The TOOL SHED

NUMBER 89 NOVEMBER 1995

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

From Sports To Antique Tools

The Transition Begins

by Mickey Holmes

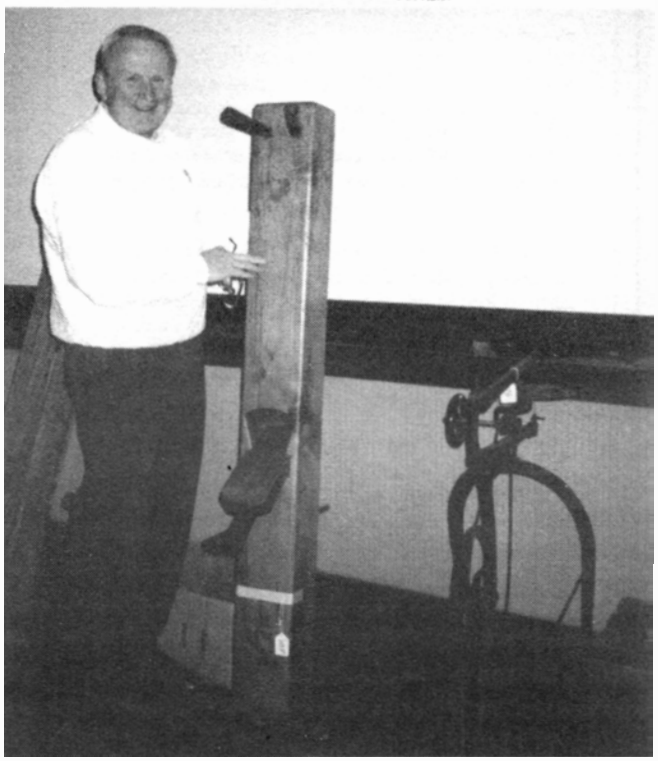
That I was in a transition period was never so evident as when asked, "Is your tetanus shot up to date?" The learning process within a *new life* had truly begun. That was back in April. It was in the *studio*, as Bud Brown, with a great deal of affection and pride, calls the area from which he has staged a dozen international tool auctions. It marked the formal start of my *educational process*, as I assumed ownership of Brown Auction Services, which I had purchased from Bud during the winter.

Now, some say the best method of gaining an education is through the "school of hard knocks." If that means barked shins, cutter-nicked fingers, and hands with ground-in grime, I'm on my way to making a very effective transition to this new life. I'd rather believe, however, the secret for successfully making this transition and getting that required education is to assimilate all that I might from great teachers. I'm fortunate. I do have great tutors – principally Bud Brown, but Bill Phillips is at beck and call, as well.

But, let me go back to the beginning; the *why* a guy who had spent almost 35 years in one phase or another of intercollegiate athletics administration would be at this juncture. After all, didn't hob-nobbing with the giants in intercollegiate athletics on a week-to-week basis, being able to pick and go to the best college football game in the country each Saturday, and then having to *work* one day a year (even though that *one day* was a holiday) constitute a job no one should ever leave?

It all began one evening a little less than a year ago during a conversation with Bud, who had befriended me several years ago, as a fledgling wood collector, at his annual International Antique Tool Auction. He casually, at least it seemed to be casual, asked me, "Why don't you buy me out?"

Yes, by then, I had retired. Yes, by then, I was becoming a little confined, though I did enjoy selling real estate with my wife, Judy, and really liked writing high school



sports for the local, suburban New Orleans newspaper. Yes, the idea was intriguing.

(continued on page 4)

November 12 - CRAFTS Meeting
High Bridge, NJ, Masonic Lodge

Photographing Tools
Program by Don Miller
Professional Photographer
(*see page 2*)

CRAFTS of New Jersey

Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society
of New Jersey

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Vice President ..... JOSEPH G. HAUCK, Lebanon
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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 twelve 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. Managing Editor: Hank Allen, 524 Harristown Rd, Glen Rock, NJ 07452. Articles, especially about early tools and trades, are encouraged and may be sent to the editors. Please send legible hand-written or typed text, or a PC disk with ascii, *Word Perfect®*, *MS-Word®* file, or send it by FAX to 201 301-9781 or 201 635-7939 (talk first).

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CRAFTS Calendar of Events

Nov. 12 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

Nov. 30 - *ToolShed* (Feb issue) free ad deadline.

Feb. 11 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

Apr. 13 - CRAFTS Auction (tentative)

Apr. 14 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

Speaker's Profile
Don Miller

On November 12, Don Kahn's friend, Don Miller, will be the featured speaker at our program on photographing tools, continuing the steady stream of experts that Don Kahn brings to our meetings. Hereafter, "Don" means Don Miller.

Don Miller, a professional photographer, is a native of New York City, where five generations of Millers have lived within a few blocks of Don's current home in the shadows of Central Park. As a boy, Don learned that his hobby, photography, was becoming very expensive so he set about making it revenue producing.

During high school Don honed his skills as assistant to a professional photographer. Then, after four years of taking photos for the Air Force, and a short return to his high school employer, he started his own business. For 38 years he's worked in 47 states and 23 other countries, specializing in advertising and corporate photography.

As a starting point for our program, Don will show us some slides of tools that he has taken. He'll share with us his expertise on cameras, lenses, and lighting, and will demonstrate techniques as we watch him photograph a variety of tools. Don will also tell us how to solve some common problems.

So bring your cameras, bring some tools that you've had trouble photographing, bring some of your successes and failures to discuss, bring your problems, and bring your questions.

Hank Allen

CRAFTS Picnic

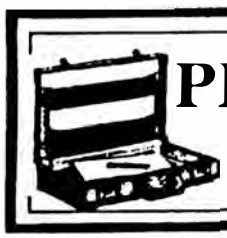
Sunday September 10 was a splendid day - sunny, breezy, and perfect temperature - for another of Ken Vliet's super picnics. Modest to a fault, Ken would only praise the job done by THE CLEANUP CREW!

Dealers and eager collectors gathered early. Others brought the attendance to over 200 (185 paid for lunch). Selling appeared brisk, and dealers confirmed this. They always do!

We were all ready when the call to lunch came. Moisture-deprived bees swarmed at sodas and other fare, but this was the only negative.

The displays were impressive. Jeanne Price won for her display of kitchen tools; Alex Farnham won for his on shoemaker's tools. Now that we've seen how enjoyable a good display can be, Ken hopes more of us will set one up next year. Think about what you might bring.

(*continued on page 12*)



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

CRAFTS is planning to produce, in association with Emil Pollak's Astragal Press, an anthology of selections from the TOOLSHED. It has been a nostalgic trip for your Trustees, to review all of the issues of the seventeen years of our publication. We did our best to choose those articles which have retained their interest over the years, and agonized over those that will not fit into the proposed format. Hank Allen is well into the task of editing the survivors and seeking the authors' permission to reprint, while Stuart Shippey is scanning and preparing PC word processor files to give to Astragal Press. We will keep you posted on progress.

Howard Jenner has relocated to New Bern, North Carolina but this won't keep him from participating in CRAFTS activities. For in between times, he is starting a new tool club for his area, Coastal Carolina, and membership is growing. Good show, Howard!

Vern Ward, one of the first nationally known antique tool dealers, has decided to relinquish ownership of his FINE TOOL JOURNAL, giving himself a bit more time to smell the roses. He established the Iron Horse Antiques shop in 1970, and his catalog matured into the present quarterly journal in 1982. Publication will be continued by Clarence Blanchard, President of Antique and Collectible Tools, Inc. Clarence's twenty years of experience in the tool game promises continuation of a useful tool source, while Vern will continue as Editor of the Journal. The tool world wishes both the old and new publishers continued success. The new address for subscriptions is 27 Pickett Road, Pownal, ME 04069.

It is with great regret that we report the passing of Jack Kebabian, one of the giants of the tool fraternity. A pioneer in tracing the history of wooden planemaking, he unearthed documentation on the Nicholsons and Cesar Chelor. Another loss, last July, was Albert S. Housman, Jr. Al, a member of CRAFTS since 1982 and active in many other organizations, was a contributor to the TOOLSHED and a helpful hand in many of our other activities. We were also saddened to learn of the death of Bert Bouwman, a long-time member.

Welcome to new members: Larry Chapman, Montgomery, NY; Al Conrad, Rockaway; Tom & Pat Czeizinger, Trenton; John Dodge, Rockaway; Robert Fort, Indianapolis, IN; Stuart Horn, Pipersville, PA; David Hunkins, Broad Run, VA; James Matteucci, San Jose, CA; Ronald Mower, Poughkeepsie, NY; Tom Narigon, Bellows Falls, VT; Dr. Alfred & Carol Palmieri, Toms River; Mathew Prusik Jr., Morgan; Seth & Patty Rosenzweig, Lebanon; Thomas Rudzenski, Pottstown, PA; Charles & Jeanette Schroth, Brick Township; Richard Slaney, Pawtucket, RI; Clarence Wagner, Howell; Robert & Catherine Weir, Pequannock; and Les Winter, New York, NY.

AUCTION Remember to pick up your tool submission form for April's auction at the Nov. meeting. Otherwise, send a long stamped self-addressed envelope to Joe Hauck.

Meet Your Dealers

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

Bud and Vera Steere of North Kingstown, Rhode Island have been collecting old tools for over 25 years and selling them almost as long. A family interest in antiques broadened, initially, into acquiring primitives and agricultural implements. Trips all over New England and the Middle Atlantic states soon led to an interest in every possible category of American tools, with strong interests in primitive iron, axes, 18th century wood planes, and Stanley and transitional planes.

Collecting, as is often the case, led to selling excess tools. At first the outlet was shoreline antique shows, but the chore of scheduling, traveling, and the weather resulted in their first catalog in 1978, which coincides with the first issue of the Tool Shed. Bud recalls that he once had difficulty parting with a single tool for an auction at a Connecticut tool meeting. That's in the past, and catalog sales now include a representative sampling from the entire collection and stock. Catalog #66 which came out in May of this year described 233 items of all kinds, all photographed.

Vera plays a vital role in the catalogs and without her there would be none. Fairness is their byword. No matter where they live everyone has an equal chance to buy, and no tools are sold from their home. Vera carefully staggers the mailing of the catalog with eight different trips to the post office, so catalogs reach 98% of their customers on the same day, and every tool is there and for sale on the day your catalog arrives with no reserves or favoritism. If you'll send her self-addressed postcards, she'll tell you the day to expect your catalog. And when you call to order, you'll almost always hear Vera's voice. Bud and Vera tresure the contacts and friendships that have come to them over the phone.

Catalogs are $7, and the next one (#67) will be available in October. Back issues of the catalog, which occassionally come up at auction, are a valuable addition to any collector's library for the information and photos they contain.

Hank Allen

Bud Steere
110 Glenwood Drive
N. Kingstown, RI 02852 Phone: 401-884-5049

From Sports to Antique Tools

(continued from page 1)

by Mickey Holmes

The more we thought about the prospects, the more interesting possibilities seemed. After all, this was the one geographic area Judy brought up when we talked about moving from New Orleans. That was something we knew we would do from the time I retired. We just didn't know when or where. And who, in retirement, could be involved with a more Utopian activity?

Obviously, last fall's migration to the Brown Auction Services' International Antique Tool Auction and Dealer Sale was much more than just another trip for the sale, and a chance to go back home with another choice old plow plane. After an extended stay, a full discussion of a multiplicity of questions, and some pencil pushing, the decision was made.

Oh, there were some conditions we felt very important: Like being able to access Bud's knowledge and have him continue his involvement at the level he might determine himself. Like being able to continue using the name *Brown Auction Services*. Like me committing to do everything that I might to maintain the status of the special events staged by *Brown Auction Services* in the past – maintain and further develop "The TOOL COLLECTOR'S AUCTION."

I guess another way to put it might be to say I'd been involved with an intercollegiate athletics special event that had produced nine No. 1 teams in a 14-game tenure. Now I was becoming involved in a fine antique-tool special event that had a better record than that. This was a legacy Bud Brown had built. Now, I've got to produce encores!

Actually, from an operational standpoint, running this business didn't seem to be all that different than what I had been doing for the past 15 years: running a major special event as executive director of the Sugar Bowl, or before that as the commissioner of a major conference. After all, included would be the development of hotel arrangements (guest rooms and display/auction area), preparation and subsequent set up for a special event, development of a *game program* (the catalog, of course--just a little different type of roster), finding the proper personnel to execute a game plan, and general administration.

Admittedly, eight months ago this correlation didn't seem like much of an oversimplification. In reality, it was! For, in addition to dealing with a plethora of tools I'd maybe glanced at before (but never had that *touchy-feely* sensation), I was trying to become a computer whiz. My intent was simply to desktop-publish the catalog, a move that would allow an expansion and the inclusion of significantly more color, yet keep the price basically the same.

All of a sudden, in April, I was confronted with two new *eezes* and neither was Stengeleeze (à la Casey), which I had lived with all my life. I quickly found the *tooleeze* much easier to grasp than *computereeze*. At least my tool tutors would move through the teaching process at a carefully conceived pace, allowing time for assimilation and converting my lay language to that of the trade. Perfunctory was the pace, and completely out of sync to my speed of assimilation, is the only way to describe what reeled through the receiver from the computer jockeys, who couldn't believe I didn't have the same computer literacy level as they, themselves. (I wonder if they ever figured out why I was calling?).

Anyway, my lessons on Stanley (though I really have not been led down the *type* path yet), edge-tools, framed, plated, and patented braces, transitional, and cooper's tools have begun to bear results. The subtleties, such as file marks, welds, forms, style, age hints, and area-of-origin clues were starting to take. Golly, it was exhilarating to notice a particular trait on a tool and blurt out something with a degree of intelligence dripping from the statement!

And then came the photography sessions. They were time intensive, to say the least! New terms flowed too: Field (fan shaped, not like a football field), Separation (not as found in a movie column, but more like a split, as in an offensive line – both open up a *hole* for better viewing), Background, and Depth of field.

There is an art to *posing* those catalog pictures, too! The pieces are not just dropped onto the field. It is truly amazing how movement of as little as a quarter of an inch, one way or the other, or swiveling a piece might impact how the final shot will look. If posed right, that picture will tell potential buyers a great deal about the piece before they even set foot in the auction hall.

That was just the start! My mind was spinning again and a catalog deadline loomed, as well as the deadline for this reflection.

Not even started was the actual charting of the auction! Believe me, there is a science to arranging the order of lots, which is all very logical, too, when one stops to think: Pace, Interest (as in keeping all involved, though truly interested in only a small portion of the offerings), and Separation (there is that word again, but this time as in separating lots of similar or same breed into different segments of the auction). All count; all contribute to a well-constructed event.

Underestimations? Yes! And they have been humbling, starting with the moving experience, our first in 17

years. We timed our house-hunting trip to the area to coincide with the worst snow storm of the winter. By the way, what is winter? And, per our real estate agent, we were his first customers to first look at the basement and thoroughly check the outbuildings before we bothered to look at the house itself. That working space for my *studio* was so important. Got what I wanted, though: a great barn with all kinds of work space. Check with Judy about the house, though.

But, of those many underestimations, three do stand out:

1. From past experience, I knew preparation for a major special event took time, a LOT of time, a lot of attention to detail (Oh, that reminds me, I still need to arrange for the security detail for Friday and Saturday.), but nothing like this.

2. The learning curve. Believe me, I've still a long way to go in that realm. Hopefully, I'll fully absorb a good percentage of what Bud has placed before me. Thank goodness he'll be involved, to the level he wants to be, for a long, long time, and I will be able to continue to have access to his mind.

3. But, underestimated the most was the fun! The people in the tool collecting realm are just great, and as I get to know more about tools and about the people involved, that feeling will escalate. This is a very personal business – after all, we are dealing with people we like and with what those people like.

Then there is the *touchy-feely* sensation that goes with the fondling of the pieces produced by those unparalleled, craftsmen artisans, who worked under vastly different conditions than those of today. Their products, with their inexplicable beauty, have stood the greatest test of all – time!

No, the transition isn't complete yet. I'm learning, though. And, just think, next year I get to do this twice. Yes, there will be two! A major spring auction (in May) will join the traditional fall auction, which will return to its regular dates, the last weekend in October.

Mickey Holmes' sports career included Assistant Commissioner of the Big Eight Conference, Commissioner of the Missouri Valley Conference, and Executive Director of the Sugar Bowl. He followed Judy around antique shops for years until he came across one that had tools. He was hooked! At first he collected woodworking tools, including many that he used in his shop, and still does. Then he focused on 18th century wooden planes, especially Yankee plow planes. When he acquired Brown Auction Services we planted the seed of this article with him. Thanks Mickey, and good luck with your first auction. Ed.

Bill Phillips with a Side-Tension Frame Saw at the 1994 Auction.

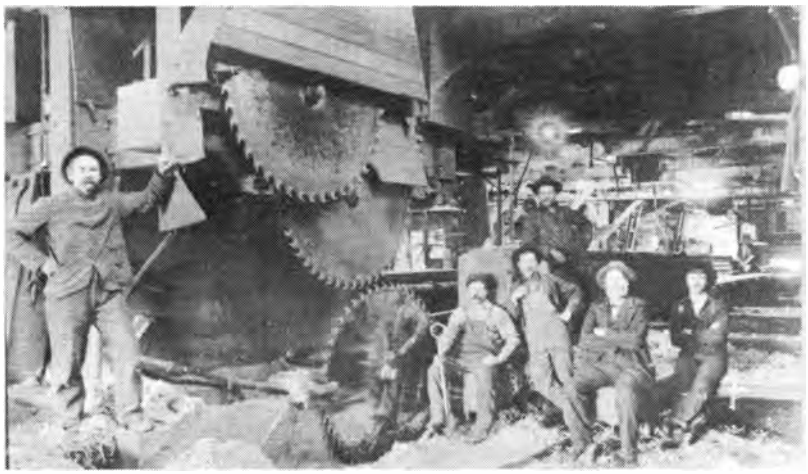
At the Dealer Show — 1994.

Emerson's Patent False Teeth
Inserted in Saws
by Larry Brundage

Before he left California James E. Emerson had an interesting role in the development of the inserted tooth circular saw. The following information will supplement Alexander Farnham's published material.

Due to a design flaw in Emerson's March 20, 1860 patented false tooth, Nathan W. Spaulding, not Emerson, would be known as the first person to devise the first really operational, inserted saw tooth. This was written by Henry Disston, no less, on page 15 of his The Saw in History.

Spaulding and Emerson had much in common as both were Maine natives and carpenters. The gold fever bit Emerson in 1852, and after a difficult trip he arrived in San Francisco in January of 1853 with about $3 in his pocket.



Breaking Down Sawmill, Elk River, California – circa 1895
Courtesy of Del Norte Historical Society

Spaulding and 13 other Mainers were bitten by the gold virus, as was most of America, and they arrived in Bagdad by the Bay in the fall of 1851. After securing the necessary gear they departed the city and went to Calaveras County. After various adventures and ventures in the arduous business of gold mining, Spaulding went into the sawmill and carpentry business.

In the slim writings on Emerson's activities in the state I did not find any mention of him working at gold mining. If he did he kept it quiet. From accounts it seems he went to work as a sawyer soon after landing ashore and pursued that and building and operating sawmills in the gold country.

J. E. EMERSON, N. W. SPAULDING.

EMERSON & SPAULDING'S

SAW-SMITHING

AND

REPAIRING ESTABLISHMENT,

No. 16 FRONT STREET,

(Between I and J Streets,)

SACRAMENTO.

Emerson's Improved FALSE TEETH for Saws, set in Circular Saws.

Every description of Saws repaired, recut, gumed and straightened, or furnished at the lowest market prices.

Orders from the country promptly attended to.

Saw Teeth furnished to those for whom we have inserted them, ready for use.

In the History of Beaver County Pennsylvania (published in 1888 by A. Warner & Co., Philadelphia) on pages 650-51 it states that Emerson, while operating a sawmill in Oroville, Butte County, built a circular saw with inserted, or *false*, teeth. That was in 1858. Emerson and Spaulding probably met while working at sawmilling. Evidently Spaulding realized that Emerson's saw tooth had good commercial possibilities, and they decided to go into business. By 1859 they were located in San Francisco at 16 Front Street, which is the street nearest to the river. They were not in business very long. It was probably the flaw in Emerson's saw tooth design that caused them to part and strained their business and personal relationships. Neither man mentions the other in any documents I have located. There is brief mention of Emerson in the above mentioned Beaver County history which states, "Mr. Emerson later located in Sacramento, where he established a similar business, which was soon extended to San Francisco. Selling his entire interest in 1859 to Mr. N.W. Spaulding, who continued its successful management, he removed to Trenton, N.J."

N. W. SPAULDING,

Late Emerson & Spaulding, San Francisco and Sacramento SAW REPAIRING AND SAW SMITHING ESTABLISHMENTS, No. **16** FRONT Street, between I and J, Sacramento, and 819 (old No. 89) Pine street, between Sansome and Montgomery, San Francisco.

Emerson' Patent **False Teeth** set in Circular Saws. Every description of Saws repaired, re-cut, gummed and straightened. Saw Teeth furnished to those for whom we have inserted them, ready for use, at $1 25 each. All sizes of Circular Saws, of the best quality, for sale at the lowest market price. fe14-1m4p

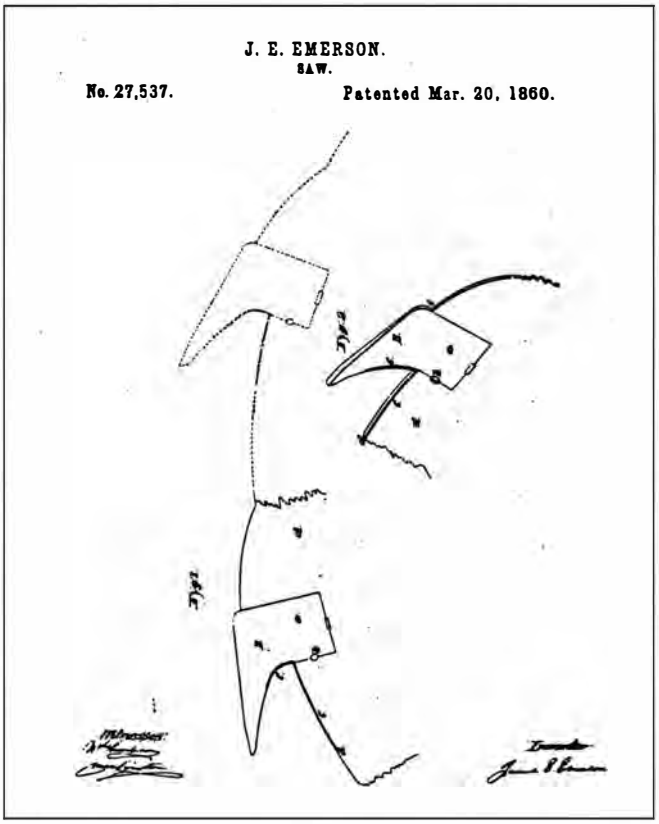

J. E. EMERSON.
SAW.
No. 27,537. Patented Mar. 20, 1860.

Figure 1.

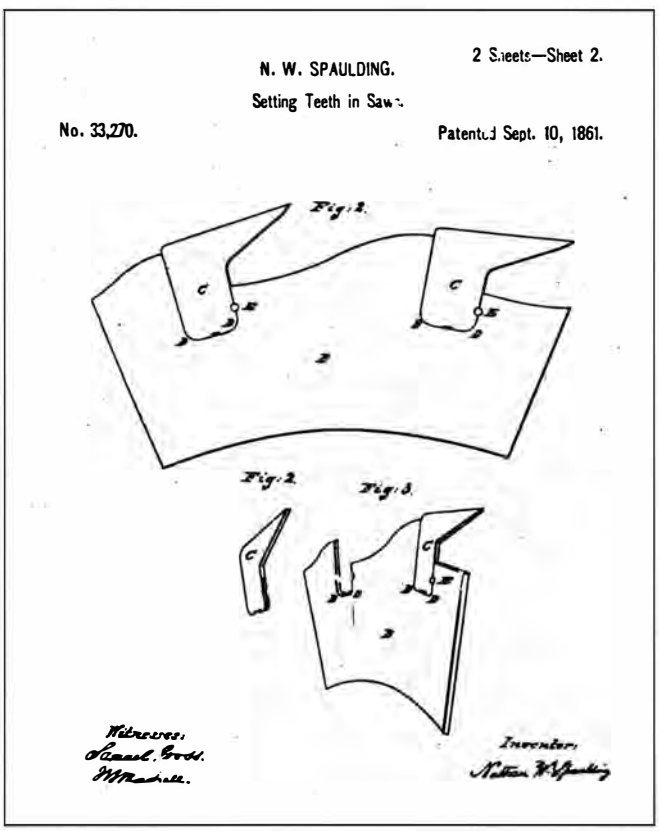

N. W. SPAULDING.
Setting Teeth in Saws.
2 Sheets—Sheet 2.
No. 33,270. Patented Sept. 10, 1861.

Figure 2.

If you will now examine both Emerson's saw tooth as depicted in his patent document (Fig. 1) and Spaulding's (Fig. 2), you will see they are almost identical with one small, but very important, exception. In Emerson's tooth the base is square, and the saw would have to be either filed or milled with a square shoulder. Being subject to side strain as it is being used, this strain would focus at the juncture of the angle, causing cracks to appear.

This problem happened to Spaulding with Emerson's tooth, and according to a statement in the 1864 San Francisco Business Directory, Nathan realized he needed to make an improvement quickly or discontinue their manufacture or use. As with a person, loose and wobbly false teeth do not work very well. If saw teeth loosen and fly out the effect would be dramatic and very dangerous to all present in the mill. This would make a sawyer who is being pushed to saw so many board feet a day annoyed to say the least. If you will examine Spaulding's tooth, you will see the remedy to the problem with a square tooth base was in having a radius at the base of the tooth, which prevents side strain from having a focal point, thus preventing cracks from appearing.

I cannot find any documents that state why Emerson left California soon after going into business with Spaulding, but I suspect the strain that developed in numerous circular saws also caused a strain in their relationship. Emerson sold out and started anew in Trenton. Meanwhile, Nathan and his brother Marcellus, who was working for him, pondered ways to overcome this fatal problem. Overcome it they did, and to protect himself from claimants Nathan managed to get his version of the saw tooth patented.

Spaulding's business grew and by 1862 he had a shop at 319 Pine St. in San Francisco. It is puzzling that up to 1865 he advertised that he would insert his saw tooth and Emerson's also. By 1863 business was not only good in the West, but he was also shipping saws with his patented tooth to numerous Midwest sawyers. He felt confident enough to open a manufactory at 23-25 South Clinton St. in Chicago, Illinois, which operated at that location until 1872 when it was destroyed by fire. They then moved to 20 South Canal and were in business there until 1891.

But there was a fly in the ointment in the form of a protracted and expensive lawsuit initiated by Spaulding against his former partner and the firm he was in charge of, namely the American Saw Company of Trenton. It seems, according to the account I have read, that American Saw sent a shipment of circular saws with teeth of Spaulding's design, not Emerson's. Nathan brought his suit against the firm and won after proving that his design was different from Emerson's. It was an expensive battle, and numerous sawyers and firms tried to prove that they, not Spaulding, were first with a tooth design such as his.

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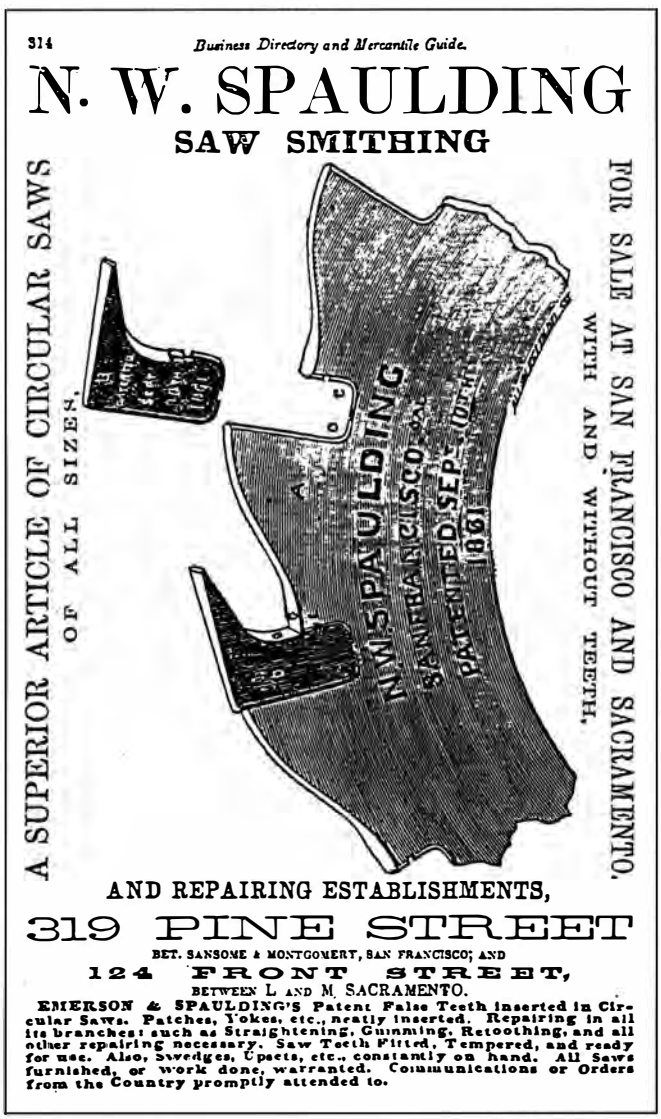
Nathan had a lawyer who not only was effective, but in the words of Abner Doble, a San Francisco tool maker, "Go to Wheaton, he knows something about patents, and he is a mechanic, and a good lawyer." Reading the statements of Milo Wheaton I can see why Spaulding won his suit, as the man had a command of the language that would convince even a person devoid of any technical knowledge that Spaulding was the one infringed upon.

James Emerson worked for the American Saw Company in Trenton until 1872. I have located 26 saw and related patents issued to him in New Jersey, the last being dated February 6, 1872 for a saw. He then moved to Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania and was a member of Emerson, Ford & Co., which was changed 6 years later to Emerson, Smith & Co. The company manufactured his various saw teeth and related equipment. He retired in 1890 and died in Columbus, Ohio in 1900. He was a prolific inventor and contributed much to the growth of the circular saw business.



In 1866 Spaulding, who had a growing business, joined forces with two experienced sawmakers who had been making saws in San Francisco since 1863, namely James Patterson and Charles Sheffield. Sheffield had learned his trade in Sheffield, England. The firm was first located on Pine Street in San Francisco, and due to increased business they moved a few years later to a two story shop at 17-19 Fremont. They operated there until the 1906 earthquake caused its destruction by fire. Production, as stated in the 1870 industrial census, was 2,500 circular saws, 1,000 mill saws, 2,000 crosscut saws, and saws and handles worth $4,000.

I have included a few advertisements to show the progression of the various enterprises, and a photo of a breaking down saw mill (circa 1895 in Elk River, California) with saws having Spaulding's false teeth. Before bandsaws were used, this rig was needed to slab out the huge redwoods from the nearby forest. Both men contributed to saw tooth technology, and with this brief coverage I want to give them their due as very little has been written about this aspect of tool technology.

Larry Brundage was EAIA Director 1987-93 and Membership Chairman 1989-1995. With an insatiable curiousity about early tools and their makers, he's been Research Editor of the Chronicle since 1988. Like Emerson, Larry moved to California (from Connecticut), but unlike Emerson he hasn't made any mistakes, so has remained there for over 30 years. While he's done research on California toolmakers, he maintains a strong interest in Eastern planemakers and sawmakers. Currently, he's searching for information on New Jersey toolmakers Isaac Harrow and M.B. Tidey, among others. A long-time collector, his interest now centers on documents and catalogs for his library. Thanks for this article Larry. Ed

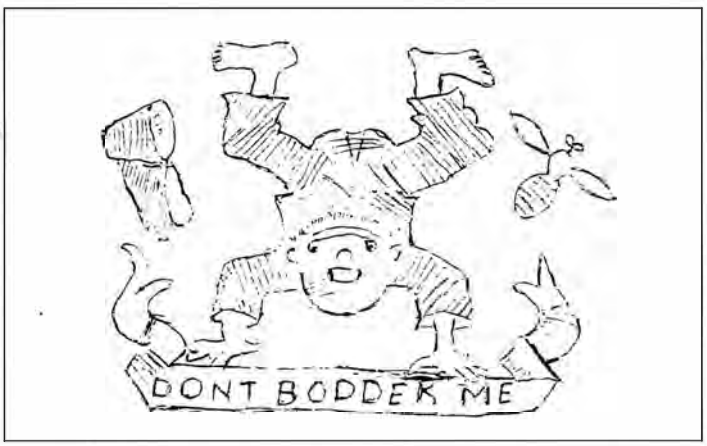
Don't Bodder Me

by Bill Rigler
(non-saw collector)

Relatively soon after I read Hank Allen's article in the *Tool Shed* [April 1995] on saw screws, I found a hand saw with an unusual etching where the manufacturer's logo would normally appear.

This is really a fairly-common looking saw. It has three split screws holding a cheap handle to a cast steel blade, the medallion logo has the common "Warranted Superior" on it, there is no nib, and the 26 inch crosscut blade has six teeth per inch.

Then you look where a logo might be on the blade. Behold a man doing a hand stand on a ribbon containing the words: "DON'T BODDER ME." Bare feet in the air, face looking you square in the eye, a shoe on the left side and a bee flying on the right side of the figure. What does this all mean?



Now I know two saw experts, Erv Schaffer and Hank Allen, so I checked with both of them. Hank had never seen one but thought it sounded like Pennsylvania Dutch. Erv owns one and received an inquiry on another one earlier, and now mine. Erv, independently, thought it might be Pennsylvania Dutch.

Miss Norma, my wife, thought the manufacturer's name could be Bodder, a play on words. Erv Schaffer's suggestion was that the shoe and the bee are the key. Shoebee, Shubee, etc. are good Dutch or German names.

While I am not a saw collector (I only have 12 hand saws), I became extremely fascinated with this unusual saw. We know there are two for sure and maybe one other known. No one that I have talked to seems to know who made them or the story that goes with the saw. If anyone can shed light on this mystery please let me know. I'll share any information received in a future Tool Shed. Write to Bill Rigler, Rt. 2 Box 153, Wartrace TN 37183, or phone or fax me at 815-455- 1935.

A Unique Wrench

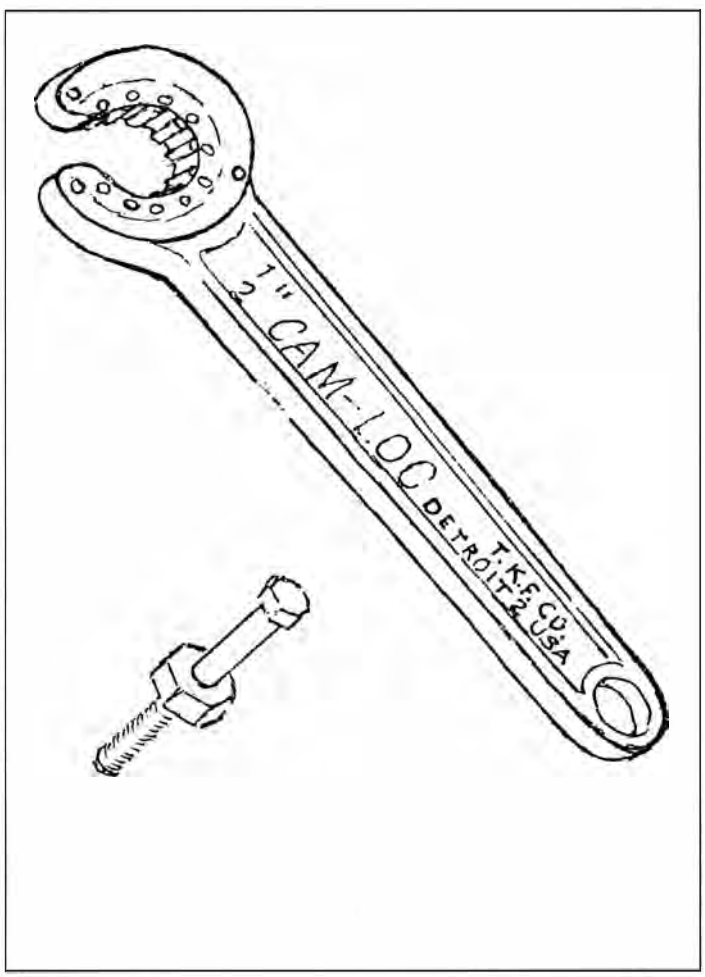
by Frank Kingsbury

"What's this wrench used for?" my son Larry asked while he was looking at my tool collection. It was a solid little open-end wrench, just 5 1/4 inches long. A plate covered each side of the circular opening, and around it were the heads of rivets that hold what appeared to be small, round or oval-shaped columns in place.

I told him that I didn't know what it was for, but that he should come look at another wrench that I was holding. However, Larry was persistent and ignored my suggestion. He began trying to fit different nuts and bolts through the opening to see if he could make the wrench work.

He located a 2 inch bolt with a 1/2 inch hexagonal nut on it that would slide through the gap and into the center opening. The nut easily slipped between the columns around the circumference of the opening for a snug fit. It could now function like any ordinary wrench to remove the nut from the bolt.

From the lettering on the wrench it is called a "CAM-LOCK" made by T-K-F Co. , Detroit 2, USA. FORGED TOOL STEEL, Pat. No. 2550010, and T N appear on the reverse side. Both sides declare it to be 1/2". Were they made in other sizes and for a special purpose? If you have an answer, I would like to know.



Displaying Tools – A Planemaker's Tools

by Bill McDougall

After my discreetly bribing the judges, my display of planemaker's tools, which normally hangs over a woodworker's bench in the hall of my home, was awarded first prize at our fourth biennial joint meeting of the Rocky Mountain Tool Collectors and the Southwest Tool Collectors here in Albuquerque in September of 1994.

The centerpiece of my display was a 4' x 4' board on which I had mounted 25 planemaker's floats, 25 planemaker's chisels, a hollow and a round plane, a planemaker's stamp, and a sample of that stamp's mark on a block covered with gold foil. The backing is wallcovering on pegboard and the tools are attached with brass wire.

All of these chisels and floats along with many other tools, including a Richardson Bros. panel saw, were in a large chest which I had the good fortune to acquire from the grandson of B. Christian, a carpenter and planemaker who had worked in the Chicago area, among other places, probably around 1870.

I can find no record of B. Christian and have never heard of any planes stamped with his name. Unfortunately, my purchase of the chest of tools took place outside a mini-storage locker on a very cold, blustery day, and I did not take the time to get the full history of the tools. I wish now that I had, but frankly I was anxious to leave before the seller changed his mind. He had called me back the day after I had declined his $5,000 price. After some negotiation in the cold we agreed on a substantially lower price, but even that was still a lot of money in 1979!

The float handles are probably pear wood and were probably made by B. Christian. The chisels are from various makers, most by Wm. Ash & Co., and have bowling-pin-shaped handles probably turned by B. Christian. All of the handles bear his name stamp. The chisels are tang type and have a large shoulder at the top of the tang. Each has been ground for a particular cut or operation in shaping wooden planes.

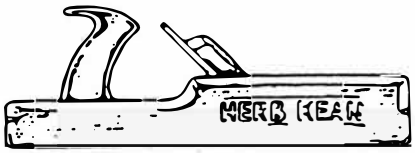
The chest had nearly every tool a good carpenter would carry except for a hammer which was probably used by one of his survivors. I've never bought a chest of tools that included a hammer!

There were 36 molding planes in the chest, mostly hollow and rounds. Thirty were made by B. Christian, but not all had received his mark. Several were incomplete and one had been reworked. They were all beech with no finish. Who was B. Christian? The rest of my display consisted of several user-made planes, some miscellaneous tools, a molding plane which I had split lengthwise to show the throat (Don't try this with a Nicholson or Chelor.), a mother plane, a maple board cut to wedge profile out of which individual wedges could be cut, and a reproduction of a planemaker's vise holding a large round plane.

The vise which I made of birch is a reproduction of one made by Alfred G. Tovey. (See Wooden Planes in 19th Century America, Volume II by Kenneth Roberts.) Mr. Tovey, believed to have been an apprenticed planemaker, emigrated from England about 1880. He was employed at the Doscher Plane Company in Saugatuck, Connecticut, later worked at Chapin-Stevens Company, and then returned to Doscher until they closed down. He died in 1943 at the age of 88.

In use the vise was locked in a bench vise at the end of a workbench. The semi-circular lever opened and closed the jaws to grip the plane. The lever straddled the iron screw of the bench vise which allowed the plane vise to be opened and closed without removing it from the bench vise. Two adjustable slide bars held the edge of the plane. Tovey's bench vise jaw was narrow enough to clamp only on the large block of his plane vise, thus allowing movement of the jaw.

When making the vise I talked with Ken Roberts, who had owned the original vise and donated it to the New England Historical Society. I had a problem figuring out what kind of fulcrum Mr. Tovey had used, but Mr. Robert's interest had been in the historical, not the mechanical aspects of the vise. How did Tovey make the connection of the jaw to the vise block? How did I make mine? Who cares! What purpose does the tapered peg projecting through the jaw serve? Why did I spend a week building this thing? Anyway, it was fun building it, and it actually works!



Kean Kuttin's

One of a Kind?

Some time ago during one of my wild buying sprees I picked up a plane that I had never seen before; see Figs 1 and 2. I assumed it was used for leveling wood because: (1) it has multiple float-like cutters which are well suited for roey or mixed wood grain, and (2) the cutters are of good steel, but not hardened. When in Vermont, I have seen stone levelers that were conceptually similar to this plane, but much cruder and the steel was hardened.

What got my attention, at least for a short while, was a nameplate. Perfectly centered on the nose of the plane was a very professionally embossed, brass plate screwed to the cast iron body; see Fig 3. I have never heard of WALTER H. KYTE, and I didn't want to chase after a "PATENT APPLIED FOR". So I put the plane away for another day.

"Another day" came last week when a guest, knowledgeable about Pennsylvania planes, almost lost his cool when he heard me call this plane a "one-off". I received a lecture on jumping to conclusions and not researching an opportunity as great as this. Well, anybody who knows me, and I thought this guy did, realizes that I don't get my kicks from tools via the "who-made-it-when" route. Not that I'm criticizing those who go in for that kind of thing, I'm just not in their camp.

However, he was a guest and I felt a little indulgence wouldn't kill me. So, I agreed to research it. I didn't say how or what, just that I would research it. First, I placed a call to Steve Zluky, in my opinion the foremost authority on planes from the Pennsylvania hard-coal region. The plane had a Hahn handle, and Kyte claimed to be from Pittston, both being evidence of a northeastern Pennsylvania origin. I dumped the whole "who and when" program right in Steve's lap. Born and raised in the hard coal, he knew how to talk to the older people who might remember something about this Kyte guy or his family. I'm pretty sure you have to be bilingual to accomplish this. I never was able to figure out what the needed language was, and Steve won't tell me – something about protecting his territory.

Next, I decided to use the plane to glean its secrets. There are a few of us collectors who actually have a romance with our tools, even though we consider them of the masculine gender, as opposed to ships, etc. I took it to the basement to see if it would level the cross section of a log I had just cut. What a joke! It didn't cut at all. I was about to give up in disgust, with a comment about all the effort that went into this plane, without first considering the operational theory. But, then came a brilliant thought (brilliant for me anyhow). Maybe that's how this plane ended up a "one-off". Maybe the inventor felt the same way I did, and threw in the towel.

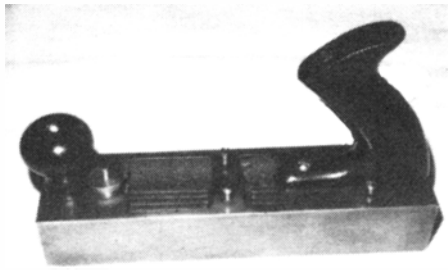


Figure 1. Top view with (4) Adjusting Screws & (1) Brass Adjusting Nut. Length 9".

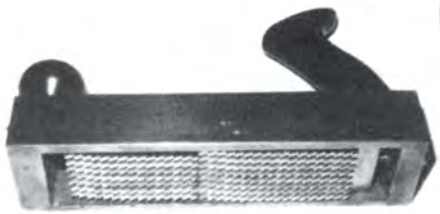


Figure 2. Underside view of cutters.

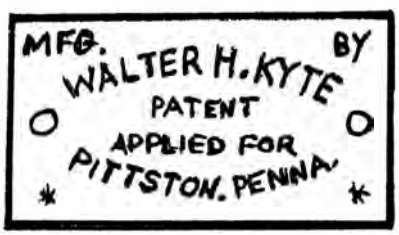


Figure 3. Brass nameplate on nose with (2) screws (fullsize).

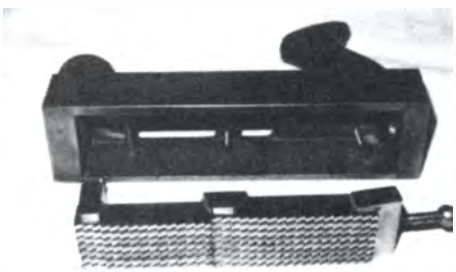


Figure 4. Cutters removed from body – showing front set of (7) and interlaced rear set of (8).

Now my investigation took on new fervor. I was going to troubleshoot this plane and find out why a perfectly reasonable theory didn't work. I was actually disappointed when I found the answer so quickly. Although the float-like teeth looked sharp, the sharpening was never completed. Under magnification I could see a tell-tale, shiny edge on each cutter, signifying dullness. In addition, each 1/8" cutter strip was milled independently and then riveted together with spacers between them to form the seven-piece front cutter and the eight-piece rear cutter; see Fig 4. However, when the cutter strips were assembled, precision was lost somewhere, as one strip was .005" proud (stuck up above the others), another was .005" shy, and the rest were randomly somewhere in between. No wonder it crashed and burned!

As I mentioned before the steel was not hardened, which gave me two choices to level the cutters: (1) take out the rivets, redrill, and rerivet, or (2) file the cutters to the same level. Fortunately, I had a good, sharp, acute-angle file that fit the rake of the teeth perfectly. Twenty minutes later I was ready to go back to the log section.

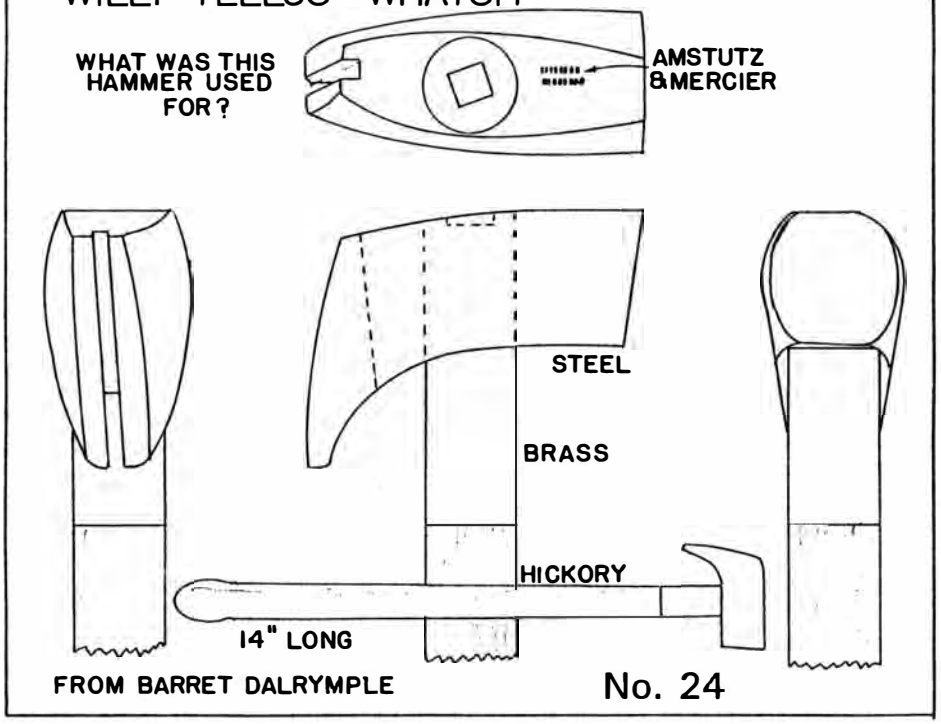
But wait! I noticed how bellied, nicked, and dirty my maple bench top was. Maybe it would be a good idea to take a few swipes on the bench top just to try it out. Man, did it do the job! It was like a new bench. Sure a belt sander would do it, even a #2 jack plane would. But this plane could do it almost as fast, a lot more accurately, and with little fear of gouging or splitting. Although floats work best on long grain, with this tool grain direction doesn't matter. It works almost like a super-scraper, except it takes more wood and is easier to use.

Why then aren't there more of these planes around today? And even if Kyte gave up, how come someone else didn't pick upon it? I suppose a real woodworker might be able to give me an answer. But like all things in life, when YOU discover something, it is the BEST. So, I now have a superb Bench-Top-Leveling-Plane in my collection. Maybe someday we'll find out who Walter H. Kyte was, but as Rhett Butler once said, "Frankly madam, I don't give a damn!"

P.S. The last time I heard from Zluky on his quest for info from his relatives and friends near Scranton, he complained about putting on a little weight from all the Pierogis. However, he was able to find out something about Walter H. Kyte. He is shown at the courthouse as purchasing land in the Pittstown area in 1903. Many of his relatives lived in the Wyoming Valley on the Susquehanna River during the early 1900s. But there is no evidence, as yet, of any planemaking or metalworking activity by Walter or any member of his family. Anyone out there know anything about this "maker"?

Herb Kean

WILLY TELLUS WHATSIT



CRAFTS Picnic (continued from page 2)

A modest auction followed orchestrated by Joe Hauck, who appeared to be assisted, at times, by auctioneer Herb Kean and money manager Chuck Granick.

Awards went to Don Kahn's *Most Beautiful* reproduction coachmaker's plow and filletster, to Hank Allen's *Most Unusual* band saw blade brazing tool by Ambler Saw Co., and to Alex Farnham's *Ugliest* wood clamp. The winner of *Make Do* is unrecorded, with apologies.

A highlight was Ann Rokita's entry in *Whatsits*, a museum-quality brace wrench with its own oil can. It was recognized as William Moore's brace patented October 27, 1874. We think there are fewer than 5 examples of this brace. There's a photo of this brace on page 6 of Pearson. A Chinese auction and door prizes followed.

Thanks Ken. And, thanks to Ken's favorite group, THE CLEANUP CREW!

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). Ads accepted on a space permitting basis. Please print or type them.

Wanted

VINTAGE PLANE PARTS. Antique Tools & Parts. Buy and Sell. Pete Niederberger, Box 887, Larkspur, CA 94977. 415 925-8563.

RACK-WING DIVIDERS & CALIPERS. ☎ 505 344-9272. ✍ Bill McDougall, 4020 Grande Dr., NW Albuquerque, NM 87107.

General information on the history of tool making activities of J & GH WALKER and AE YOUNG and specifaclly about their LEVELS. ☎ 504 673-4049 ✍ Don Rosebrook, 38352 Henry Rd Prairieville LA 70769

Old WRENCHES and GLASS INSULATORS. ☎ 215-493-2513 Maurce & Georgie Maltby, 1108 University Dr, Yardley, PA 19067.

STANLEY "HANDYMAN" TOOLS, CATALOGS, ADVERTISING or any other items that deals with this line of tools. ☎ 516-360-1216. ✍ Bill Hermanek, 31 Wildwood La Smithtown NY 11787

Information/ author(s) for a *ToolShed* article on trade & tools of the PATTERNMAKER and how these have changed over the years. ☎ 201-444-9440. ✍ Hank Allen, 524 Harristown Rd. Glen Rock NJ 07452

Articles with pictures showing how tools have been displayed. We can assist with the writing or pictures, if necessary. ☎ 201-444-9440. ✍ Hank Allen, 524 Harristown Rd, Glen Rock, NJ 07452

Jeanne Price's kitchen tool display at the CRAFTS picnic

Some of Alex Farnham's shoemaker's tools at the picnic