ago, the highboy is the testimony of a cabinetmaker's carving skill, artistic balance, and choice of woods. It is an heirloom piece and one that was, and is, affordable only by the wealthiest. See Figure 1.

He contacted us, the Jacob Brothers, as we had already created several pieces of 18th Century furniture for him. We instructed him on how the tree should be sawn (in boards up to 4 inches thick) and air dried (for a minimum of five years).

In 1991, the lumber was air dried to a point where final drying would leave the lumber ready for furniture making without the hard working qualities of totally kiln dried lumber.

Next, we created a full scale drawing of the highboy showing the proportions and carving designs in detail. This would guide us during the working process.

Four hand planned 4 x 4 solid walnut bolts were selected for shaping out the legs of the base. The pattern was laid out and a compound cut was made to rough out the basic form of the legs. The ball and claw was formed using Butcher, Buck, and Addis carving tools with a *lignum vitae* mallet. Initial layout of the ball and claw was made using a compass to draw a circle on the bottom. This was used as a guide to form the "ball." The claws were sketched in and the wood between them was carved out. The legs and ankles were formed using Stanley #53, #64, and #151 spoke shaves. Little by little, the bottom of the foot was carved and shaped until the ball, claws , knuckles, and ankle looked like a bird' s foot grasping a ball showing strength and good form. (The carver must sense how far to go to achieve the proper proportion.)

When this was accomplished, the carving pattern on the middle section of the legs was laid out and the side blocks were glued in place. At this point nothing was done to the top of the leg where the quarter column was to be placed. *(cont. on page 4)*

CRAFTS of New Jersey

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of New Jersey

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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 starts at 2 P.M.

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. Assistant Editor: Herb Kean. Articles, especially about New Jersey tools and trades, are encouraged and may be sent to the editors. Send legible hand-written or typed text, or PC ascii or *Word Perfect*® PC disk, or FAX to 201 635-7939 or 201 301-9781.

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CRAFTS Calendar of Events

Sept. 11 - CRAFTS Picnic, Brady Camp, NJ

Nov. 6 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

Tool of the Year

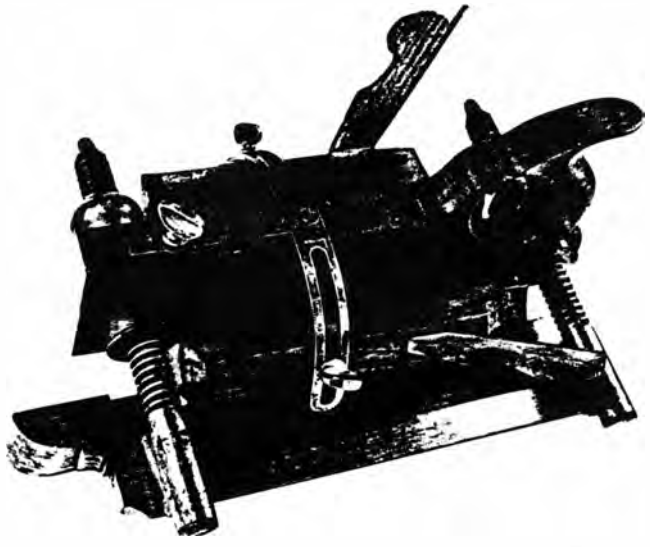
by Bud Brown

Fred Beck of Springfield, Ohio has been collecting tools since the early 1980s. His early collecting motto was "**Pretty Tools and Ivory Rules**." Prior to the '80s, the retired pharmacist's main collecting interest was the best Pennsylvania rifles that could be found. At one time, one of his early rifles sold for a world's record price. Fred has other collecting interests, including fine American glass and a library of over 1000 non-fiction books, many of them quite rare.

This past winter, Fred paid $15,000, in a private transaction, for an extraordinary plane. It is slightly similar to the one shown in *PTAMPIA*, Pg. 116 (see photo below). It is the difference that makes this plane so breathtaking: ebony and rosewood, with ivory tips. The plane has a brass plate affixed to it engraved, "**M.B. Tidey Maker and Inventor**." Fred and I know of no other similar plane by M. B. Tidey.

Some other "pretty" planes in Fred's collection include: a pair of wide, early I. Lindenberger crown molders, a Sandusky centerwheel in rosewood, another in boxwood, and a handled E.W. Carpenter Patented plow in boxwood and rosewood. Additionally, Fred has a Sandusky centerwheel in ebony! Not too many years ago, Fred sold a Sandusky centerwheel in boxwood with ivory tips at Crane's for $8000, a record that stood for several years for a tool sold at auction. And these are only to mention a few!

We are proud to award **Tool of the Year** for not just a world record breaker, but for a tool that can hold its own with any collectible.



Tidey's Double Beveling Plane
(courtesy of Roger K. Smith, PTAMPIA Pg. 116)

We accepted with much regret Bob Fridlington's departure from the CRAFTS board. Bob was one of the founders of CRAFTS, and served as Editor of the *TOOLSHED* for many years. He has been one of the mainstays of the Board of Trustees for sixteen years. He felt (although the Board disagreed) that this was long enough, and refused renomination. He will continue to be part of the cadre keeping the club running, but offered his seat to a newcomer. CRAFTS owes Bob a great debt of gratitude.

As his replacement, Hank Allen was nominated, and elected at the June meeting. Hank is a very knowledgeable collector, with a particular fondness for early English planes. He has already dug his teeth into assignments that will further improve our *TOOLSHED*.

☞ **PICNIC**: Ken Vliet promises us another outstanding day at Brady Camp. As the flyer that you have received in the mail told you, we are changing the Picnic admission procedure. Trying to handle members who do not register in advance has proven to be just too much of a hassle, unfair to the volunteers who do the work as well as the caterers. **If your registration and registration of your guest(s) is not received on or before September 1, we will not be able to feed you.** You will be admitted to all functions except the lunch line. We've made the special mailing to ensure that you have more than enough time to register. Please don't ask us to make exceptions. We hate to say no.

Welcome to new members Thomas Blanchard (East Nassau, NY); Herbert Cannon (Chatham); Jeffrey & Linda Clayton (Toms River); Ray Kistner (Rock Hill, NY); Robert & Chris Kozakiewicz (Trenton); Raymond Mikolajczyk (Trenton); Herbert Mulack (Wood Ridge); Annette & Peter Murricane (Blairstown); John P. Peter (Slatington, PA); Patrick Ryan (Bethlehem, PA); Karl W. Sanger (Silver Spring, MD); William L. Turton (Roseland); and D.A. Webernick (Wenonah).

Meet Your Dealers

The purpose of this column is NOT to evaluate dealers, but simply to present useful and interesting information about tool sources.

Twice a year the most ardent tool collectors make pilgrimages to Nashua, New Hampshire to feast their eyes and empty their wallets at tool auctions run by Your Country Auctioneer. Richard A. Crane presides over and cries the auctions for this group, which conducted its 15th annual Antique Tool Auction and Show last April 22-23. This event always attracts fine tools from consignors, and many dealers attend to offer their best items for individual sale. It is but one of the sales arranged by this group, from a Cabin Fever listed sale in February through a half-dozen or more other tool sales in New Hampshire. It returns to Nashua for a back-to back listed sale and a catalog sale in the Fall (Sept.30-Oct.1 this year).

Dick believes that he has sold more tools at auction than anyone else over the last ten years. A past president of the New Hampshire Auctioneers Association, he is a master of his profession. His colorful style, red suspenders and derby hat, and sense of humor holds the crowd's attention while keeping the sale moving.

His Manager for tool activities is J. Lee Murray, whose twenty-five years of tool collecting has won him wide recognition as one of the more knowledgeable members of the tool fraternity. A dealer and appraiser for over ten years, Lee is active in the Early American Industries Association, and a member of many other tool groups (including CRAFTS). He covers a lot of territory for buying and appraising tools, and locating consignments for Your Country Auctioneer's sales.

If you are not on their mailing list (most of us are!) reach Dick at 63 Poor Farm Road, Hillsboro, NH 03244, Tel.603-478-5723 or Lee at P.O. Box 113, Warner, NH 03278, Tel 603-456-3705.

Jack Whelan

After the side blocks were glued, carving began on the mid-leg.

After the four feet had been formed and carved, the base frame was made by dressing off each piece to depict 18th century tool marks. Each was then mortised and tenoned together. The secondary wood we used was yellow poplar. After the base was made but not glued together the front apron carving had to be done. Bear in mind that the front apron's overall thickness was a ¼" thicker when the rest of the case was made. The background was dropped and became flush with the rest of the case. The design stood out from the solid wood.

The front apron carving was not applied but cut from the solid. Only the best furniture was made this way because dimensional change of the wood never affects the carving (applied carving drops off). After many hours of intricate carving, the front apron finally took on that artistic look of being laid on the front. This is where skill and experience evidences itself, for the carver drops the background ¼" and makes the background into one plane then carves what is left into a flowing design. See Figure 2.

On this highboy, the detail and intricacy of the carving of the acanthus leaves and other areas tested our skill. One must take into consideration not only dealing with grain direction but of achieving flow and working it to appear that the leaves just lay over the surface, instead of being part of the surface. Flow and grace in design, with thick and thins and no monotony to the design is what great pieces of furniture or art is made of. It will stand the test and scrutiny of time.

The base was now ready to be assembled and pegged. The quarter columns, up to now had not been done because we needed the corners to clamp the case together. Next, on the two front legs the notch for the quarter columns were cut out and capital tops and bases were turned on a wood lathe and quartered. The columns were turned and quartered and then fluted. After the quarter columns were finished and glued in place the base mid-molding was made, mitered, and attached.

A select piece of 1½" walnut was cut to size for the base center drawer. It was cut to the outside size and rabbeted in the back for dovetails and thumb beaded in the front. Remember that we were going to again carve from the solid the whole drawer front including the shell. First, we dropped the background and carved the floral carving on both sides of the shell, making sure the background was in one geometric plane. After the sides were finished the center shell was again dropped below the background surface of the first carving. We dropped the deepest part of the shell a full one inch below the original surface from which we started. Once the shell was finished the drawer front was hand dovetailed to yellow poplar sides and backs. We always hand cut dovetails. Machine dovetails (made by machine or routers) are inferior because machine-cut dovetails leave a hollow area behind the tail caused by the rotary cutter which eventually leads to looseness of the joint. See Figure 2.

Now we were ready to start the top of the case. This consisted of dovetailing a square box using walnut for the sides and yellow poplar for the top and bottom. To this box we added the face, which contained the quarter columns, the scrolls at the top, and the drawer separators. We did not glue the "box together." Once the face was made, the interior sides were dado'd to receive the drawer runners and the back of the sides and top and bottom were rabbeted to receive the back. All surfaces were hand planed inside and

Figure 2. Completed front apron (lower section) and center drawer.

out to an 18th century appearance. We now glued the box with front face together, except for the top front pediment of the highboy.

This pediment is made of one piece of walnut wide enough to allow for rosettes to be attached to the front scroll molding. The piece was tongue and grooved into the top so as to slide in from the top. The pediment, like all the other carved areas, was thicker than normal because the background had to be dropped to be flush with the rest of the face. This allowed for the rest to be "carved in the solid." Again, we were dealing with a lot of work to get the background into one geometric plane. Carving had to make the design appear to lay on the surface. (The cheaper way is to apply the carving but we know that the finest furniture is not made that way, because with the width of this area, dimensional change of the wood would result in some of the applied carving dropping off.) See Figure 3.

Figure 3. Portion of carved pediment before scroll molding and rosettes were applied.

After weeks of carving , the pediment was glued in place and the scroll molding was carved out of one piece of wood and mitered at the corners to receive a crown molding on the sides. Rosettes were next turned on a lathe and then floral carved. They were then glued to the pediment. These were the only carvings that were glued onto the highboy.

The base of the cartouche was made and mortised to receive the cartouche. The cartouche (the center ornament) was made by using a 12/4 (3") piece of walnut, cutting a curve into the face and carving the full design into a solid block. Once the face was finished, the back was cut away leaving a curved form of only ½" thick. This gracefully curved cartouche would gently lean over the face of the highboy.

The capital bases and finials on the right and left were our last project. Square blocks were fluted, capped, and drilled to receive the finials. The flame finial was turned to outside dimensions and then carved in three steps.

The first step created major grooves. The second step put minor grooves within the major grooves. The third step relieved the top and gave a delicate flame-like appearance.

The chest was finished except for nailing on the back boards and making the drawers. The carved base drawer had already been done. All of the drawer fronts were from one walnut crotch that was consecutively cut. (A "crotch" is the "Y" in a tree where two major trunks come together). We chose to alternate the feather grain to break up the monotony of one direction. We worked down the drawer fronts with a low angle plane which was sharp enough to shave with. The final outside surface was scraped with a Stanley #81 scraper before we sanded the piece. Major crotch areas were mostly scraped and sanded as planing tends to pull the grain. Once each drawer face was cut to size and selected for the correct drawer, sides and backs were hand dovetailed and glued together.

We next made the bottoms and slid them into a dado made to receive the bottom. We made our own rosehead nails to fasten the bottom to the back.

Dust covers between each drawer were made and slid into a dado which we had made in the drawer slides previously (all fine chests have dust covers between the drawers so the dirt from one drawer will not enter another). The back was tongue and grooved together using a Stanley #49 Match Plane. We nailed the back into the previously made rabbets with rosehead nails.

The brass hardware was next. Fitted onto the chest and then taken off, we checked to see if all the drawers ran smoothly.

Finishing of the chest was done by first filling the surface with a paste wood filler. Then we used about a 2 lb. cut of flake shellac dissolved in alcohol. We put on five coats of finish and rubbed it down. The brass was fitted on only after everything was dry.

The entire piece took about 2,100 hours. Slightly more than half of that time was dedicated to the carving work. The final result was a walnut Philadelphia-style highboy made from one tree (except for the secondary wood).

And so, the once mighty walnut that stood along the French Creek again stands near the French Creek. This time, it is in an ironmaster's mansion (owned by the man that commissioned the piece) and still stands tall and proud.

The Military Saddler's Chest

by Kenneth K. Hopfel

After several years of collecting various harness tools I had the opportunity to acquire a military saddler's chest. This unique chest contains everything the saddler would need to make emergency repairs to harness, horse and other leather equipment. Self-contained, this portable workshop can be broken down by collapsing the side legs, thus allowing for easy storage at the back of the artillery wagon. See Figures 1, 2, and 3.

There are two styles of this type of Saddler's Chest for the Artillery and Cavalry. The first, which is an earlier variation, had cast brass hardware. This characteristic can be found in the solid brass door hinges (also with brass rivets) and the cast brass leg supports on each side of the chest. The brackets to support the right and left legs were made of hardwood which was later modified to an all steel support bar.

The second style, and later chest, had steel hinges and leg supports. There is also a slight variation made in the tool retainers mounted on the inside of the doors. This second style also had stationary handles on the sides which replaced the older hinged 'drop handles' found on the older style chest. At times the leather strap for the foot operated clamp is dated. The later chest has '1917' stamped into the leather belt.

The outside of the chests were originally painted a tanish brown which was later changed to the more conventional olive drab color. Across the front of the chest was stenciled:

SADDLER'S CHEST FOR BATTERY WAGON

This was sometimes accompanied by cannons and regiment numbers depending on where the chest had been issued. Attached to the inside of the chest was a paper list which inventoried the tools and provided the number of the appropriate slot in which the tool was to be placed.

At this time it may be of interest to point out that in 1873 the Board of Officers convened in an effort to standardize materials, equipment and supplies that would be issued to the Cavalry Service via the War Depart. As a result of their proceedings Ordinance Memoranda No. 18 was generated in 1874. Resolution No. 12, of this memoranda, established an inventory of 40 tools that would be issued to the saddler. The list included every tool that they believed a saddler would need in the cavalry, based on actual field trials. By 1942 the list had expanded over the years to 62 items, the additions primarily being needles, rivets and tighter inventory control. See Resolution No. 12.

These chests were outfitted with tools manufactured mainly by the C. S. Osborne Company although Osborne was never contracted to produce the chest itself. Many of the tools within the chest are stamped 'U.S.A.'. This mark identifies the tools as government issue for the UNITED STATES ARMY. The draw gauges that were issued to the saddler were provided with a 4 or 6 inch length cutting bar. The original gauges were brass and rosewood but later replaced by the all iron model. The 'U.S.A.' insignia was placed on the underside of the gauge's bar. Close inspection of these gauges, and other tools, will reveal the absence of the final grinding and polishing steps. These steps were only implemented on tools destined for the public market.

The 6" leather splitter that was supplied with the saddler's chest had a distinctive insignia of a bomb burst that was similar to the design from the Ordnance Department. This logo was cast into the splitter frame and indicated that this tool was military issue for the battery wagon.

The round knife that was issued for this chest has an unusual characteristic. The knife appears to be identical to any round knife frequently found however the handle is slightly offset to the blade which guarantees proper placement within the tool rack. The round knife was also the symbol used on the arm band for the saddler. This arm band was blue in color with the knife depicted in yellow.

The Henry Disston Company also made several tools that were provided with the chest. They manufactured the 6" leather splitter, the round knife, and a pricking carriage. The pricking carriage had a hollow handle that housed three different wheels to mark 7, 8, or 10 stitches uniformly per inch. Occasionally tools manufactured by Kraeuter and Lowentraut can also be found within the chest.

During my research I had the privilege of corresponding with a gentleman who had held the position of Army Saddler. He had originally requested to be a farrier when joining the service but was sent to a 12-16 week training period at Fort Riley, Kansas to learn the skills of the saddler. After training he was assigned to a company that had horses and was required to make replacement parts in his spare time to avoid a rush job in the field. He is now living in Connecticut as a partially retired saddler and running a family tack shop.

Figure 1. Chest in the storage form, self-contained.

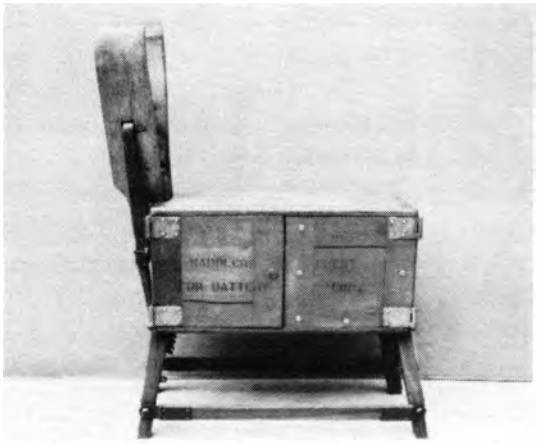


Figure 2. Chest set up with the stitching clamp.

Figure 3. Chest interior: splitter and other hand tools.

RESOLUTION No. 12.

Saddlers' and Blacksmiths' tools.

The Board is of the opinion that the tools for a company of cavalry, as now issued, should be changed to conform to the following, namely.

Saddlers' tools.

12 awls, stitching, assorted.
6 handles, plain, for stitching-awls.
1 handle, patent, for stitching-awls.
1 awl, seat, handled.
1 awl-stub, 2 inches long, with handle, not patent
1 awl, peg, with patent handle.
1 claw-tool.
1 compasses, common, 6-inch.
2 creasers, cut, lignum-vitae.
1 edge-tool No. 1.
1 edge-tool No. 2.
1 gauge, draw.
1 hammer, riveting.
1 hammer, saddlers'.
1 knife, half-round, 5-inch.
1 knife, head.
2 knives, shoe.
1 knife, splitting, 6-inch.
1 mallet, head 5¼ inches long, 2¾ inches in diameter, weight 14 to 16 ounces
2 papers needles, harness, No. 4.
2 papers needles, harness, No. 5.
2 papers needles, harness, No. 6.
1 paper needles, Glover's, No. 3.
1 oil-stone, 1 sandstone.
1 pair nippers, cutting
1 pricking-carriage, with three wheels, Nos. 7, 8, and 10.
1 rule, two-foot.
3 punches, hand, Nos. 7, 8, and 10.
1 punch, spring, with three points, Nos. 4, 5, and 6.
1 punching block of lead, 5 by 5 inches by 7/8 inch thick.
1 riveting-rion, 3 inches by 3 inches and 1 inch thick.
1 rivet-set with two holes, 1 screw-driver, 3-inch.
1 shears, 6-inch blade.
1 slicker, steel, with wooden handle.
1 stitching-horse for general service.
1 stitching-clamp for special service.
1 tickler, 2 thimbles.

Kean Kuttin's

The Stanley No. 39- 13/16"

Back in 1985 when John Walter published his little pocket price guide for Stanley planes, he listed the No.39 13/16" as $2500-5000. It was the most expensive model in his book. I think this was because up to that point very few people had ever seen a 13/16, and most weren't even sure that Stanley produced such a model. Those who believed that it existed said that there was no identification on the piece.

It was right after the publication of that guide that I heard that one was found. It was in the box, and the box had the identification marks of 13/16". I'm not sure what it sold for, but in John Walter's next book (1986) he changed the price to $1000-2500, but this included the box. It wasn't until the fall of 1988 that the 13/16" rarity was heard from again,(at least in a public sale). It sold without the box for $1000 at Bud Brown's auction.

The No.39 dado series was introduced by Stanley around 1900. John Walter puts the 13/16" model as first coming out in 1921. Stanley probably wanted to give the woodworker a dado that would cut a groove that could exactly accommodate a 1" dressed board, which at that time was planed to 13/16". It didn't sell. Maybe because it was necessary to dress the side of the dado groove slightly, and as such the 3/4" was much better suited for the job.

In any case, it was obvious that Stanley was not sure they had a winner, and they coppered their bets by not making a permanent casting. What they probably did was treat the No. 39-13/16" as an experimental model and sent it to their machine shop to have it milled down to size from the 7/8" casting.

Having worked in factories a good part of my life, I can picture what happened next. The machinist proudly showed the finished piece to the sales engineer, who complained about the **7/8"** still being on the body. "You told me to make it 13/16", you didn't say anything about milling off any identification," was a likely response from the machinist. He then milled off **No.39. 7/8 In.** (and not very workmanlike I might add). Now the new product was put on the conference table with all the applicable department heads etc. hovering over it making all kinds of glowing predictions.

continued on page 11

J. A. King, Planemaker of Newark

by Phil Lothrop

Mystery is often more compelling than knowledge. So, if this article raises more questions than it answers, it may bring forth a person with better information and our goal would be served.

When I acquired a John A. King plane in a CRAFTS Auction, I went looking for background information on the maker. Aside from the brief entries in *American Wooden Planes* and *Plane Talk*, there was very little in print regarding this black toolmaker. "King John A. (col'd) plane maker 20 Academy" was the listing in the *Directory of Newark for 1835*. This seemed to be the prime, if not the only, source of information on John A. King.

Records show that his father was Dublin King, who was probably a slave in the service of the family of John Alsop King. It is likely that the black Dublin King took his family name from his relationship with that family. Although slavery was unpopular in this area by the turn of the century, it had not entirely ceased in New Jersey. By an act passed in 1804, all children born of slave parents after the Fourth of July of that year were declared free. Those born prior to that date, unluckily, were to be considered forever in bondage. However, many were manumitted (given their freedom) for a variety of reasons.

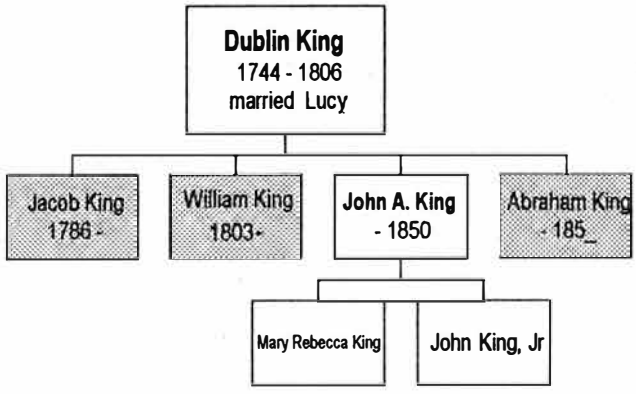
This was probably the case with Dublin King, as he was a land owner in the township of Newark by 1820. It was often traditional for slaves, freed or still in bondage, to name their children for distinguished members of the family they served and perhaps admired. This may explain why there were two John A. Kings in Newark during that time period, one black and one white.

Let' s look at what little we know about John A. King, our black planemaker. He married Phebe and they had two children: a daughter, Mary Rebecca and a son, John King, Jr., who I believe worked with his father making planes. Could this son be the John King who has been called the "white planemaker, John King?" More about that later.

On January 23,1828, the black John A. King, of the township of Newark, purchased the land and a small house at 20 Academy Street in Newark from Edward Haines and Dublin King for $205.54. Here he lived and worked until his death early in 1849.

"On April 14, 1828, two colored men, Abraham and John King, came before the Newark Town Meeting to ask for assistance for the education of poor colored children." This was one of the few times our black planemaker found his way into print.

John A. King died in 1849, "insolvent and unable to pay his debts." His brother, William King, is listed as the Administrator of his estate. Since the estate was "insuffiient," the property at 20 Academy Street was ordered to be advertised for auction in the Daily Advertiser.



Family tree of John A. King showing his parents & his children.

The Sheriff's sale was held in 1851. Abraham Mockridge, one of Newark's more prolific planemakers, was the successful bidder paying $1,175.00. This calls to mind a statement made by Ken Hopfel in his article on J. King, *A New Jersey Plane Surfaces*, which appeared in *The Tool Shed*, June 1992. Ken says, "It would be interesting to know how close these planemakers associated with each other...." I have wondered thus myself and I believe Alex Farnham has suggested a close-knit community of tool makers in his books on New Jersey Toolmakers. Going a step further, I wonder if the John King that is thought to be white was in fact the son of black planemaker John A. King.

I believe that after his father's death in 1849, young John King, Jr. went to work for Abraham Mockridge, who had bought the shop as explained above. Although the Newark Directories were fairly accurate, they were not above errors of typography and content. All we have to go on in regards to the "white planemaker," John King, is a listing in the directory.

Interestingly, he is listed just above the group of Kings who are all noted as black. I found many Kings, white and black, in my research. The only planemaker we can document as to color and trade is John A. King, the son of Lucy and Dublin King who we know to have been black from church and family records. And, we know John A. King had a son named John King, Jr.

Information on the "white John King" is limited to the listing in the Directory which may have simply failed to list him as "(col'd)."

It is quite probable that, with his father operating a one man planemaking shop in the home and an uncle who was running a carpentry business, that the young John King grew up a woodworker. It is also very possible that he made some of the planes marked by his father, John A. King. More than that, the chances are that the Kings, John A. and son John, were jobbing planes to Mockridge and Searing. In *Plane*

Talk, Winter 1989, there appeared, on page 208, a report of "possible significance ... a John A. King/Newark [NJ] imprint overstamping J. Searing on a complex molding plane...."

It' s difficult not to draw the conclusion that when John A. King died there was good reason for Abraham Mockridge to bid on the shop which was doing some of his work and to keep the son, John King to run the place. This may well answer the question as to why there is such a strong resemblance between the planes made by Mockridge & Francis, Andruss and John King, raised by Ken Hopfel in his article in June 1992.

I believe we can all agree that there is almost a plethora of Mockridge and Francis planes and no real shortage of Andruss and Searing products. All of these manufacturers must have had some help, especially Mockridge. Is it possible that the Kings signed only a few planes in their time because most of their production was made for other planemakers? And, what are the probabilities that there would have been two unrelated John Kings, both plane makers, in a city of eight thousand?

Data from Essex Co. Deeds Books and Essex Co. Wills Books.

Wood Bottom Planes (Transitional)

by Ed Modugno

Fourteen years ago, my grandfather gave me his Stanley #32 wood bottom plane. He told me how he used it to plane the surface of the large dining room table that he built 40 years earlier. I always liked the look and feel of the wood bottom plane with its elaborate metal adjustment parts. I cherished the plane for years, and eventually became interested in collecting old tools. However, I only became a serious collector about seven years ago.

Wood bottom planes and all-metal planes evolved about the same time in the mid to late 1800s. Wood bottom planes may have been used as a transition between all-wood planes and all- metal planes. Perhaps woodworkers familiar with all-wood planes found it easier to change over to all-metal planes by first using a wood bottom plane with the same nechanical upper parts as an all-metal plane. Union Mfg. Co. even made a wood bottom plane with an all-steel bottom. This must have given the feel of wood, but relieved wear on the sole.

Stanley stopped producing wood bottom planes in the 1940s. However, they are still popular today with woodworkers, especially in Europe. They are available in quality hand tool catalogs.

Not many people collect wood bottom planes. Most plane collectors keep them just to fill a number size in their collections. I collect all types of wood bottom planes and especially enjoy finding planes made by different makers. The picture above shows several different types of wood bottom planes from my collection.

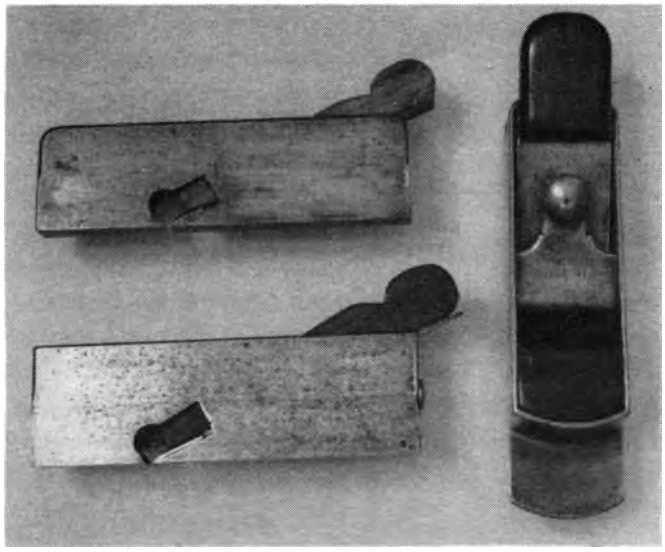
Front Row (left to right): Lakeside (sold by Montgomery Ward, made by Stanley), Chip-A-Way (sold by Simmons Hardware), Standard Rule Co. #26 (Unionville, Conn.), B-Plane (Birmingham, Conn.), Atlas Tool, Ohio Tool Co. #024, Goodall #24, Fulton (Sold by Sears, made by Sargent), Union #21 (New Britain, Conn.)
Back Row (left to right): Sterling Hardware Co .(Pittsburgh, PA), Ubson Nut #27 (Unionville, Conn.), Hudson Tool Co. #27 (New York, made by Ohio Tool Co.), Keen Kutter #27 1/2 (made by Stanley and Sargent), Gage/Stanley #G28 (Vineland, NJ), Stanley #29, Chaplin's Patent (Tower and Lyon Co., New York), Siegley #31 (made by Stanley)
Missing from photo: Sargent (New Haven, Conn.)

New York Machinist-Made Metal Planes and Pianomakers Tools

by Dominic Micalizzi

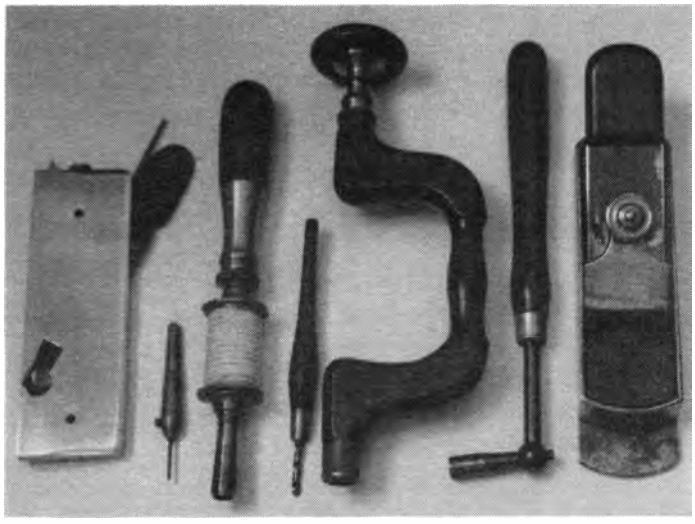
Note: This is the second part of a two-part article that started in the June *ToolShed*. The first part was about the men, while this part is about the tools. If any of our readers are aware of other tools by these makers, please notify the author so they can be included in his further research.

LAURITZ BRANDT



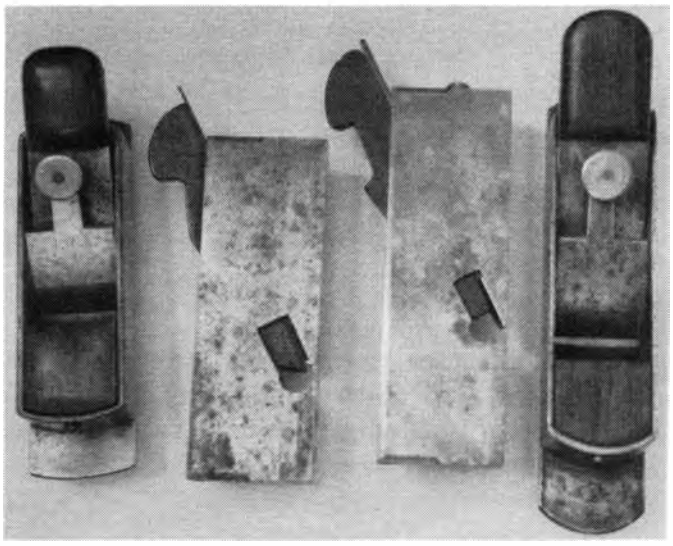
Left top: Rabbet plane. Dovetailed steel; ash infill & wedge. 7 3/8" x 1/2".
Left bottom: Rabbet plane. Pinned steel; rosewood infill & wedge.
Right: Mitre plane. Dovetailed steel; rosewood infill & pad.
(All Brandt planes are dovetailed or pinned.)

NAPOLEON ERLANDSEN



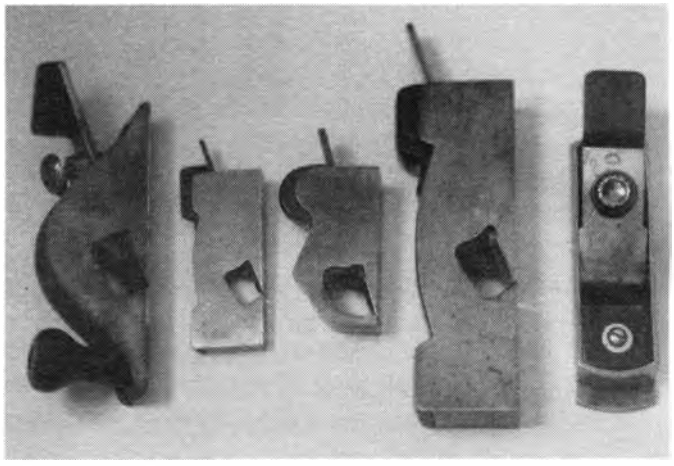
from left to right
Rabbet plane. Polished cast iron; rosewood wedge. 7 ½" x ½"
Bowdrill & pad. Brass; ivory spool, rosewood & brass handle.
Pianomaker's brace & pad. Brass and rosewood.
Tuner's hammer. Steel and rosewood.
Miter plane. Cast iron; rosewood infill & pad. 8 3/4" x 2 1/4"

GEORGE THORESTED



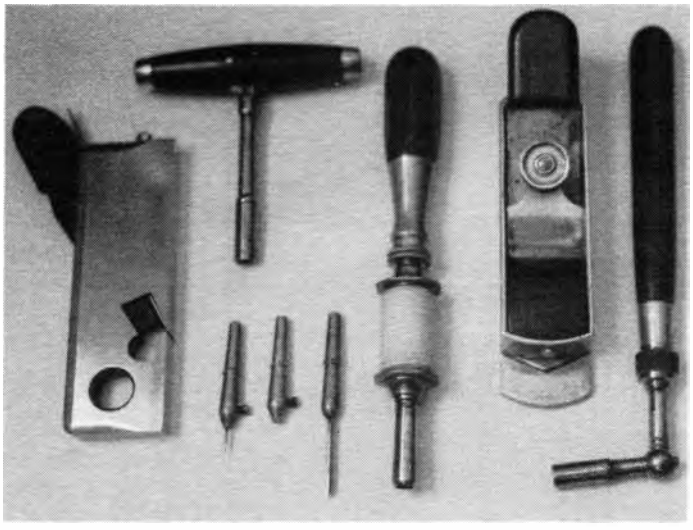
from left to right
Miter plane. Cast iron; rosewood infill & pad. 7 5/8" x 2"
Rabbet plane. Pinned steel; rosewood infill & wedge. 6 7/8" x 5/8"
Rabbet plane. Pinned steel; rosewood infill & wedge. 7 5/8" x 5/8"
Miter Plane. Dovetailed steel; rosewood infill & pad. 9 ½ x 2"

JOSEPH POPPING



from left to right
Shoulder plane. Cast bronze; rosewood knob & pad, steel sole. 7 13/16" x 1 1/4"
Shoulder plane. Cast gunmetal; rosewood infill & wedge. 4 5/8" x 1/2"
Bullnose rabbetplane. Cast iron; rosewood infill & wedge. 4x1
Shoulder plane. Cast iron; rosewood infill & wedge. 8 5/8"xl ½
Mitre plane. Cast iron; rosewood infill & wedge. 7 ¼" x 1 7/8"

JULIUS ERLANDSEN



from left to right

Rabbet plane. Cast iron, nickel-plated; rosewood wedge.
7 1/2" x 3/4"

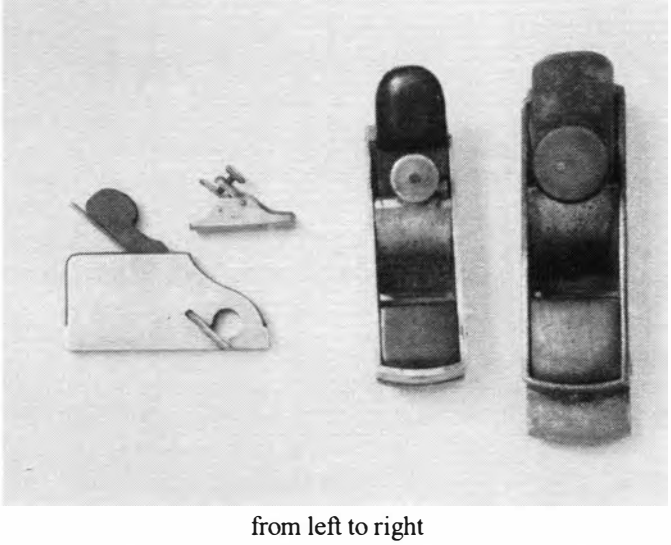
T-handled tuning hammer. Steel; rosewood & brass handle.

Bow drill & pads. Brass; ivory spool, rosewood & brass handle.

Miter plane. Cast iron, nickel-plated; rosewood infil & pad.
8 1/8" x 2 1/8"

Tuning hammer. Rosewood handle. Patented.

UNKNOWN MAKERS



from left to right

Bullnose rabbet plane. Pinned brass plates; rosewood wedge.
Unmarked. 4 1/8" x 7/16"

Violinmaker's plane. Cast gunmetal.
Marked - H.S.& CO. 2 1/4" x 13/16"

Miter plane. Cast iron; rosewood infill & pad.
Marked - C.TOLLNER, N.Y. 5 11/16" x 1 3/4"

Miter plane. Cast iron; rosewood infill.
Marked - C. TOLLNER, N.Y. 7 5/8" x 2"

***Kean Kuttin*'s continued from page 7**

Finally someone said, "Why did they mill off the **No.39**, why not leave that on and just take off the **7/8 In**?" "Brilliant," everyone agreed (except the fellow who was competing for the suggestor's job). So another sample went back to the machine shop with plenty of remarks about "those guys in the front office never being able to make up their minds." Finally the altered 13/16" was born and made its way into the marketplace, -where it promptly flopped amidst a chorus of "I told you so" from everyone except the poor schnook who thought it up.

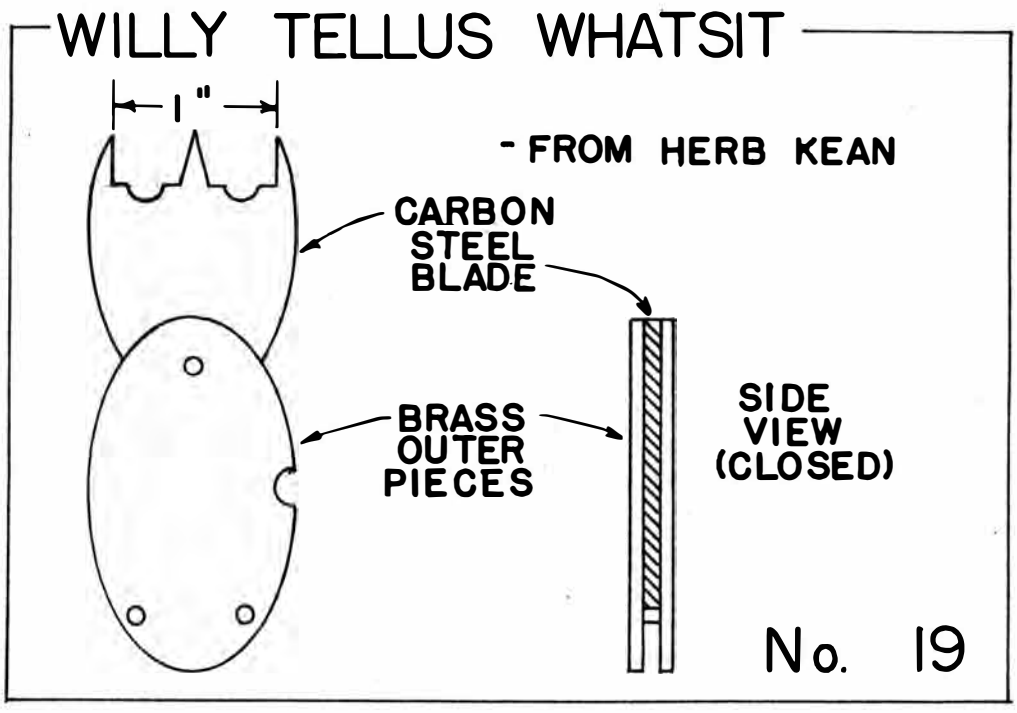
Before you give this speculative part of the story a frown, let me tell you that until recently the two pieces that I mentioned, and a few others that showed up, all had the **7/8 In** milled off but not the **No.39**. HOWEVER---I just got a piece that has both the **No.39** and the **7/8 In** milled off. My first reaction was that it was not genuine, but then I wondered why anyone would go to such extremes (there is a lot of precision milling involved) and not follow the look of what existed in the literature, namely that the **No.39** is not removed. Then I thought perhaps a woodworker of many years ago wanted a 13/16" and had his machinist friend make it for him. Why then mill off all the identification, and then painstakingly rejapan it perfectly, if its only going into your toolbox?

Without using any of the above arguments as positive, I preceded to investigate further. I felt there had to be stronger evidence than just whether the japanning over the milled spot was original. Remember the entire left side of the piece and all of the grooves on that side had to be re-milled also. Before giving you my results, I should offer one piece of information: when metal is milled it leaves telltale minute marks that are as good as fingerprints. Under 5X magnification you can tell the size and feed of the cutter, and even its orientation. You can also detect the tiny tear marks and running lines produced by the cutter. I won't say it's impossible to reproduce these marks and their attendant patina, but I doubt that anybody sloppy enough not to follow the known example would care (or even know) about such facts. And if it was just someone making one for a friend some time back, in no way would the "fingerprints" exactly duplicate the factory-made pieces.

The milling marks on my No.39-13/16" are absolutely identical on both sides. In fact, they even match the lines of the 3/4" and 7/8" pieces. This tends to prove that the entire piece was done in the same set-up with the same cutter etc., and therefore is a factory alteration.

I would like to think that not only do I own a rare plane but I may have the prototype!

* * * * * * *



✍ Letters Received

It is my good fortune to have Whatsit No. 18 [*The ToolShed*, Number 82, June 1994] new in the box complete with instructions. It is a Linoleum Layers Scriber.

The ToolShed is easily the best tool journal in the U.S. at the moment . . . . Keep up the good work.

William T. Wilkins - Houston, Texas

I have the tool pictured and have used it when laying linoleum floors. It is generally known as "linoleum scribe" and is used by linoleum and other types of flooring installers.

It is used to scribe a line on the linoleum to define where the cut will be made. It is particularly useful in preparing inserts for cutouts when doing designs in linoleum, when doing cove work and when placing stripes in the linoleum floor.

Howard J. Meyer - N. Tonawanda, NY

The National Museum of American History Branch Library would be interested in obtaining an issue of Toolshed, for June 1993, that contained a history of the Sargent Company by Paul Weidenschilling. [Ed. note: copy was sent.]

James P. Roan, Librarian
Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.

Buy, Swap, & Sell

CRAFTS members only may have a free 5 line (40 word) ad that is primarily related to the exchange of tools or information. Each additional line (over 5) is $1. Send to: Stuart Shippey, 251 Hillside Ave., Chatham NJ 07928-1732 (FAX 201 301-9781). All ads accepted on a space permitting basis. Please print/type.

WANTED

To buy, borrow, or look at; PRINTED TABLES FOR NUMBERING YARNS as advertised by Brown & Sharp for use with their Yarn Reels. Noted in their 1911 and 1929 catalogs. ✍ Max Richardson, 16 Colt Rd., Summit, NJ 07901 ☎ 908 273-7709.

HANDCUT FILES or RASPS. Marked or unmarked. No machine cut wanted. ✍ Hampton Williams, 11389 Bantry Terrace, Fairfax, VA 22030. ☎ 703 278-8242.

Harness/leather working DRAW GAUGES, ROUND KNIVES, ... etc. by BURSCH, SEYMOUR, BALDWIN, CHARLTON, GOODSELL NJ Cutlers. Ken Hopfel, ✍ 25 Lilac Dr., Flemington, NJ 08822. ☎ 908 788-2053.

FOR SALE

The Workbench Book by Scott Landis $23; Restoring, Turning and Using Antique Woodworking Tools by Michael Dunbar, hardcover $17; *Dictionary of Woodworking Tools* by R.A.Salaman, softcover $22. Order postpaid through Frank Kosmerl, ✍ 432 Hollybrook Rd, Rochester, NY 14623

ANTIQUE TOOL SALE, first Saturday of every month, On the corner of Fairfield & Demerest, Wayne, NJ. Info: ☎ 212 696-4908 ask for Gene.

MEET THE CRAFTSMAN, THE ENDANGERED SPECIES BUY-SELL-TRADE Antique & Users Tools at the LAMBERTVILLE ANTIQUE MARKET (NJ), Tables #56 Sundays. Joseph Janiszewski.

CLEARING OUT. #607C; early #8; early #4½ ; #4, 5, 6 prelaterals; #112 and many other STANLEY PLANES. Herb Kean ☎ 201 993-8374.