The TOOL SHED

NUMBER 90 FEBRUARY 1996

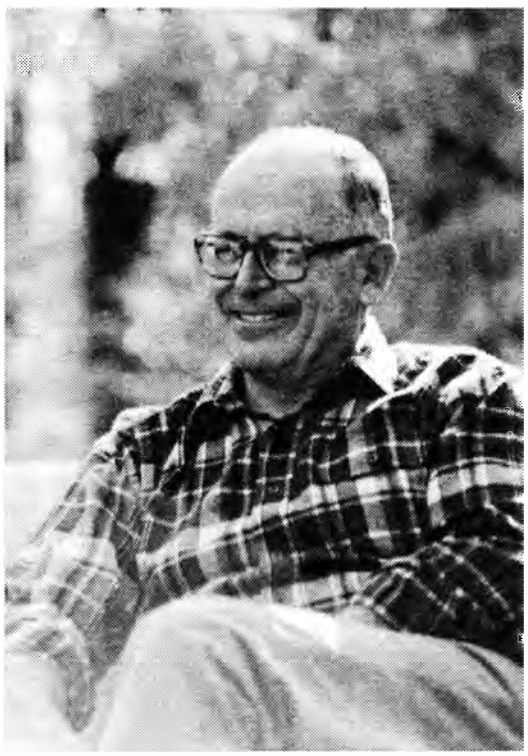
A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

Emil Pollak

1925 - 1995

by Herb Kean

There is little need for a formal announcement of the passing of Emil Pollak. By now, I would doubt that there are any of us who are not aware of this sorrowful event. Rather, this is a remembrance piece for a man who was considered a giant in our tool-collecting community, both here and abroad.



Three months have gone by since he left us, and I still cannot accept that fact without doing a mental "double-take." I unconsciously start to the phone to ask him a question, only to stop and reflect after a step or two. It is almost inconceivable to me that a person so full of life has vacated his spot in our world.

Working closely with Emil opened my eyes to a personality that was indeed rare. He would take a positive position on a controversial issue and succinctly state his case. He would then listen to the opposing argument, patiently waiting without interruption. As many times as not, he would concede the point and quickly move on. He hated meaningless discussions, as they robbed him of the precious minutes of accomplishment that he treasured so much. And those accomplishments were many, centering around his successes with antique tools and the **Astragal Press**, a publishing company that he and Marty, his wife, started in 1983.

Throughout most of his tool-collecting era, which started in 1980, he served as a Director for CRAFTS and the EAIA. It is unusual to see a dynamic person who does not superimpose his ego across the issues. That was Emil; he would dismiss pettiness, compromise when needed, and maintain the objectivity of a court judge.

He felt that antique tools did not share their proper place in the hierarchy of collectibles. Unlike many of us who agreed with this situation, he did something about it. Together with Marty, he published **A Guide to the Makers of American Wooden Planes**, a book that added one of the necessary dimensions required of a desirable collectible.

He never took himself, or life, very seriously. If something didn't quite work out, he shrugged his shoulders, smiled and moved on. Being only human, he did not like losing, but more than anyone I knew, he understood how to lose graciously. Not that he lost very often; quite frankly he had a very high batting average with finances, people, and life itself. Unfortunately, he was thrown a wicked curve in the late innings.

Those who knew him well could not help having some of his traits rub off on them. Those who only knew of him will benefit by what he has permanently left in his ventures throughout life. Godspeed good buddy.

February 11 - CRAFTS Meeting
High Bridge, NJ, Masonic Lodge

Tools & Techniques Used in Piano Manufacture & Maintenance
Program by Charles Willis
Registered Piano Technician

CRAFTS 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 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

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

Jan. 31 - *ToolShed* (Apr issue) free ad deadline.

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

Apr. 27 - CRAFTS Auction, Flemington, N.J.

Mar. 31 - *ToolShed* (June issue) free ad deadline.

June 9 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

Speaker's Profile
Charles Willis

On February 11 Charles Willis of Paramus, New Jersey will be our featured speaker. Charles is a Registered Piano Technician who works as an independent contractor, specializing in the maintenance of concert pianos in Northern New Jersey. His topic will be the tools and techniques of piano manufacture and maintenance.

Using his models of piano actions, we'll learn how they work and how older pianos differ from newer ones. He describes himself as a "novice collector" of piano tools. We'll see some tools from his collection as well as modern ones. In his collection are five tools that were designed for the same simple function, but some of them just don't work. Sound familiar?

Mr. Willis will be assisted by Charles Huether, also a Registered Piano Technician, from Clifton, New Jersey. He is a piano history buff and will be showing slides of piano manufacturing locations. It's interesting that Clifton is also the home of American Piano Supply Co., the largest manufacturer of piano tools. This firm is the successor firm that acquired the tool manufacturing business of Hammacher Schlemmer of New York.

Hank Allen

ToolShed Retrospective - 1995

Having completed my first year on the Tool Shed under my mentor Herb Kean and with the superb graphics and publishing work of Editor Stuart Shippey, I want to thank them and all of our 1995 authors: Bud Brown, Larry Brundage, David Englund, Alex Farnham, Todd Friberg, Bob Fridlington, Peter Habicht, Mickey Holmes, Herb Kean, Frank W. Kingsbury, Bill McDougall, Bob Nelson, Max Richardson, Bill Rigler, Don Rosebrook, Roger Smith, Jack Whelan, and Tom Wyman. I lament the passing of good friends Al Hodge, who had written frequently on measuring tools, and Emil Pollak, who was ever supportive. I'm happy that Greg Welsh has recovered and will write for us again. Inspired by the authors of 1995, we have some good stuff lined up for 1996.

Hank Allen

Auction Notes

CRAFTS 1996 auction will be held on April 27 in Flemingon, N.J. The February meeting is the deadline for the delivery of tools. If you can help with setup Friday night or with the auction, call Joe Hauck at 908 236-2072. This year you can get a list for the auction a week or two in advance of the auction. Send $2 (no SASE) with your name and address to:

Steve Zluky, Box 243, Whitehouse, NJ 08888.

Herb Kean has eloquently expressed our sense of loss in the death of Emil Pollak. On a personal level, this was a bitter blow. Emil, a member of CRAFTS since December 4, 1979, was the one who persuaded me to become Treasurer. He formulated the plan for my first book, convinced me to write it, and vastly improved my drafts. He persuaded me to reverse my "never again" decision and launched my second book.

He served CRAFTS as a director, contributing his great business skills and a keen vision of our future development. His proposal to produce a TOOLSHED anthology is well under way, and is being continued by his indomitable wife, Martyl.

Your directors, in the meeting of December 3, appointed Charles Granick to fill Emil's unexpired term. Chuck, a founding member and a former director, is well known as a discriminating collector.

Greg Welsh accepted appointment as Membership Chairman, and will be responsible for maintenance of these records. Our growth has required the separation of this responsibility from the office of Treasurer. Membership dues, however, should still be sent to the Treasurer.

The November 11 Auction, Mickey Holmes' maiden venture as President of Brown Auction Services, was held in Harrisburg, PA, rather than its former site in Morgantown. In all other respects, however, it continued the fine traditions established by Bud Brown. For those of you who have not yet seen the Prices Realized list, some of the highlights may be of interest.

The star of the show was a Sandusky center-wheel plow, rosewood with ivory tips, which went for $12,000. There were two toted, ebony, ivory-tipped plows: one with ivory knobs and flat nuts brought $5000, the other $2700. Other notable wood included a round by Hosea Edson ($3400), a Chelor plow ($3500) and one by John Nicholson ($2700); a John Nicholson complex molder ($3000) and one by Thomas Granford ($1300), and a Francis Nicholson round ($1000).

Stanley planes included a #10 1/4C for $1800, an A6 Foreplane (new in box) $1700, and two #1's for $800 and $700. Other metal plane highlights were a Mathieson panel raiser ($1475) and thumb plane ($1150). A block plane, prototype of Shea's patent, was hammered at $1750.

A decorated side axe dated 1787 brought $1700. Two rare levels changed hands, one 28" long by William Ward ($1000) and an L.L.Davis adjustable ($800). A pretty Thompson's patent Miter Gauge brought $4200, and a plummet lamp $1400.

Welcome to new members Turk Aziz, Hagerstown, MD; Frank Bobinyec, Wharton, NJ; William & Kathleen Brooks, Cleveland, OH; Randy Gemenden, North Plainfield, NJ; Steve and Maria Johnson, Redmond, WA; Stuart & Marie Lathrop, Allentown, PA; John Owen, Magnolia, NJ; Jack & Lillian Vail, Williamstown, NJ; Alan & Jane Weaver, Prospect Park, PA; and Don and Anne Wing, Marion, MA.

Meet Your Dealers

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

ENGLISH SOURCES

As the American mother lode of antique tools from barns and attics is slowing its production, more and more English and other European tools are appearing in tool sources. For those of you who might be interested in doing your own importing, here are some sources I have dealt with. All of these will accept payment in US dollars as personal checks, and Customs causes no problems as anything marked "over 100 years old" gets in duty free.

David Stanley conducts international auctions twice a year in Leicestershire, most recently last September 30. The catalog for this was well illustrated, in a format similar to the Brown presentation, and offered 1840 lots. Hammer prices ranged from $16 to over $10,000. His next sale is scheduled for March 30, and information regarding this is available from Don and Anne Wing at the Mechanick's Workbench in Marion, MA (508-748-1680).

Tony Murland has been a familiar sight at dealer sales in this country. He has expanded his tool activity into production of major international auctions. His catalogs are beautifully illustrated, and the recent one (for the July 28 sale) listed 1635 lots, hammered in the range $20-$7500. Peter and Annette Habicht are U.S. Agents and can provide information at 413-229-7745. The next auction will be in July 1996.

Be aware that both auctions charge a 10 percent buyer's premium, and British VAT is charged on this (although not on the tool price). Both welcome consignments from the U.S. through their agents.

Aside from their auctions, David and Ian Stanley operate The Tool Cabin in Osgathorpe, Leicestershire. LE12 9SR and issue illustrated lists of better quality tools; phone 011-44-1530-222320. Tony Murland's Tool Shop in Suffolk has a large selection of tools for sale. He welcomes telephone inquiry at 011-44-1449-722992.

Another dealer with a large selection is Roy Arnold, at 77 High Street, Needham Market, Ipswich IP6 8AN, England. Old timers will remember the Arnold and Walker catalogs, one of the earliest sources of information on antique tools. Roy is a particularly good source for books on the subject.

See ads in your EAIA '95-'96 directory for more information on these three sources.

When Ashley Iles retired from the edge tool business he had established, he opened the Old Tool Store in Lincolnshire. His son, Ray Iles, took over after his father's death, and issues a tool list of some 30 pages periodically, available for three dollar bills sent to Red Lion Inn, East Kirkby, Spilsby, Lincs. PE23 4BX, England.

Bristol Design (Tools) Ltd, 14 Perry Road, Bristol BS1 5BG, England (011-44-272-291740) makes quality woodworking tools, including Norris-type planes available as finished tools or in kit form. In addition, they sell antique tools from a catalog illustrated in color (five issues for $16, check made to Charles Stirling).

Jack Whelan

Froes

by Hank Allen

Splitting, or riving, wood in early days was a skill practiced by craftsmen who made boards, shingles, clapboards, fences, basket splints, chair parts, wagon spokes, lath, and more. Our ancestors used axes, gluts or wedges, froes, drawknives and spelk planes for splitting wood.

The froe was designed for splitting. It is typically an L-shaped tool made up of a wedge-shaped blade with a dull, but not blunt, knife edge and a wood handle. Blades were usually straight with a socket forged at one end, but curved blades were also made. Most handles were round and tapered, and were inserted up through this socket. But some froes had eyes similar to those on axes for handles that were wedged. The froe handle is held in an upright position in one hand while the other hand drives the top of the blade downward with a wood froe club or mallet. After a split is started, the froe is wiggled downward to lengthen it until the split is complete. Most old froes were hand forged, but they were also available in many catalogs. The 1873 D.R. Barton catalog offered straight froes at 12 1/2 cents per inch. You can still buy a new froe from Woodcraft for $50. I couldn't find a curved froe in any catalog.

The following from Alex Bealer's The Tools That Built America takes us back in time, "Probably the first real organized industry in the first colony of the British Empire, Virginia, was the splitting of clapboards to be exported to England. ... With no sawmills established at Jamestown, splitting was the only suitable method for making small boards." (The first sawmill in Jamestown was burned to the ground by sawyers, which was the fate of many early sawmills in England.) Even after sawmills obviated the need to split wood, which came earlier in New England where sawmills were in use early on to support the thriving timber export trade, wood continued to be split by hand by those who did not have access to sawmills or believed split wood to be superior for certain uses. For example, we know that rived wagon wheel spokes are stronger than sawn ones. And sometime, splitting can be faster than sawing. Bealer does not believe any clapboards were split after 1850.

Much detail on splitting wood is contained in another Alex Bealer book "Old Ways Of Working Wood", one of my favorites. For example, cedar is the most ideal wood to split because it is amenable to splitting almost any way. Thus, a 24" cedar log can be squared with a froe and then easily be split into shingles. An oak, pine, or chestnut log, on the other hand, must first be split by axes or wedges into billets (quarters for smaller logs or triangular radial sections for larger ones). For oak the useless sapwood and the pith of the heartwood is discarded; for pine and chestnut only the bark is removed. Oak billets can then be split radially with a froe which produces boards that are wider on one edge. Thus, oak was the principal wood used for clapboards. Bealer says that pine and chestnut billets must be split tangentially to the annual rings which produces boards of even thickness that will not split when nailed. Herb Kean has demonstrated for me that oak boards can be rived out either radially or tangentially.

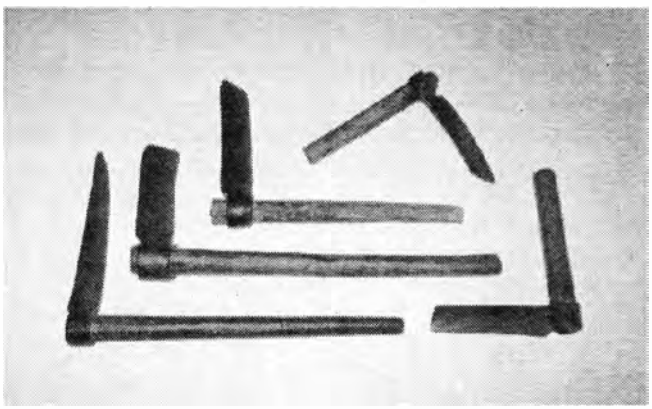


Figure 1. Straight froes.

Examples of the most common froe, the straight froe with round wood handle, are shown in figure 1. Froe blades were both longer and shorter than those pictured, from 3" for the basketmaker's froe up to 24" for the shinglemaker's froe. Froes with blades 8"-12" long are commonly called "cooper's froes", but their use by coopers is probably exaggerated. More likely, barrel stave blanks made in the woods to be traded to the local cooper may have been riven out with froes. But, it's unlikely that the cooper would have used a froe for any further preparation of barrel staves.

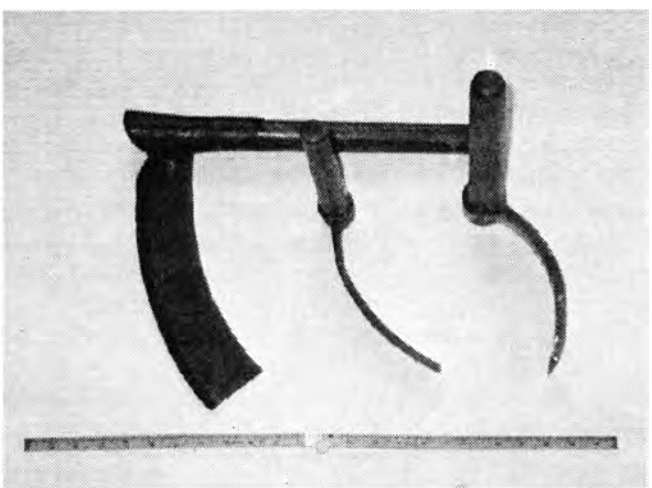


Figure 2. Curved froes.

Figures 2 and 3 show a variety of curved froes, including the one in the center of Figure 2 that I was prepared to call left-handed. But actually either curve could be held in either hand; therefore, I'll just mention

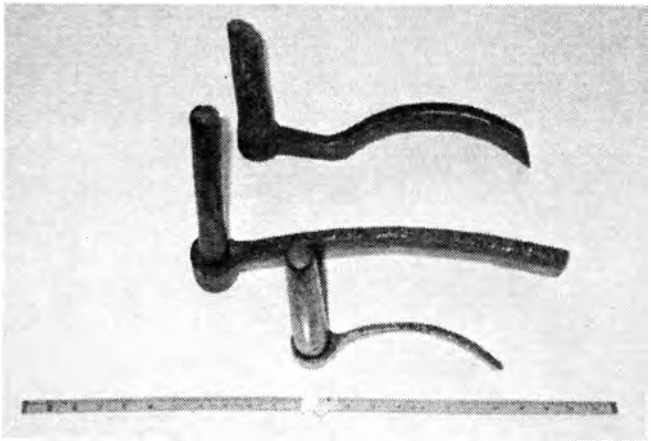


Figure 3. More curved froes.

that froes can have different curves. What you'll hear about curved froes is that they were used by coopers to rive out curved barrel staves. Curved froes may have been used to rive out short staves for shallow sap buckets, tubs or pails, or even kegs, but not barrel staves. Bill Rigler, who lives in Tennessee's cedar country, has split cedar with a curved froe and tells me that curved staves come out smooth on both sides, and for runs up to about 18". But for other woods, I quote Edwin Tunis from his book Colonial Craftsmen, "[I] doubt that a curved froe will do what is hoped for it. Wood has its own ideas about how it will be split." Herb Kean tried to make some one foot curved staves from reasonably straight-grained oak. What resulted were staves that were curved on both sides at the very top of the split, but, as Tunis had warned, the curves soon gave way to the grain, and the bottoms were mostly without any trace of curvature.

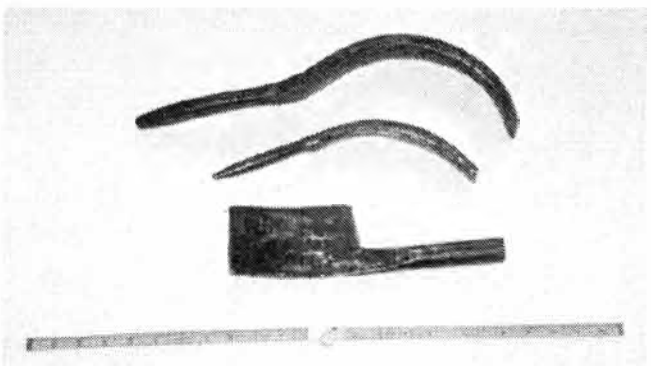


Figure 4. All-iron curved froes.

Figure 4 shows three all-iron curved froes with straight handles. One similar to the bottom froe is pictured in The Chronicle (44:2:54) with the suggestion that it's a cooper's froe.

Figure 5 shows two froes with axe-eye sockets. Figure 6 is another axe-eye froe, but this one has a knife edge on the end of the blade. It's a lathmaker's froe from this November's Brown auction. The name is corroborated by Salaman. I couldn't find an explanation of how the edge at the end of the froe was used. If you know, please write.

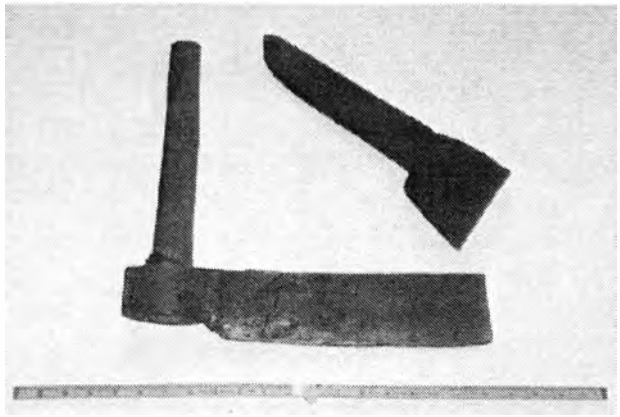


Figure 5. Axe-eye froes.

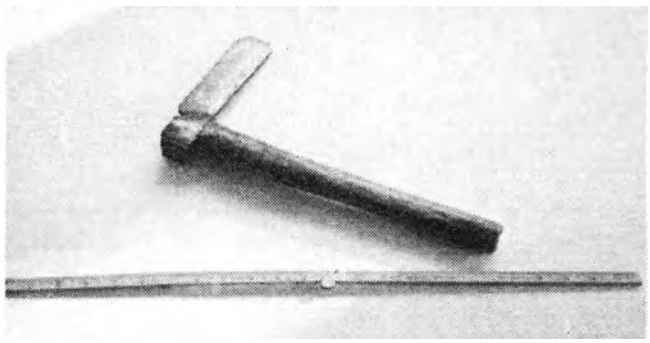


Figure 6. Lathmaker's froe.

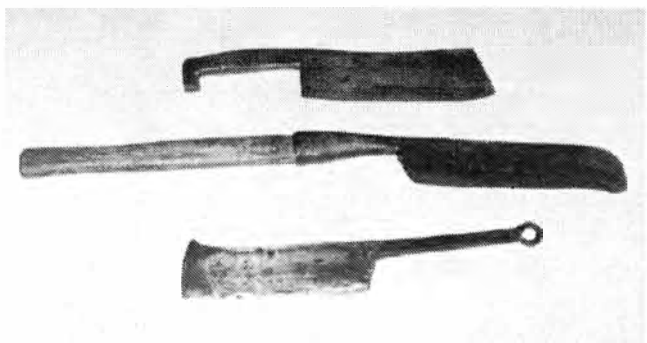


Figure 7. Knife froes.

Figure 7 shows three knife froes. The one with the wood handle is the only froe in my collection with a maker's mark. It was made by the Underhill Edge Tool Co. of Nashua, New Hampshire, and thus dates to 1852-90.

And finally, the most unusual froe has eluded me. I have never seen the double-handled froe whose straight blade has a socket at each end for handles. This froe is pictured in the Crane catalog of August 1983 (it sold for $85) and also in Bud Steere's Catalog No. 29 dated December 1983 (priced at $110). Do you think Bud bought it in August and sold it in December? Or maybe he had more than one! Anyway this froe is at the top of my most wanted list.

Special thanks to Herb Kean and Bill Rigler for their help with this article.

Jacob Rude, Tinsmith

by Bill Sanford

In the summer of 1985 we attended a farm auction north of Lafayette, N.J. Walking up the long lane, I noticed an old worn oak bench at the side. It was very sturdy, and being alone, apparently not a part of the farm items. It was heaped with old tinsmith tools. I was riveted as I saw six various turning machines, an old wooden folder, a bench shear, a grooving machine, and stakes with other non-related things.

We had collected painted tin for many years, and I had worked as a plumber with tin-knockers in construction for 40 years. So, I recognized immediately what I had stumbled upon. So did only one other person, and that made an auction! When the hammer had fallen, after a series of dramatic bids which surprised everyone, the pile was mine.

Over the next few years as time permitted, I cleaned the tools, I studied past Chronicles for articles on tinsmithing, and the addition of more tools continued. Today, our principle needs are an old forming press of 1875 vintage and some wire benders, if they can be found.

Interestingly, knowledge of the old Connecticut tin tool manufacturers is quite complete. My machines were made by Roys and Wilcox of East Berlin, Connecticut. At the Kebabian sale in Northampton in August of 1987, it was my good fortune to acquire an original Roys and Wilcox advertising broadside dated 1852. This was their Mattabesett Works on the Middletown Railroad at East Berlin. All the tools they manufactured are listed, described, and priced on the broadside.

Several summers later in a mall in Madison, Wisconsin, I found a pair of Roys and Wilcox dividers in excellent condition. As I wondered where the dividers had been since about 1850, and how they got to Madison 140 years later, I knew I had to know more about my farm sale tools. Where had they been, who had owned them, and how did they turn up in a farm sale? Wouldn't that be a story worth recording?

Back in Lafayette some six years later, a lifetime antique dealer said he believed the tools may have belonged to "old Jake Rude" who had a tin shop and then, later, a general store in an old stone building on the main corner of this small town. John Pumelye pointed out the structure. So, to the store I went and began asking questions. The present occupant said that if I'd "go out that road about a mile" there lived a lady who should know of Jake Rude and what had happened in this old building during the last 80 years or so.

It was "out there" that I met Mrs. Paul Vaughn, and the story began to unfold, at least partially. She was gracious and interested in my quest. I learned she had lived with the Harvey Rude family over several years while a small girl. In talking, she referred to "Daddy Rude" who turned out to be Jake Rude, the father of Harvey Rude (1898-1974). Jake (1858-1935) was 77 years old at his passing and was the tinsmith. He is buried in the North Church cemetary in Hamburg, N.J. During our first visit we looked at old photographs of the store and tin shop, and at Jake's original account books, which I have. In the next few months I spent much time at the cemetary and the Sussex County Library checking over every old record, book, and census roll available. Snell's History of Sussex County revealed that Caleb Rule "removed" from Morris County to Sussex County in 1776. His son, Caleb, fathered 10 children, six of whom were still alive in 1881. Our interest narrows to Samuel Rude (1828-1899) whose son Jacob Rude is our primary interest.

Tin Shop and Post Office, Lafayette, NJ - late 1890s

Records of this time indicate that young men were indentured, apprenticed, or just went to work in some shop or trade or farm much earlier than nowadays. The 1870 census roll shows Jake as a boy of 12 years living with his parents. The next census roll of 1880 shows Jake as a single man boarding at the Daniel Tankay home, and that he "works in a tin shop". He was then 22 years old.

This unidentifiable tin shop has to have been in existence for a while to have had Roys and Wilcox tools, as the company merged in 1871 to help form the larger firm of Peck, Stow, and Wilcox. Jake has to have started work in the 1870s as his earliest account book, or ledger, begins with a November 17, 1882 entry of "to repairing heater pipe / Mrs. J.S. Allen / 50 cents." He had to have served some time to become the owner of the shop at 24 years of age. The ledgers are a meticulous recording of each and every transaction through March of 1898. In near perfect script the customer was named, the purchase described, and its cost was recorded as paid. This was done daily. There are no summaries of any kind, likely indicating the complete freedom from any taxes, regulations, or other modern business tribulations.

Pails were fixed for 10 cents. Teapots were a little more. One entry shows the sale of 132 lf of roofing tin for $7.93, or 6 cents a foot. There are hundreds of cans sold for $3.75 each. These were large milk cans with covers. The history is that much of the milk from Sussex County farms went by rail to New York City, Newark, and other Hudson River points in Jake Rude's milk cans. Competition likely was working even then as newspaper ads in the Sussex County Register of that time show that John A. Quick had a tin shop in Newton five miles away and sold iron-clad milk cans for $3.75 also. Pails, dippers, and other tin items were made and sold. Stove pipe and guttering were frequent sales, but there appear to be no document boxes, sconces, trays, etc. as the era of these items and their painted decoration had long passed, especially for rural tin shops.

In the absence of any available record or public ad in those years about the shop's origin and Jacob's training, we do know that the 1860 county plat map shows the original stone building being owned by Samuel LaWall, a tailor by trade. In 1870 he was still there and tailoring. We know from the register of deeds that Jacob acquired the building in 1890, eight years after his account books show him being in business for himself.

The photograph in this article shows the original stone building with Jacob and his family in front and an attached wood structure with milk cans and other large containers standing outside. It is logical to assume that the tin shop was in the wood frame addition, and that the time was 1890 or later because of his time of purchase. It is undetermined when the addition was erected, or if another smith occupied it, or if Jake worked there before he became the owner. A later photograph shows the addition removed, a full two story addition in place, and gasoline pumps outside. The tin shop had been moved to the second floor of the addition and a hoisting arm with pulley erected to move heavy items through a second floor window. The hoisting arm is still in place 100 years later.

Jake expanded into a general store as well before 1900, and his ledger reflects this. He was selling seeds, nails, other general store items, and gasoline. The tin material appeared to taper off. Sometime before 1922 Harvey and his family moved into the quarters above the store, and Jake moved to a house on the adjoining lot. He was becoming less active and left the store to his son - only selling gasoline after that. He had also been the Postmaster for 16 years before this move. Mrs. Vaughn believes that around the time Harvey moved upstairs, the tin shop and tools were moved and stored in a wooden barn behind the second house.

As time passed, Jake died in 1935 and his wife followed in 1938. Harvey died in 1974 and everything in the barn lay undisturbed from the early 1920s until the properties were sold in 1985. Mrs. Vaughn sold the contents of the barn to Marcus Malone, a local repair man, for some money and the refinishing of several pieces of old, old furniture that she has in her home. Mr. Malone cleaned out the barn and sold the contents (tin bench and tools) at the farm sale which was held by his daughter.

The original purchaser of the tools from Roys and Wilcox or an agent seems still to elude us. By referring to the broadside, however, the Roys and Wilcox machines I have are readily identified and are described as "No 1 Improved Machines" with brass wheels, top plates, and boxes or bearings. They are numbered 1 through 7, the name being stamped into the brass bearing blocks. The machines are demountable from rotary stands that are placed in a cast iron bench plate with receiving openings. This plate is 14" deep and 4 feet long.

The final home for these tools, while I am here, is in an old 12 x 32 standing seam roofed garage. I have insulated it, lined it with horozontal rough sawn 12 inch pine boards, and white washed the interior. The floor is 2" x 9" planks sawn from old treated telephone poles.

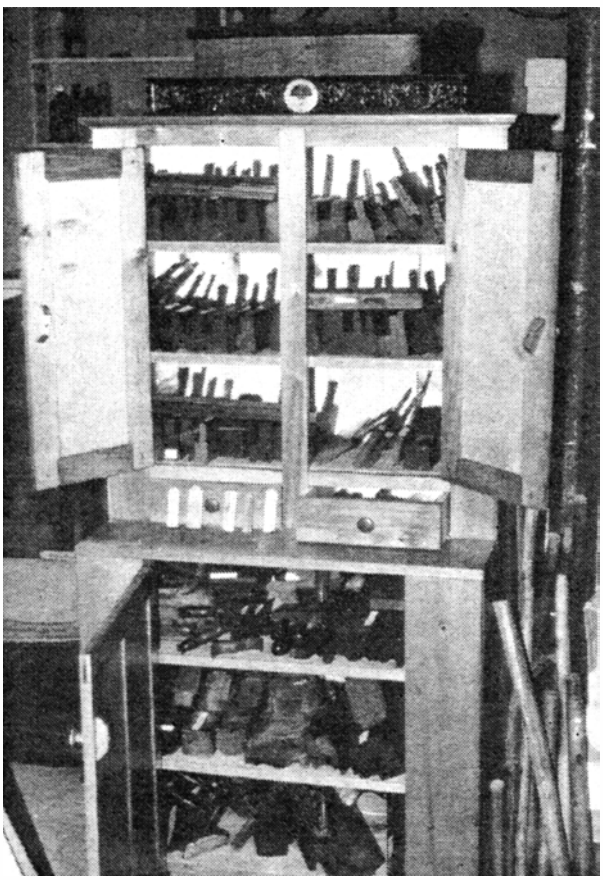
I have acquired several very old smith shop benches, a library of pre-1900 catalogs and texts, along with many other old and marked tools and machines. Other accesories are three tapered-blade squares and a dozen dividers and compasses, all of the period and maker marked. This completes the period shop replicating until another true tool comes along.

Displaying Tools

A Step Chest for Planes

by Karl West

Most of my tools are displayed on a row of shelves with a large piece of pegboard attached to the wall over the shelves. I keep hanging tool after tool on the same board. They talk about the Big Bang Theory, well it is going to happen in my cellar someday! In addition, I have a special display of 18th century planes. I thought I would offer my idea for this display to Tool Shed readers.



People when seeing my tools often ask, "Do you ever use these tools?" Although I have built my cottage, built a field stone fireplace, and finished off the upstairs of an expandable cape, I used modern tools. I decided to use antique tools to make a step (or step back) chest to display my planes.

In making my chest I went all the way, except for hand-planed boards. The chest has panelled doors that have mortise and tenon joints at the corners held with wooden pegs. The edges of the door panels were planed down with a jack plane up against a fence to get raised panels. The panels are installed in slots and can move freely. I made a gauge to test the panel edges for thickness by cutting a slot in a piece of wood identical to the slots in the door frame. While planing the panels to fit the slot, my gauge was used to test the thickness of the edges so they would fit the slots in the door. Later I found, on page 204 of Salaman, that my gauge is called a mullet gauge. Then I said, "What the heck" and made two dovetailed drawers, with the front dovetails hidden. The drawer bottoms fit into slots in the drawer front and sides. I used old catches and knobs also.

The top of the chest is deep enough to hold 10 1/4" planes, and the bottom is about 20" deep. In the picture with the doors open you can see the planes displayed and labeled. These are all 18th Century American planes. A few ivory rules are shown in front of the drawers. I hope the idea of a step chest for planes will be helpful.

A New Tool Room

by Edgar O'Quinn

I've been searching for information on displaying tools for the past 3 years, but I've come up empty. Therefore the Tool Shed articles have given me a much needed fix.

I collect old and unusual tools, with my main interest in woodworking tools. I have had them displayed in a 2-car garage, long ago converted to a work shop. Dust has been my worst enemy. It has bothered me to see fine old tools covered with an inch of sawdust.

Recently I have enclosed a patio on the back of my house for displaying my tools, with the permission of my wife, of course! The room is 20 by 32, and I have included lots of shelves and open wall space. However, I can see already that I don't have enough of either. Your sliding panels show there is hope for getting maximum display space in a given area, and have given me something to mull over.

I'd like to share a couple of my ideas, and when my room is completed, I'll send some pictures for Tool Shed readers. For my wall display, I've sheeted the walls with 1/2" plywood and, using spray adhesive, covered the plywood with burlap. For hangers I'm using old wood thread spools. I've been buying all I can find for several years at flea markets, yard sales and estate sales. I must have a bushel of assorted sizes. I plan to attach the spools to the wall with round head wood screws with the heads painted to match the burlap.

I've found the spools work well for hanging saws, hammers, hatchets, drawknives, levels, etc. Two of them spaced close together will let you drop lots of other-shaped tools in between. There's no problem of tools slipping off because of the ridge at the end of the spools

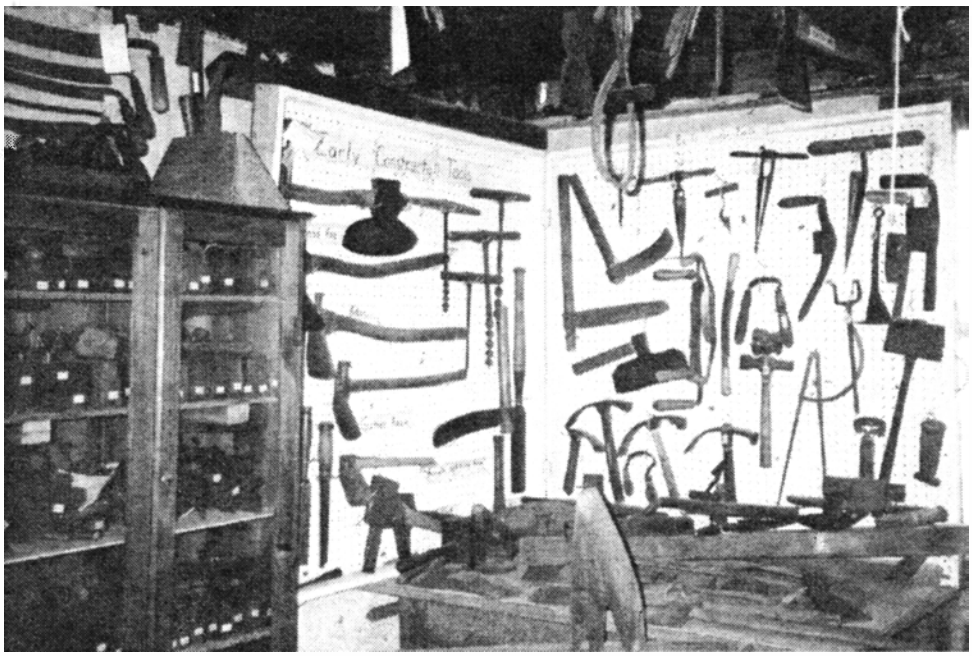
Another idea is to use flat wood clothespins for hanging saws, knives, and other flat-bladed tools. Sometimes these need a pegboard spacer or small spool placed behind them to hold the clothespins out from the wall to accomodate handles, etc. I drill holes in the clothespins below the slot for attaching them to the wall. Again, I paint the screw heads to match. I paint about a hundred at a time by inserting them in styrofoam and spraying them.

If any readers know of books, articles, or other information on displaying tools that they can share with me I would appreciate it. P.O. Box 531, Tazewell, VA 24651

Portable Display Case
by Barret Dalrymple

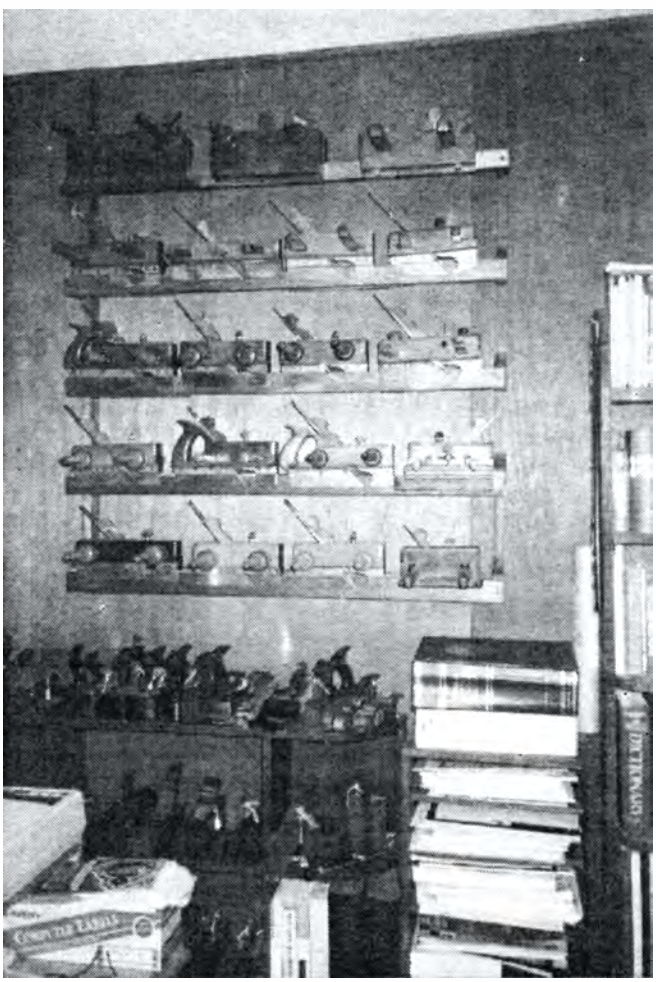
I've been interested in the articles in the Tool Shed about displaying tools. I have been planning to make several pegboard panels hinged to the wall that would open up for viewing on both sides and then fold back out of the way, but I like your sliding panels too.

Enclosed is a photo of a portable display case that I made several years ago to take to a show. It is hinged in the middle and folds up for transport. When opened up it is free standing on a table. At the present time it is being used in a corner of my tool room as a permanent display.



Mounting Plow Planes On A Wall
by Jack Whelan

I solved the question of how to mount some plow planes on the wall of my study as shown in the accompanying photograph. The rack is made of 1 x 2 (full) hardwood slats mounted 4" away from the wall. Plow planes sit with the skate and fence straddling the slats.



Ed: Karl West is a Massachusetts collector who is a fixture at the Crane auctions in Nashua. He's very interested in primitives and has written several articles for the Chronicle. We welcome Edgar O'Quinn of Tazewell, Virginia to the Tool Shed. Anyone who paints screws by the hundred has to be taken seriously. Barret Dalrymple is a Tool Shed author, having written on ice harvesting tools. Jack Whelan who has every type of fenced wooden plane known to man is the author of The Wooden Plane, and our President.

Antique Tool Discovery Day at the Mercer Museum

Several members of EAIA and CRAFTS participated in this annual November event at the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. The Mercer also holds a *Folk Fest* each May, but that deals with crafts and products and not tools.

The Museum itself is a great treasure. Curator of Collections, Cory Amsler, has developed this special day from a "whatsits" program to a much more diversified program that reaches out to tool collectors to showcase their collections and to act as experts to answer the questions of museum visitors. And, he has more plans for the future.

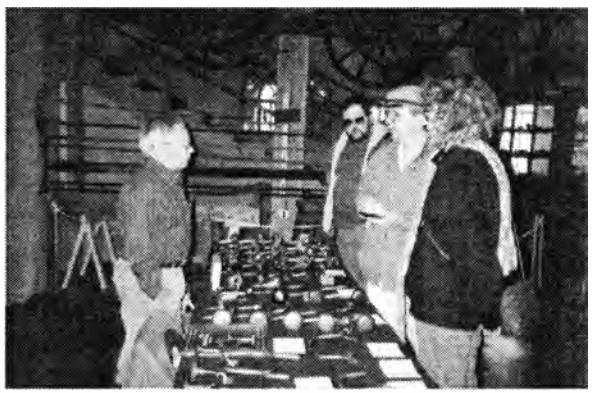
There were perhaps 20 tables displaying a wide range of tools for visitors to view. Many visitors brought tools to be identified, and discussions were lively. Spreading the knowledge of antique tools to the general public is an objective of the EAIA and CRAFTS organizations, and a service to all current collectors. I'm sure we'll have several new CRAFTS members as a result of our efforts.

A demonstration of coopering captured visitors' attention, and the cooper, Herb Kean, was surrounded most of the day. It was really neat to see him helping kids to shape a new barrel stave over his long jointer. Certainly the kids will never forget.

At the end of the day, participants were invited to put on white gloves and browse through the tool storage rooms. I was able to recognize and examine several tools that had been pictured in Henry Mercer's book Ancient Carpenters' Tools, and then to browse through endless old tools.

The photos taken by my friend Charlie Flynn are of the displays at the Mercer. I hope you enjoy them. In closing, if you haven't been to the Mercer, or visited the Spruance Library there, which houses the EAIA Library, plan to visit soon. ..... Hank Allen

Mercer Museum Curator Cory Amsler and EAIA Librarian Phil Rodel with Phil's housewright's tools.



Hank Allen with American patented braces.

Remembrances of Emil Pollak by David Englund

My first memory of meeting Emil Pollak was at the 1982 EAIA meeting at Shelbourne, Vermont. As we sat on the paddle-wheeler Ticonderoga, Emil told me that his book, A Guide to American Wooden Planes and their Makers, would soon be completed. I thought to myself, "Oh sure, how many times have I heard this before?" Lo-and-behold, it soon was published and I learned to separate Emil as a "doer" from all the "talkers" of this world.

I found him to be the type of leader who most often worked "behind-the-scenes", however back in 1984 when the EAIA had developed some financial problems, Emil surfaced to become the Financial Chairman and he turned the situation around. He understood "turn-around", and knew what had to be done to accomplish it; and unlike many people, Emil did not fade when the job got unpleasant. Then, like the typical entrepreneur, he backed out of the limelight and let others take over the policies he had set up. Emil never took responsibility lightly - if he agreed to serve on a committee, then he expected significant results and worked very hard to achieve them.

Oddly enough, I learned Emil did not like to compete with his friends. He had been buying Nicholson/Chelor planes at auctions, but when I started buying them, Emil chose not to outbid me, although he easily had the financial strength to do so. It took me a long time to realize that this part of his character had something to do with how he gained respect from others - part of what made him a leader.

Emil was never content to retire as he enjoyed the challenge of work, and once he started **The Astragal Press** he became quite a promoter. He was extremely well organized and had clear-set goals; he used to tell me how many titles they were going to add to their booklist that year.

I always had a great time around Emil. He challenged me with his sharp wit to be more alert and to try to keep up with him. One thing Emil never did was to put on airs. He would always take time to listen, and he enjoyed helping people with his advice. He was not afraid to speak his mind if he didn't like the way something was going, but most often he chose to find the humor in a situation; he just loved to kid around with people.

Somehow we got into the habit of going to Merrimack, NH where we went to the Lobster Boat Restaurant and consumed enormous amounts of steamed lobster. Emil sometimes would break apart the shell so that it sprayed lobster juice onto the person sitting across the table. When Frank happened to be in the line of fire, he gave Emil a look of disgust that I'll never forget. I thought I'd never stop laughing! There really wasn't much Frank could do about it because Emil was his boss.

My wife and I joined the Pollaks and others on the first EAIA tour to England, and one of the planned events of the tour was to attend the David Stanley Auction in London. Nearby was a small restaurant I knew about, so we invited Emil and Marty to join us there for dinner. I didn't tell Emil I had eaten there several times before and expected to use my knowledge of the menu to impress him with my great ordering skills. However, Emil began discussing the finer points of the various menu items with the waiter, and ordered a better meal then I did - his very first time there. That one got to me!

I had hoped to see Emil Pollak on my recent trip to the Brown Auction, but Sunday evening Frank called with the bad news that Emil had died that day. It's hard for me to realize that he's really gone and I'm without my good friend.

Hidden Simplicity

There are times when the complexity of a situation reaches a point where it appears as if only a genius or a space-age computer could handle it. It is times like these when I have felt that perhaps the brain of mere man, by itself, is not enough to function in our high-tech world. But something always drags me back in time to point out how yesterday's "mere man" was able to solve problems that today's sophisticated intelligentsia find formidable: **sailing ships, pyramids, Stonehenge, and** the like. Some of these techniques still impress our scientists. How did they do it centuries ago?

Most of the answers are known, or speculated at, and most make good sense. But every now and then, something comes along that piques our curiosity, sometimes to the point of embarrassment. We wonder how anyone without our elaborate education and equipment could do the things that they did. An example, although never thought of as anything except a common utilitarian item, is the **barrel.**

The concept of the barrel can be seen in drawings as far back as the Egyptians. With their intelligence it is easy to understand how they progressed from hollowed-out tree sections to staves forced together with wooden hoops. However, these vessels were only tapered tubs and buckets and did not incorporate the "belly" of the later Roman barrels.

The purpose of the belly is obvious to anyone who has ever rolled a barrel. A bellied barrel can be easily rolled and turned due to the small surface area contacting the ground. It does away with the conical bucket-type vessel that doesn't roll in a straight line. There are other advantages: additional strength provided by the arch affect, the ability to drive the hoops from both ends (a perfect cylinder without a belly would not allow the hoops to be driven), and the ease of tilting the barrel upright from its horizontal position.

But nothing is more puzzling than how this belly was accomplished, keeping in mind the two main criteria of a "wet" barrel: 1) it must not leak, and 2) it must hold a rather exact amount of liquid.

The skill of preventing the barrel from leaking requires an explanation that must be reserved for a more lengthy article. As such, this technique will be postponed to another time. The subject of this article is: how could men without any education (many could not even sign their names) and without power tools of any kind, maintain an almost unbelievable accuracy relating to the volume of the barrel.

Kenneth Kilby, in his book **The Cooper and His Trade,** describes a simple tool that he calls diagonals. Most are merely two pointed sticks bolted together at their ends so as to pivot. They look exactly like a pair of primitive dividers, see Fig.1. But this is where the similarity ends. The tool (it is really a gauge) is placed in the already formed barrel that has its bottom in place, see Fig.2. One tip is placed at the junction of the stave and the bottom, the pivot joint is rested against the belly, and the remaining tip indicates the level where the groove for the lid should be cut.

Using the diagonals as a guide, an experienced cooper can adjust the position of the top croze groove in order to yield the capacity required, (within allowable limits). And it can be proven with some calculus, geometry and computer work. The downside is that it is necessary to have a diagonal for each size barrel. Although I'm only guessing, I'd say that the Master Cooper made his set of diagonals using finished barrels that were already checked for capacity. Kind of a backward approach, but nevertheless a perfectly

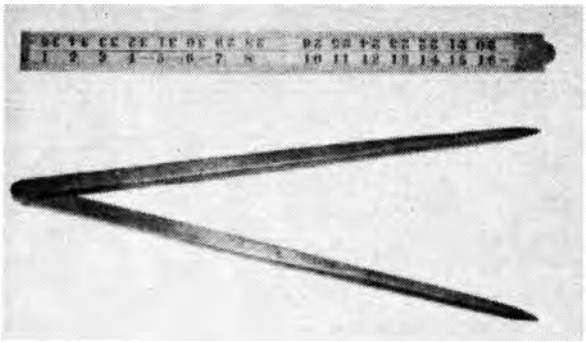


Figure 1. A Cooper's diagonals for a 14 gal. barrel.

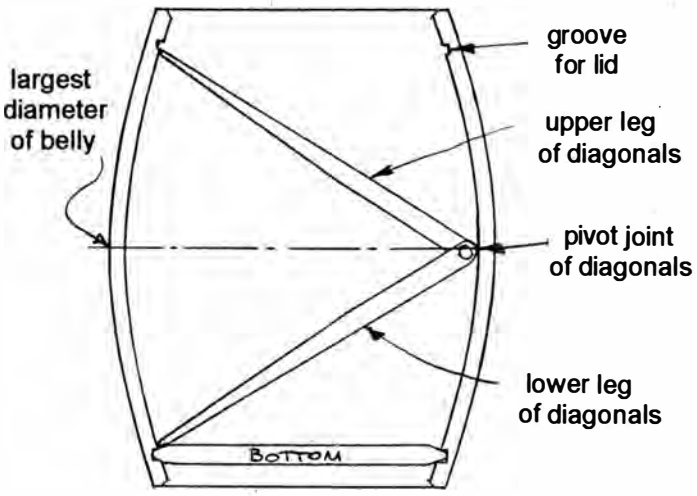


Figure 2. Cross-section of barrel showing diagonals in position.

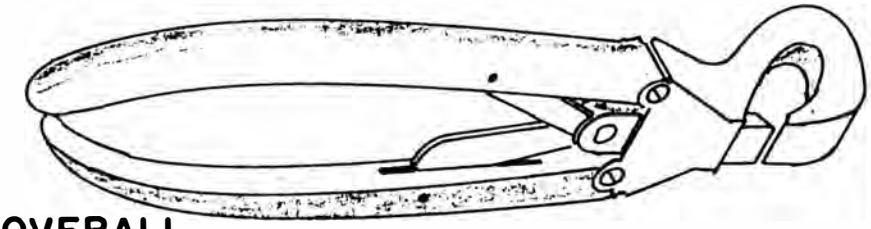
accurate way to do things. Trial-and-error is the antithesis of a calculated design, and although sometimes more time consuming, it is usually deadly accurate.

You will rarely see these diagonals for sale, most likely because of the ease of misinterpreting the wooden ones as worthless. (The English did have a few that were all metal). Such aids as templates and diagonals were probably used only by apprentices, and discarded when experience proved them unnecessary.

With a little study, it can easily be seen why this simple gauge works. If the barrel is bellied-out too much, the pivot joint of the gauge will touch lower in the barrel, and therefore the tip of the upper leg of the gauge will also touch lower. This gives a lower height to the "containing" portion of the barrel (the space between the bottom and the lid), and offsets the increase in diameter created by the oversized belly. If the belly was too "flat" (tending toward cylindrical) the opposite correction would occur. Overly simplistic? To prove it, spend a few days on the calculations or call a math professor at Stevens or MIT. (Jack Whelan did the math for me.)

I have mixed emotions about disclosing this rather simple trick for an otherwise mind-boggling operation. I feel information about tools should be disseminated if we are to have them elevated to their proper level. But if I keep doing this, I won't have any jaw-dropping stories left when I give my barrel-making demonstrations. On second thought,-- coopering has so many colorful and interesting vignettes of man's ability to conquer complexity with minimal equipment, that I don't think I will ever run out of these stories. *Herb Kean*

WILLY TELLUS WHATSIT



12 1/2" OVERALL
FROM AL HODGE

No. 25

Letters

Willy Tellus Whatsit No. 23 [*ToolShed*, June 1995, page 16]

[It] was used to make a wire hose clamp for industrial pneumatic hoses having wear-resistant fabric coverings. The hose clamp is made by using a piece of 12- to 14-gauge wire approximately 4 times the circumference of the hose, plus 5 inches. The 2 ends of the wire are held together, and the loop thus formed is then squeezed, making a U shaped loop with the bottom of the U approximately 1/2 inch wide. The wire loop is then wrapped twice around the hose with the 2 ends being brought under and through the loop. These 2 ends are then inserted into the 2 holes in the face of the tool. The wing nut and the U-shaped washer are then screwed down, clamping the wire to the body of the tool. The notched rod (tongue) is placed against the crossover portion of the U-shaped wire loop. This is held in position and the knob at the other end of the tool is turned, tightening the wire around the hose. After the wire is sufficiently tight, the tool is pushed around the hose, bending the wires over the crossover section. The tension on the wire is released and the wire is cut approximately 1/2 inch from the bend. These wire ends are hammered down, and clamp is complete. I have a tool similar to his which was made by the Cleveland Pneumatic Tool Co., Cleveland, O, USA, Pat'd Feb 21, 1905 Patents Pending. Maurice Maltby, Yardley, PA

Don't Bodder Me [*ToolShed*, November 1995, page 9]

That is not a bee on the right hand side of the hand- standing man etched into the saw blade pictured on page 9 of the September Tool Shed. It is a fly! The etching probably represents the Pennsylvania Dutch song "Shoo Fly Don't Bother Me" which was sung by men in the military as "Shoe fly don't bother me, I belong to Company B." Alex Farnham, Stockton, NJ

I mentioned this to my wife who is a trained voice musician. She recalls singing the "Shoo fly! Don't bother me!" song in the 1940s or so. It is surely of German origin - probably popular in Pennsylvania. We're both from Milwaukee - also a high population of German families! So, it probably is a take off from the "popular" ditty (popular to some). Tho I must admit that when she sang it for me, it was eerily familiar! Had I heard it as a kid too? Maybe. Anyway, it annihilates the "maker" being hidden in the logo mark. I do feel the saw was made to appeal to Pennsylvania Dutch or German ethnic groups by the unknown maker. Erv Schaffer

Kean Kuttins [*ToolShed*, November 1995, page 11]

Herb Kean's fun article about the Walter H. Kyte plane brought back memories which may or may not apply to this device. The pictures and description of this tool reminded me strongly of something I had used once or twice about 50 years ago for scraping down the maple cutting block in a butcher shop. Every day the butcher block was cleaned up by first washing with hot soapy water and then scraping with a type of wire brush whose teeth were narrow strips of spring steel. But about once a month we used a tool like the Kyte plane to actually remove a little of the maple end-grain wood and create a "fresh" surface. The removable "cutters" could be washed afterwards. If I am right, it is a woodworking tool not used by woodworkers.

Jim Packham, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
The Tool Group of Canada

Auction Schedule

January 27, Commonwealth Fire Company, York, Pennsylvania, Barry Hurchalla's auction followed by the M-WTCA Area P meeting on **January 28**. Call Barry 610-323-0333.

February 24, Holiday Inn, Nashua, N.H., Your Country Auctioneer's Cabin Fever Auction. Call Lee Murray for information 603-456-3705.

February 24 and **March 23**, Gablesville AC, Boyertown, Pennsylvania, Barry Hurchalla's regular monthly auctions. Call Barry 610-323-0333 to get on his mailing list.

March 8-9, Indianapolis, Indiana, Tom Witte's Spring Tool Show & Auction. Call Tom 616-668-4161.

March 30, England. David Stanley's 27th International Catalog Auction. Call Mechanick's Workbench for a catalog 508-748-1680.

Notice

M-WTCA Area L, Rocky Mountain and Southwest Tool Collectors 5th Biennial Joint Meeting with the P.A.S.T. Tool Collectors as co-host in Albuquerque August 29-31, 1996. For information contact Bill McDougall 505-344-9272.

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

HARNESS & SADDLE MAKING Tools and Catalogues. Larry J. Bolhuis, 702 Howard St., Aplington, IA 50604-1044 319 347-2753

Excellent condition, carpentry and plumbing antique tools. Planes, wrenches, wood & steel bar clamps, woodworking vise, various unusual items. Al Conrad, Rockaway, NJ 201 625-8508

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

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

For Sale

Large selection of quality tools. PLANES: Ivory tipped R/W Plow, Crown, Molders, Stanley. Goosewing AXES, Bowl ADZES, Cooper's Tools, Hand Forged Tools, etc. Send $1 for list to: Cliff Yaun, 51 Nissen Lane, West Hurley, NY 12491 914 679-9206