The TOOL SHED

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SPOKESHAVES AND SIMILAR TOOLS

by Thomas Lamond

On numerous occasions I have found myself in a conversation where others have discovered that I am a collector. They may also be collectors and many willingly share the area in which they have an interest. Perhaps you've found yourself in a similar situation; the conversation gets to the point where someone asks, "What do you collect?" My reply includes some reference to "old tools."

After clarifying old tools as woodworking, leather working, and measuring tools, the conversation may lead to the use of the word *spokeshave* which, more often than not, results in the question, "What's a spokeshave?" My usual reply is a definition such as:

> "A spokeshave is a tool that consists of a cutter, or blade, mounted between, and in line with, two handles. It has a small bottom so the cut can be regulated or controlled. Most spokeshaves can be either pulled or pushed and many are, or were, used for shaving wood."

Of course there are exceptions to that definition, but I have found that many tool-orientated individuals really haven't taken much time to really think about spokeshaves and the tools that are similar to spokeshaves. I would like to take this opportunity to share some information that may cause the reader to realize the diversification and scope of a tool category that many may have overlooked.

One may find it interesting to know what the name *spokeshave* actually refers to. Although a spokeshave was, and still can be, used to fashion spokes for wheels, rungs for ladders, and the like, such a task is far more efficiently accomplished with a lathe. The early wheelwrights who made spokes undoubtedly used such a tool, but the name actually evolved from the shoe trades.

Leather shoes are *built* around a wooden form called a *last*. Each last has to be shaped like a foot and, like feet, two are required to make a pair. Lasts were used to fashion the shoes by wrapping the leather around them. In the course of doing so, the lasts were subjected to hammering and pounding, as the damp leather was molded around the form prior to being sewn. The last had to be made to withstand the repeated pounding so the wood used had to fit certain specifications. The wood had to be hard, free of defects, and capable of being made very smooth. The grain had to be running in the correct direction to reduce failure and breakage.

Tom Lamond with part of his collection.

In order to meet the requirements, hardwood logs were selected, usually beech in Europe and maple in America. The logs were sawn to length and split into wedges. Those wedges were called "spokes."

(continued on page 4)

November 9 - CRAFTS Meeting
High Bridge, NJ, Masonic Lodge

Spokeshaves
Program by Tom Lamond (see page 2)

☞ program starts at 1 p.m. ☜

CRAFTS of New Jersey

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of New Jersey

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The purpose of CRAFTS of New Jersey is to encourage interest in early trades and industries, and in the identification, study, preservation and exhibition of tools and implements used and made in New Jersey as an integral part of our heritage.

Membership in CRAFTS is open to anyone who shares the above interests. Annual dues per person or couple are twelve dollars for the membership year of July 1 through June 30. Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer: John Whelan, 38 Colony Court, Murray Hill, NJ 07974 (write check payable to Crafts of New Jersey).

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 12 P.M.; meeting starts at 1 P.M.

The TOOL SHED
Published five times a year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Managing Editor: Hank Allen, 524 Harristown Rd, Glen Rock, NJ 07452. Production editor: Stuart Shippey, 251 Hillside Ave., Chatham, NJ 07928-1732. Articles, especially about early tools and trades, are encouraged and may be sent to the Managing Editor. Please send legible hand-written or typed text, or a PC disk with *Word Perfect*®, *MS-Word*® or ascii file, FAX to 973 301-9781 or e-mail to sshippey@asco.com.

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CRAFTS Calendar of Events

Nov. 9, 1997 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

Nov. 30, 1997 - *ToolShed* (Feb. issue) free ad deadline.

Feb. 8, 1998 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

Jan. 31, 1998 - *ToolShed* (Apr. issue) free ad deadline.

Apr. 4, 1998 - CRAFTS auction, Flemington, N.J.

Speaker's Profile - Tom Lamond

Our speaker for November 9 will be Tom Lamond, author of this issue's feature article on spokeshaves and author of a new book: *Manufactured and Patented Spokeshaves & Similar Tools*. He is a recognized authority on spokeshaves, a skilled woodworker, and regular speaker for a variety of audiences. His presentation for CRAFTS will include a general overview of spokeshaves and some practical advice on how to use them.

After working as a carpenter and contractor, Tom returned to school where he earned BA and MA degrees in Education from CCNY and a PhD in Education Administration from LIU. He taught Industrial Arts in New York public schools for 30 years. For most of this time he was also adjunct assistant professor at CCNY, where his area of expertise was woodworking and design.

Tom has written numerous articles for *The Gristmill*, *The Stanley Tool Collector News*, *Plane Talk*, and Clarence Blanchard's *Fine Tool Journal*. He is a past director of Mid-West Tool Collectors and a member of several other tool organizations.

His collecting began in the early 1960s with tools of the woodworker and related occupations. But spokeshaves and related tools became his specialty, and he has collected over 1500 examples in this category. As part of his research he has observed and studied considerably more and has logged over 250,000 miles in his quest for information.

Tom's book is 452 pages in hard cover with about 400 photos of over 700 tools. There are 16 fantastic pages in color. But wait, we'll have a review by Roger Smith in an upcoming issue. You'll find information and ordering details elsewhere in this issue.

*** * * NOTICE * * ***

NEW MEETING TIME - 1 PM

CRAFTS Directors have approved a new starting time for the formal portion of our meetings. Beginning on Nov. 9, we will start at 1 PM rather than at the old time of 2 PM.

Museum Reopens

The **Museum of Early Trades and Crafts** on Main Street in Madison reopened on October 4 after a $1 million restoration. Regular hours are 10 AM to 4 PM Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 5 PM on Sunday. Admission is $2 for children 6 to 17, students, and seniors, and $3.50 for other adults. To receive a calendar of museum events call 973 377-2982.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The CRAFTS annual picnic typically signals the end of the summer for tool collectors. We can now look forward to fall colors, cooler weather, and some great auctions, including the Brown International Auction and Dealer Show in Harrisburg, PA (see page 12).

Once again we had great weather and a fine dealer turnout for the picnic. A big thank you to Ken Vliet (and family) for another well-run event. Thanks also to Anna Rikita and Richard Burton for their prizewinning displays. Contest winners were: Bob Fridlington for ugliest tool, a manure hook; Charlie Hildebrandt for make-do tool, an axe with a plow handle; Don Wallace for most unusual, a calf weaner; and Dominic Micalizzi for most beautiful tool, an adjustable compass plane with figured maple body.

Fall is also a great time to review your collection to identify some winter projects, or to locate some unusual or quality items for our auction in April. That's right, the auction "wheels" start turning this early! Greg Welsh, our new auction manager, will have the consignor forms available at the November meeting. If you're not at the meeting and need a form, send a SASE to Greg at 3 Dinnerpot Rd, Califon, NJ 07830.

Getting back to the collection review, most of us have some difficult or time-consuming restoration or cleaning projects hidden away: items that seemed like such a good buy at the time, or maybe you were having a dry spell and bought it in desperation. Well now is the time to make a decision, lay out a plan including major steps, give yourself some target dates, and get going. On the other hand, maybe you aren't going to keep a tool after you restore it; that can be a demotivator especially when you start to figure out how much time it will take. There is an answer. I have consigned a number of these "projects" to various auctions over the last two years and have been surprised by the results. An important requirement is that the object must be unusual or highly desirable. About two years ago a homemade adjustable compass plane made of figured maple sold at the CRAFTS auction. The plane needed work and was still covered in "original dirt." At the picnic it won the most beautiful tool prize.

In closing, I'd like to advise you that CRAFTS begins its 21st year in 1998 and that the February *ToolShed* will be our 100th issue. Welcome to new members: Wayne & Lorraine Card, Wantage; Douglas Corlette, Princeton; Mark DeVito, Milmont Park, PA; Michael Elky, Upper Black Eddy, PA; Bob Finnegan, East Hartford, CT; John & Jean Fredmund, Wilkes-Barre, PA; James Galvin, Edison; Henry & Rose Marie Geisenhoner, Flemington; Kevin & Elyse Halloran, Somerset; Ezra Herman, New York, NY; Ken March, Thomasville, PA; Anthony Pillagalli, West Chester, PA; Mark Poland, Butler; Stephen Sedor, Sargeantsville; Anthony Seo, Palmerton, PA; and Tom & Darlene Thornton, Parsippany. Joe

Meet Your Dealers
Phil Whitby

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

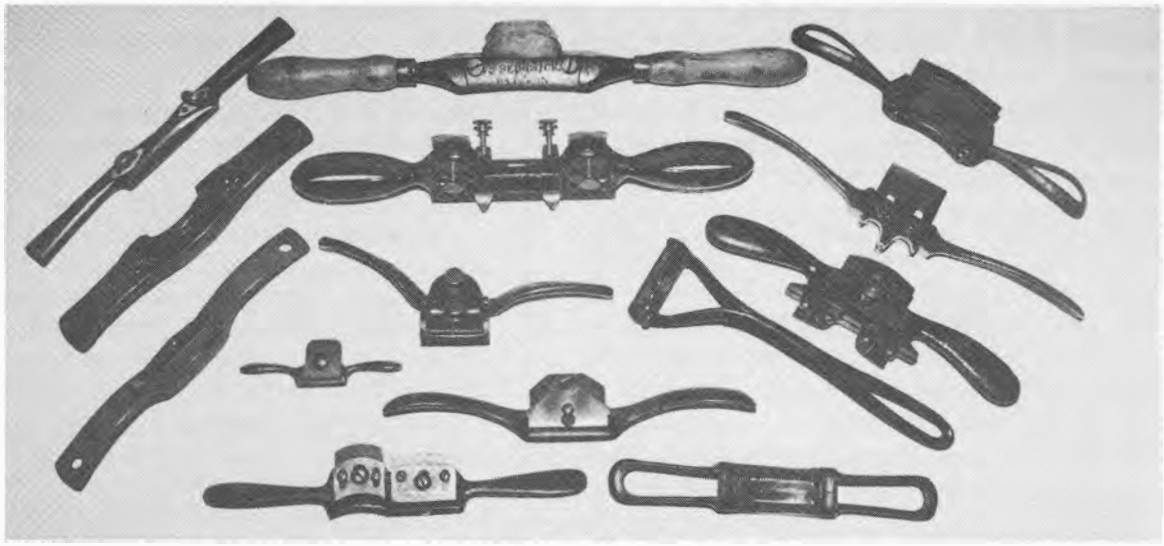
The proprietor of the new "New Boston Tool Room" at the intersection of Route 125 and New Boston Road in Kingston, New Hampshire, about 15 miles southwest of Portsmouth, is Phil Whitby. There you'll find a large selection of tools ready to take home. You can easily stop in before or after a trip to a Crane auction in Nashua.

Phil's annual path around the country is, perhaps, unique. In November, December, and March he's at home in Englewood, Colorado, a suberb of Denver. In January and February he's in Southern California and the Southwest, living in his motor home. From April through October he'll be at his second home, under construction, in New Hampshire and minding the "Tool Room." He's at all the major auctions and tool gatherings, including the CRAFTS auction and picnic. He trys to be in England at least once a year, primarily to acquire stock.

He's a native of Colorado and a graduate of the University of Southern Colorado. He taught Jr./Sr. high school industrial arts in Colorado for several years. Collecting tools started in his own high school days, and this love affair has never dampened. From teaching he started his own building and cabinetmaking business. That's when the tools really began to accumulate. Soon he was in the tool business. In 1985 tools were his full-time business, and his seasonal migrations from coast-to-coast began.

Phil deals mostly in Stanley tools and other manufactured and patented tools of the 19th and 20th century, primarily because of their importance in the Industrial Revolution. But Phil doesn't shun any category of tool, so don't be surprised to find 18th century wooden planes or primitive tools in his inventory. He also carries books, catalogs, and periodicals. In 1984 he started his triannual mail order catalog which features about 100 tools. He has co-sponsored two catalog auctions in the Midwest within the past few years, and will be selling at auction the collection of a prominent Midwest collector in May of 1998 in LaPorte, Indiana. Write or call for details of his catalog or this important auction. Phil is upbeat about the future of tools. He's confident that prices will continue to increase on the rarer and top-of-the-line tools. While we hear that tools are now only being recirculated, Phil sees fresh, good stuff coming from closets and barns. And, there are still occassional grass-roots finds available at flea markets and local sales. You can reach Phil at 303-795-5650 from November through March, and from April through October at 603-642-4054, which is also the number of the New Boston Tool Room. You can reach him by mail at P.O. 1003, Kingston, NH 03848.

SPOKESHAVES AND SIMILAR TOOLS (continued from page 1)



Some examples of tools falling within the category of spokeshaves and similar tools.

The rough shaping of the spoke was done with an axe or hatchet. The resulting rough form was then refined to a large degree with a bench knife or stock knife. These knives were hooked to a bench at one end and manipulated via a T-handle at the other.

The arrangement provided for considerable leverage but not as much control for precise refinement as required. Additional shaping of the spokes involved the process of shaving with a tool that ultimately became known as a "spoke shave." If the lastmaker was proficient with a spokeshave he could reduce the amount of the final refinement that was done with a rasp, scraper, and, in later years, glass (abrasive) paper.

Depending on the use of the term, *spokeshave* has been written as either one or two words. The older usage more frequently involved two words. Contemporary use has resulted in a single word. Other names were also used for such tools. They included *shoe shave*, *heel shave*, and *edge shave*. These three terms are still usually presented as two words, but they can also be used as single words.

Eventually the association of spokeshaves with last-making became a thing of the past. This occurred around the 1870s to 1880s when lastmaking lathes became prevalent. Because spokeshaves were used for so many other things, their use had been adapted to many other applications. In many cases more specific names were used, but generally they did retain their general name. As time went on the portable electric router was introduced. That technology change impacted dramatically in the decline of the use of spokeshaves and similar tools.

Definitions distinguishing one type of shave from another serve to show the differences between the actual tools, but, quite possibly, the terminology may have been determined by the maker and/or the user. Patent titles also seem to bear this out:

> **spoke • shave**, *(spok)* n: a cutting or planing tool consisting of a blade with a handle at either end, usually in line with the blade, and a narrow sole in front of, and sometimes also behind, the cutting edge: used for shaping, trimming, and/or smoothing a variety of materials, usually wood or leather.
>
> **shoe • shave**, *(shoo) n*: a cutting tool similar to a spokeshave but used to shape leather for heels or fashion wood lasts on which shoes were formed.
>
> **heel • shave**, *(hel) n:* a cutting tool similar to a spokeshave but primarily used to shape the heel after the layers of leather have been fastened together.
>
> **edge • shave**, *(ej) n:* a cutting tool similar to a spokeshave but primarily used to trim the edge of a leather sole for a shoe or boot.

When considered collectively, shoe, heel, and edge shaves fall into the category that may be referred to as *similar tools*. That category is not limited to the shaves mentioned. It would be more complete when the list that follows is considered.

Many of the tools on the list are collectively called spokeshaves, but they may also be described more specifically as noted. Applicable trade titles can be added to some names.

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A Listing of Spokeshaves and Similar Tools

Sole Shaves	Rabbet Shaves
Shoe Shaves	Patternmakers' Shaves
Heel Shaves	Combination Shaves
Leather Shaves	Quirk Routers
Keg Shaves	Carriagemakers' Shaves
Coopers' Shaves	Car Builders' Shaves
Molding Shaves	Stair Railers' Shaves
Sash Shaves	Handrail Shaves
Beaders	Specialty Shaves
Reeders	Shave-like Scrapers
Panel Shaves	Pull Shaves & Box Scrapers

The last entry, pull shaves & box scrapers, really doesn't fit the definition considering they do not have handles in line with the cutters, but many were made by shavemakers. Many also function with a shaving process rather than a scraping process, and I feel it's acceptable to include them in the overall scope of similar tools.

It should be noted that the list does not include the *drawknife* nor does it include some other terms that are considered incorrect when describing spokeshaves. (ex.: draw shave, shaver)

Although some drawknives were actually patented as *spoke shaves*, and may even have been used to shape spokes into lasts, the lack of a bottom regulating surface excludes them from the general spokeshave definition. Drawknives, more appropriately, fall within their own category.

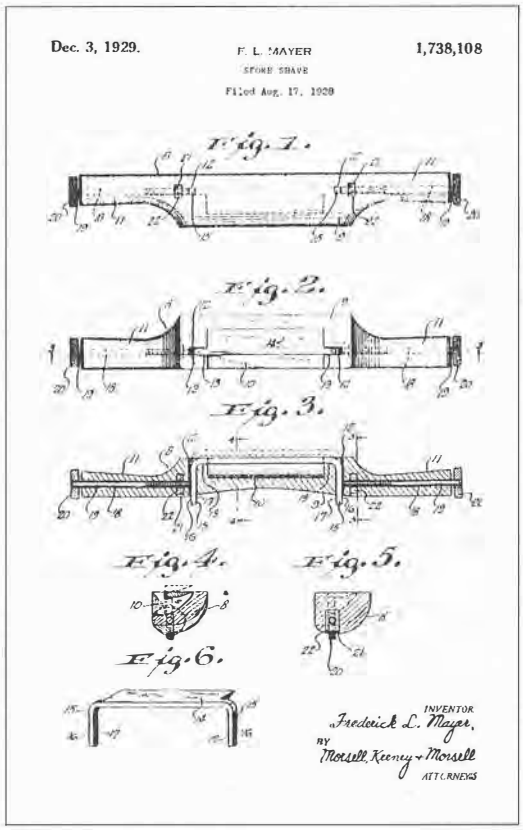
Historical references to the *spoke shave* actually don't date back very far. That may be because the term evolved from the lastmaking trades as the technology of shoe and boot making evolved. The earliest actual mention of the term may be found in what is now commonly called by an abbreviated name *Smith's Key* which was originally dated 1816. The full name of the publication is *Explanation or Key, to the Various Manufactories of Sheffield, with Engravings of each Article, Designed for the Utility of Merchants, Wholesale Ironmongers, and Travellers.*

Joseph Smith, the author of the "Key," included spokeshaves with the coopers' tools as well as the joiners' tools. In both lists he used the term *spokeshaves* (single word). In the "Coopers' Tools" section he uses the term *coopers' shave irons* to differentiate between spokeshave irons and those irons used in coopers' shaves. In the "Joiners' Tools" section he lists seven types of shaves: common, plated, screw iron, boxwood, boxwood w/screw iron, coopers', and coopers' inside. These listings strongly indicate that the spokeshave, in a number of recognizable versions, had achieved an identity as a specific category of tool by that time.

It should be remembered that the shaves listed were all wood-body shaves. The introduction of iron as a component of the body of shaves may have recently started by then, but not to an extent where it was mentioned along with the tools Smith included in his list.

The iron-body shave is believed to have been introduced in America sometime during the late 1820s or early 1830s. Quite possibly Hazard Knowles was instrumental in the introduction of such a shave, but as of this time that has not been substantiated by documentation or with any shaves so marked. The strongest evidence pointing to this conclusion are the spokeshaves representing the design and technological ideas Knowles introduced in his 1827 patent for an iron plane body.

The utilization of iron in the making of hand tool components seems to have greatly increased around the time Knowles introduced his iron-bodied plane but that didn't eliminate the development of wood-bodied tools, at least not for some time.



Copy of the graphics page from Patent No. 1,738,108 dated December 3, 1929. The focus of the invention was another solution to securing the cutter.

Spokeshaves with wood bodies, or wood stocks, continued to be developed for many decades after Knowles's ideas were introduced. One of the major problems encountered in shaves made of wood was the securing of the iron (cutter) and the subsequent adjusting of the thickness of cut. Numerous solutions for addressing both problems are evident in those wood-bodied shaves that have survived until today, yet the problem was still being addressed by inventors until after the turn of the century.

continued on page 6

Many of the solutions sought involved additional metal components along with the wood bodies. One of the last, if not the very last, true spokeshave patent that was issued addressed the problem of securing a tanged cutter quite similar to those used around the turn of the 18th century. The patentee, F. L. Mayer of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, patented a metal-bodied shave that included a tanged cutter. (See patent copy on page 5.)

At the same time prospective patentees were trying to improve wood-body shaves, the metal-body shave was evolving. Apparently many ideas specifically related to shaves were investigated. Some led to patents while still others just led to manufacturing variations. As of this writing, 127 patents have been identified that apply either directly or indirectly to spokeshaves. Some of those patents specifically mention spokeshaves or similar shaves. For others the association has been established by markings that were included on the tools. Some of these patents were for ideas and designs for planes which were also applicable to spokeshaves and visa versa.

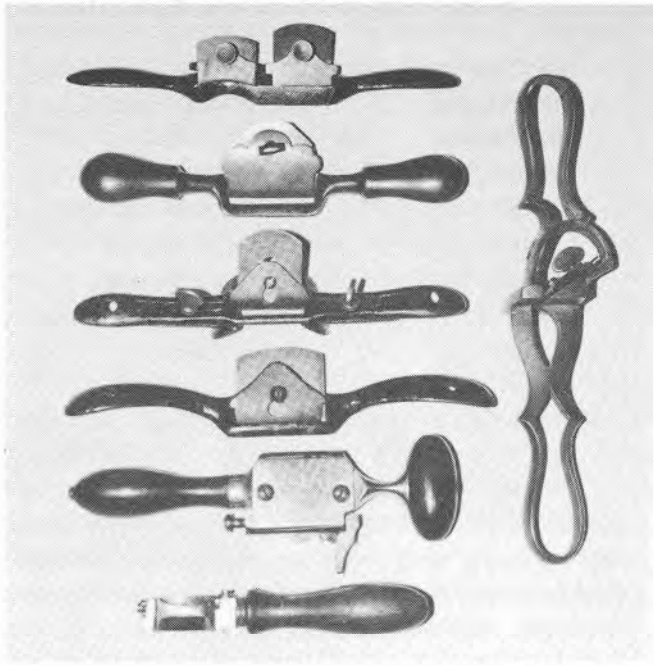
Some connections are somewhat nebulous and require a bit of detective work to determine such associations. One that comes to mind stemmed from a date that was included on an Elijah Holmes shave. The patent was issued for a vegetable slicer, but Holmes included the adjustment mechanism in a shave and protected himself by including the patent date on the thumbscrew.

The only other shave-related patents currently known to me are those that were issued in Great Britain. Surprisingly there are only seventeen such patents, nine of which were issued to Edward Preston or E. Preston & Sons. They fall within Class 61: Abridgement Class Hand Tools. Three others have been identified as British design patents, each of which was issued to E. Preston & Sons.

Although patents for spokeshaves that may have been granted by other countries are unknown to me, I wouldn't be surprised, if there are any, that they are in some way associated with those issued in the United States. This can be explained in two ways.

First, the patent regulations that prevailed in most countries, at the time spokeshave-related patents were being issued here, tended to be restrictive if a similar patent had already been published in another country. Communication access, being what it was at the time, restricted or prevented simultaneous filing. Patent review and issuance wasn't something that could be readily coordinated.

Of course this didn't seem to prevent many "Patent Agents" from charging patentees to process their patent ideas in other countries. It wouldn't surprise me to find that some of those agents were no more than con men who accepted fees knowing full well that any foreign patents would be disallowed.



Examples of spokeshaves and similar tools.

Top down: Mosher's patent double shave,
Holly's spokeshave with wraparound lugs,
Union No. 111 chamfer shave,
Sargent with marked cutter (made by S. Smith & Sons),
Kendall & Voss Windsor beader (early style),
Lothrop's "Patent Applied For" single-handed shoe shave.

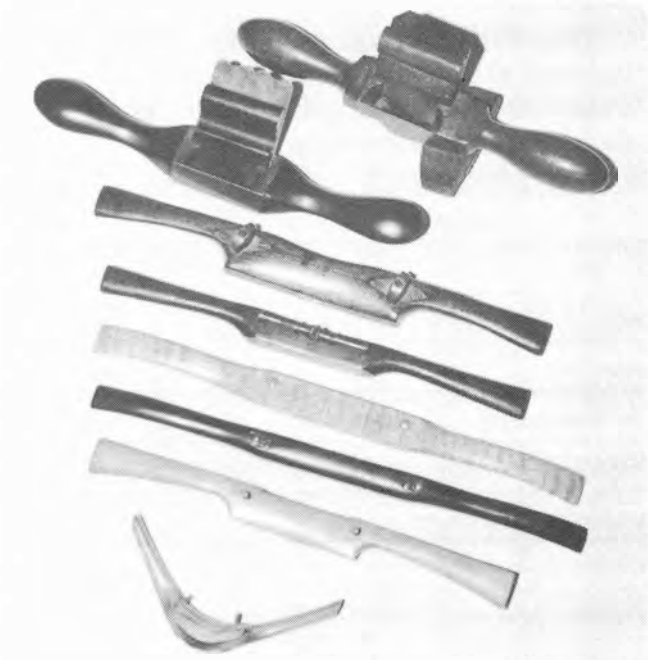
Right: Unmarked brass rabbet shave, vertical design.

The second explanation is related to where manufacturing technology was developing. The reinvention of cast steel by Benjamin Huntsman in England in the 1740s certainly had a significant impact on manufacturing and production technologies as well as edge tool technology. History notes that the Industrial Revolution started in England around 1760 and then spread to other areas, including the United States. By the later 1700s, industrial discoveries and advancements in the United States were progressing in their own right. One of the areas demonstrating significant growth was that of iron founding, which included the production of iron tools. It wasn't until around the 1840s that significant supplies of American-made cast steel became a reality, but by that time iron casting had advanced tremendously.

There is no question in my mind that the iron-bodied spokeshave and certain similar tools originated in the United States. By the 1880s the idea of the iron-bodied shave had been accepted by some English makers, notably Edward Preston. By the time they were bought out, E. Preston and E. Preston & Sons developed a number of new ideas in the realm of tools. Iron-bodied shaves, readers, routers, and similar tools represented a significant part of that development. *continued on page 7*

That is not to say E. Preston did not offer wood-body shaves. In their 1909 catalog they offered seven styles of wood-body shaves with cutters in a variety of sizes ranging from 1" to 5". Those variations numbered 45 in total. In the same catalog they offered 12 metal spokeshaves most of which were similar to the designs offered by Stanley. Eleven other metal spokeshaves were also offered that either were registered or included Preston's patent adjustment. Eleven more tools were offered that fell in the areas of reeding tools, routers, chamfer shaves, or rabbet shaves. Thirty-four more iron-body molding shaves were also offered. That adds up to 68 metal-bodied shaves or similar tools (considering size variations). Still another couple of dozen were offered at other times. Some had different adjustment features, some were smooth handled, and some were more closely related to later Stanley design versions.

To date I have identified in the vicinity of 183 American patentees and/or makers of spokeshaves and/or similar tools and approximately a dozen makers from other countries. I hesitate to put a number on the shaves and similar tools I have yet to be able to attribute to an individual or a specific manufacturer. Many of these will probably remain unidentified except that a good proportion were made by blacksmiths, patternmakers, or founders.



More examples of spokeshaves.
Top down: Beech and brass handrail shave,
Ebony and brass shave with wedged cutter,
C.S. Osborne adjustable rosewood shave,
Bauer's patent shave (made by H.F.Osborne & Co.),
Spear's patent shave (tiger maple),
Spear's patent shave (rosewood),
Mathieson / Glasgow (boxwood),
W. Maples & Son / Sheffield (boxwood).

Perhaps, in time, more information will become available that will reveal who made these types of tools, where the makers were located, and when they were productive. In the meantime I call your attention to my new book, *Manufactured and Patented Spokeshaves & Similar Tools ... Identification of the Artifacts and Profiles of the Patentees and Makers.*

The book is about shaves and similar tools and the men who made them. I have arranged the information for others to consult for their own purposes: identification, technology, history, etc.

As always, I invite readers' comments and input. I would certainly like to hear about additional information, updates and/or corrections, and shaves not included. Since the book went to the printer I have collected a number of artifacts that could have been included along with many new bits of information, and I continue to seek more. But it was necessary to draw a line or stop including material so the project could go forward.

In time I may well consider a supplement to the book. I still have many questions that are unanswered and know there are considerably more shaves still to be discovered. If you're so inclined, get in touch. Share a thought or a piece of information or ask a question.

Ed: Tom Lamond is also our speaker for the November meeting. You'll find his profile on Page 2. You'll also find information and ordering details for his new book elsewhere in this issue.

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Finding Old Tools in Your Den

by Steve Johnson

You may enjoy the thrill of the old tool hunt - driving for hours to some faraway antique shop, getting up at 3:00 AM to be first in line at the local estate sale, and hobnobbing with your fellow tool wizards at the regional meetings. All these experiences have a lot going for them, and they form the core of the antique tool hunting experience. But you might not be aware that you could still seek out old tools even while the car is in the shop - on the Internet.

The What?

The **Internet** is a system of telephone lines, ethernet cable, and other wire that ties together many (if not most) of the computers in the world. All this wire is collectively called the "information superhighway," because there's lots of it. You can take a spin on the superhighway by buying a computer, installing a modem (most new computers come with one these days), and signing up with an **internet service provider** (ISP). The ISP rents you (usually per month) a connection to the superhighway – an onramp, if you will.

So what kind of vehicle do you need to keep up out there? You need something called a **Web browser.** This is software you install on your computer that lets you enter a web address (sometimes called a URL) and see whatever information is at that address. In this strange new world, there are only essentially two cars on the highway - *Netscape Navigator®* and *Microsoft Internet Explorer®*. Either of these two web browsers will take you where you want to go, but having the most up-to-date model helps get the most out of your site visit. Some older browsers cannot display the information at a site in the manner that the author intended.

Once you're buckled in, there are several different kinds of internet experiences. You can:

1. Visit a Web Site to see what information/tools the author has there.
2. Visit an online auction house and see what tools are for sale.
3. Discuss (via email) the merits of some old tool with other diehard collectors.

Web Sites

To visit a web site, type the address into your web browser. There are some central sites like *The Electronic Neanderthal*

(http://almond.srv.cs.cmu.edu/~alf/en/en.html)

that have all sorts of woodworking information, or you could go direct to the well and try some of these resources (listed roughly in order of appearance on the net):

Dealer Name	Web Site Address
Jon Zimmers	http://www.teleport.com/~jonz/ad_index.htm
Falcon-Wood	http://www.oldtools.com/
Bob Kaune	http://www.olympus.net/bktools
Steve Johnson	http://www.tooltimer.com/Tools/tools.htm
Larry Poffenberger	http://www.concentric.net/~Rstytool/
Andrew Sexton	http://www.members.aol.com/jasexton/tools.htm
Chuck Zitur	http://www.mcn.net/~anchor
The Tool Shop	http://153.104.63.160/members.aol.com/toolshop/toolshop.exe?form=welcome&disp=8
For Love or Money	http://www.europa.com/~john/
Vintage Tool House	http://www.tooltimer.com/vintage/
Tools 'n Rules	http://www.toolsrules.com/
Mel Miller	http://www.tooltimer.com/melmiller/
Martin J. Donnelly Antique Tools	http://www.mjdtools.com/
Trinders' Fine Tools	http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/finetools/

There are others, but these dealers seem the most serious about dealing tools on the internet. Most have good return policies, so you can buy with confidence. Several also accept charge cards.

There are also several regional or national tool collecting organizations with web sites - the big two are the M-WTCA **(http://www.mwtca.oerg)** and the EAIA **(http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Old_tools/about.htm).**

Online Auctions

Some web sites operate round the clock web auctions. At these places, you look through lists of stuff for sale, some with pictures, and make bids using your web browser. Most items are open for bidding for about a week, then highest bidder takes it (unless there was a reserve). I have seen a few good deals here, but mostly you should be carefull - a lot of the sellers are not tool dealers and don't know what they are talking about, or are unfamiliar with grading systems, etc.

If you want to take the plunge, try

http://www2.ebay.com/aw/

with your browser. This is just one of the online auctions you can try. You can use your web browser to search for others. (Searching the internet for new sites is an acquired skill, but can be a lot of fun!)

Email Discussion Groups

There is only one email group that I know of specializing in old tools. This group operates an email list service, which essentially means that you can send a piece of email to the list and it will be distributed to everyone in the group to comment on. This group is a good place to ask questions, because you're usually guaranteed some kind of answer.

To subscribe to a group, send email to

listserv@listserv.law.cornell.edu

with the following line for the subject:

subscribe OLDTOOLS <your name>

With all this net browsing ahead of you, you should be able to add several "acquisition stories" to your arsenal. "There I was, down to 14.4 on my modem when I spotted a new link! Cautiously following it, I waited for the picture to download - was it, could it be, yes, it WAS an unrecognized type 1!"

Ed: Steve Johnson, who lives and works in Redwood, Oregon, is User Education Manager for Research at Microsoft Corp. The Internet is his specialty. A woodworking hobby and an interest in history led to an appreciation of old tools, and his collection. Here his specialty is metal planes, lathes, and treadle-powered woodworking tools. If you have internet questions or sites you think readers would want to know about, send them to the *ToolShed*.

DISPLAYING TOOLS

The Leatherworking Tools of Russell Bigelow

Browsing through back issues of the *Harness Shop News*, the publication of SHATA (Saddle, Harness, & Allied Trades Assn.), with Russell Bigelow I found a reference to him as, "...this country's premier authority on U.S. leatherworking tools." In another he was, "...one of the leading authorities on leather-working tools in the **world**, who contributed much of the information about American leatherworking tools found in Salaman's *Dictionary of Leather-working Tools*." I was with a heavyweight.

Russell was a Massachusetts meat cutter with a leather-working hobby, until he retired. Now he lives in New Hampshire, where the Bigelow Harness Shop is located about a mile east of Winchester on Route 119. He buys and sells leatherworking tools and equipment and is a prominent leatherworker. *Early American Life* has included him for the past two years in their list of America's top 200 craftsmen.

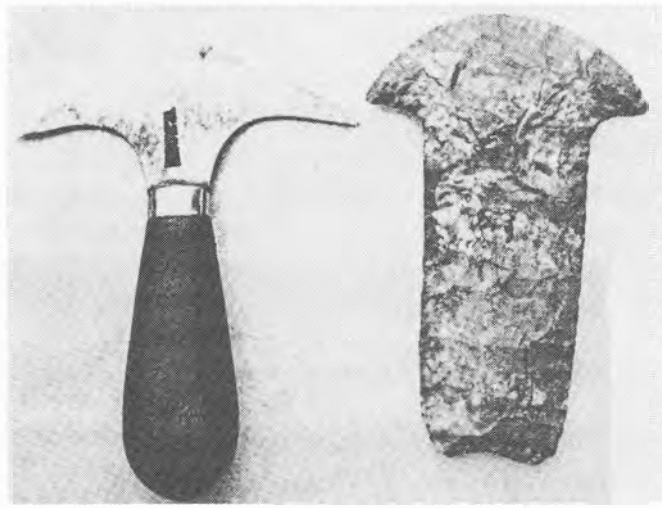


Photo 1.

The round knife is among the ten earliest tools made by early man, and it has not changed significantly over time. Russell wrote in the *Harness Shop News* about a primitive stone one in his collection that was found in Tennessee and dates to the Late Ice Age or early Woodland Period. It is pictured in Photo 1 with a relatively modern one. A rare New Jersey bridle-cutting knife with a probably unique shape is shown in Photo 2. It was made by D.S. English of Newark who died in 1849.

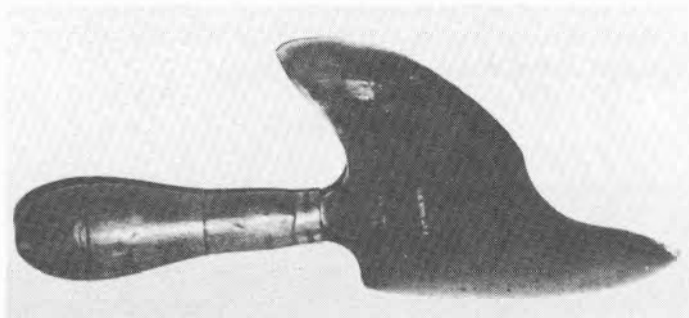


Photo 2.

Photo 3 shows a typical leatherworker's tool kit set up for display. Photos 4 and 5 show two wall displays from Russell's shop. Russell also takes his tools and examples of his work to crafts fairs and other outdoor events to exhibit his leatherworking tools and to demonstrate how leather is worked. Photo 6 shows his setup at one such event (unfortunately only his sunglasses are visible). In the background you can see several of Russell's handcrafted and handpainted leather firebuckets.

The history of the leatherworking trade has been preserved in very attractive labels that came with tools, on or in boxes, etc. These are collectibles in themselves. Russell is thinking about writing a book that will feature his extensive collection of these labels.

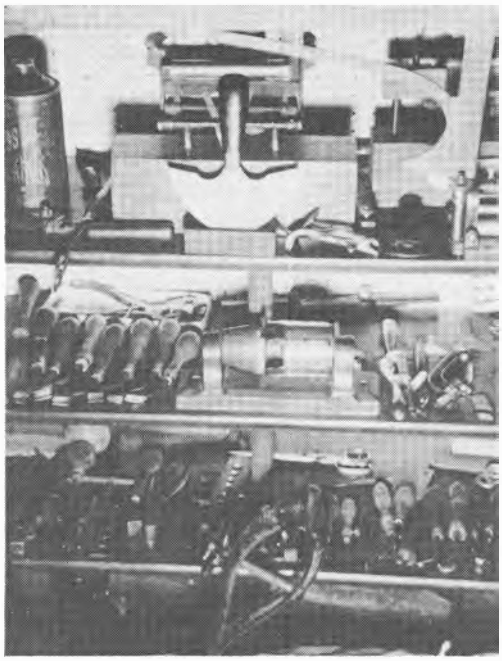


Photo 4.

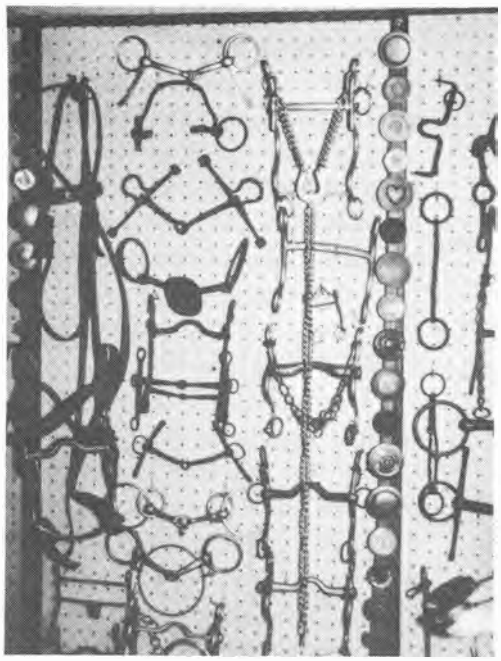


Photo 5.

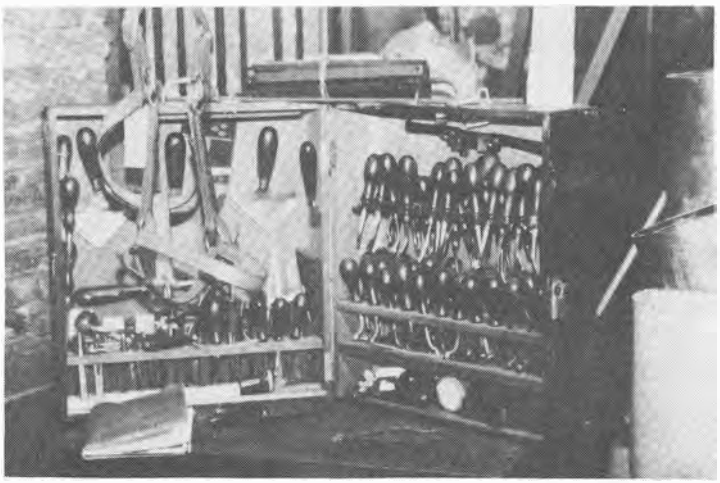
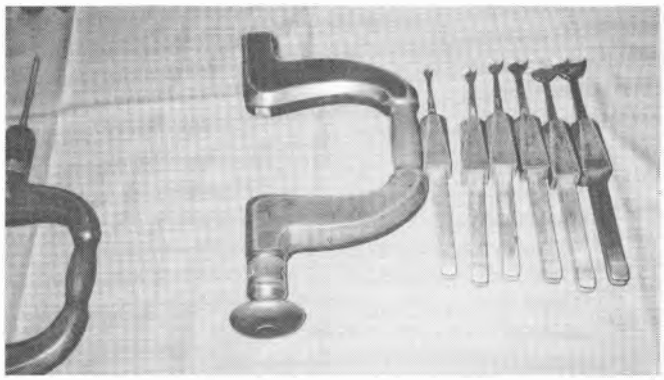


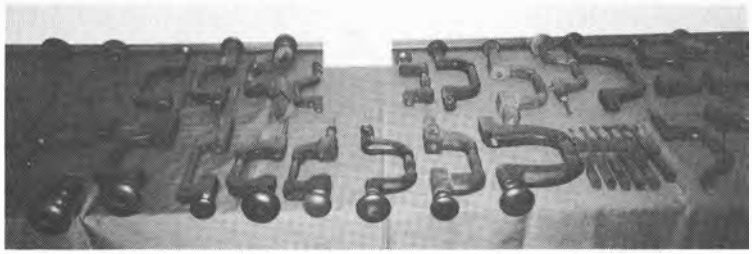
Photo 3.

Photo 6.

CRAFTS JUNE MEETING DISPLAYS

At our June meeting Chuck Granick and Herb Kean presented a display of over two dozen wooden braces. (For more on wooden braces, see Ron Pearson's article in the September 1996 *ToolShed*.) The closeup photo shows a remarkable American shipwright's brace in maple with a 14" swing, and six centerbit pads.





Kean Kuttin's

Better Late Than Never ?

Is it really better to be late than not to show up at all? Here are two cases from the standpoint of the tool collector, each taking an opposite point of view.

CASE 1:

You have every good intention of getting up at 4:30 to go to the flea market, but the partying the night before takes away some of your get-up-and-go. In fact there is very little get-up and no go at all - until 8:30.

However, when you arrive at the flea market you make a beeline straight to where your "secret" dealer always sets up. An appalling number of people surround his booth, and you tell yourself that they couldn't be tool buyers, not this late. You don't recognize any of the crowd and feel that there is still a chance, as this dealer sometimes sets up late and is missed by the swarm of earlybirds.

As you get closer, you can see a rosewood plow plane in the hands of a potential buyer. He is studying it as if his life depends upon this purchase. The tag is hanging from the wedge clearly showing the price to be $100! Good grief, what is he hesitating about? The plane is in superb condition, and the knot in your stomach gets larger when you hear the dealer say, "And there are a bunch of these here cutters that go with it."

"Well, yes but I've seen these planes go for a lot less than this," is the remark from the buyer.

"Yeah, but this one is in mint condition and it's got a name on it," is the dealer's response.

"Will you take $75?"

You're thinking, "Stand your ground, stand your ground, don't take the $75. I'm willing to give you the whole $100." But those words stay choked down. A more aggressive type may have blurted them out in desperation, but you feel this would be impolite and wouldn't want anyone doing that to you.

After what seems an hour of agonizing delay, the dealer finally says, "I got here late today and all the collectors have been through, so I might as well sell it to you for $75. I don't want to go home with it." CRASH, your heart falls to your stomach. If only you hadn't had that second cup of coffee, if you hadn't taken so much time finding a closer parking spot, if, if, if.

You snuggle up to the guy who bought the plane the minute he leaves the booth and is out of earshot. "Do you want to sell that plane? I'll give you a nice profit."

"Naw, I always wanted one of these to put on my desk. This one's kinda nice. I think I'll keep it."

"I'll give you twice what you paid for it!"

"Are you a collector or something? This plane must be worth more than I thought. Thanks anyhow."

After that you wander aimlessly around the market and return home empty-handed. But the incident, and your lousy luck, keeps replaying itself in your mind. Finally you say to yourself, "Why did I even go today? BETTER **NEVER**, THAN LATE."

CASE 2:

You have decided (for whatever reason) to invite your wife to go with you to the flea market on Sunday, and then have lunch somewhere in a nice country inn. Yes, you won't get started until 10:00 or so, but what the hay, this is going to be a day out with your loved one, not necessarily a tool-hunting day. (Y-e-a-h R-i-g-h-t.)

You enter the market with an attitude of complete abandon. You are carefree and not totally absorbed in finding a tool treasure. (Y-e-a-h R-i-g-h-t.) It's "interesting" wandering around at 11:30. You see people that you never noticed before. You stop to talk to all your favorite dealers, knowing full well that anything good is long gone.

Then your wife finds you at one of the booths. She calls you aside and asks if you saw the plane down at the end of the aisle. "I haven't been down there yet, but it can't be anything good or it would be gone by now," you reply.

"It's in a box and has lots of extra parts. It looks new, but it's old like the ones you have."

"Well maybe I better take a look. Where did you say it was?"

HALLELUJAH, who would have believed it! The dealer got there late also and had just set up. You are the first to see this gem. He is a furniture dealer and had to take this "thing that looks like a woodworking tool" in the last lot that he bought. But he feels it's worth at least $100

"How about $75?" "Sure, why not?"

Your wife is smiling, because she knows that the profit from this transaction means lobster and champagne for lunch. And you know: BETTER **LATE**, THAN NEVER.

Herb Kean

Fall / Winter Auction Schedule

October 24-25, Sheraton Inn-East, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Brown's 14th Annual Dealer Show and International Tool Auction. Call Clarence Blanchard 207-688-4962 for a catalog or information.

November 15, Hillsboro, N.H., Your Country Auctioneer's listed auction. Call Lee Murray for information 603-456-3705

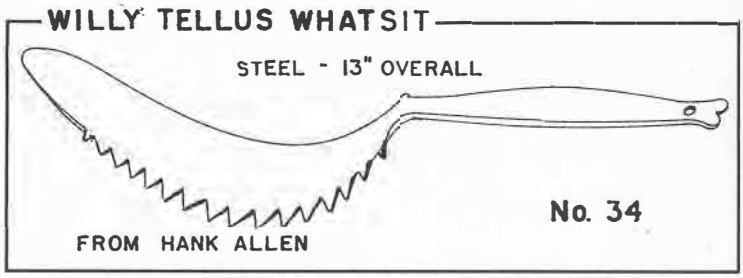
November 15 (no December date yet), Gablesville AC, Boyertown, Pennsylvania, Barry Hurchalla's regular monthly auction. Call Barry 610-323-0333 to get on his mailing list.

November 30 (also March 1, 1998), Fine Tool Journal absentee auction, call Clarence Blanchard for information 207-688-4962

January 24, 1998, Day's Inn Conference Center, York, Pennsylvania, Barry Hurchalla's auction followed by the M-WTCA Area P meeting on January 25. Call Barry 610-323-0333.

February 21, 1998, Holiday Inn, Nashua, N.H., Your Country Auctioneer's Cabin Fever Auction. Call Lee Murray for information 603-456-3705.

Notice Cory Amsler, Curator at the Mercer Museum at 84 South Pine Street in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, reports that the Museum's fifth annual Antique Tool Discovery Day will be held on November 1 from 10 am -3 pm. The program features tool collectors' displays, films, demonstrations, tool talks - including an entertaining "Whatsit" presentation - and other activities. In addition you can browse through the Mercer's 50,000 artifacts from America's pre-industrial past. For information call Cory at 215-345-0210, ext. 27. For lunch your editor recommends a visit to Maxwell's Restaurant and Victorian Pub.



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 line over 5 is $1. Send to: Stuart Shippey, 251 Hillside Ave., Chatham NJ 07928-1732, FAX 973 301-9781, or E-mail sshippey@asco.com. Ads accepted on a space permitting basis.

Wanted

MILLERS FALLS CATALOGS BEFORE 1900. Originals, copies, etc. Charles Thrower, 4085 Pheasant Ct., Allentown, PA 18103-9769 or call 610 432-8715.

STAIR RAIL PLANES and SHAVES by PHILADELPHIA makers. Please contact: Leon Kashishian, 321 W. Vine St., Hatfield, PA 19440 or call 215 855-8655.

STANLEY "HANDYMAN" Tools, Catalogs, Advertising, etc. that deals with this line of tools. Bill Hermanek, 31 Wildwood La., Smithtown, NY 11787. 516 360-1216.

UNUSUAL TOOLS, WHATSITS, old DENTAL INSTRUMENTS, solar compass, rack wing calipers/dividers. Bill McDougall, 4020 Grande Dr., NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107 or call 505 344-9272.

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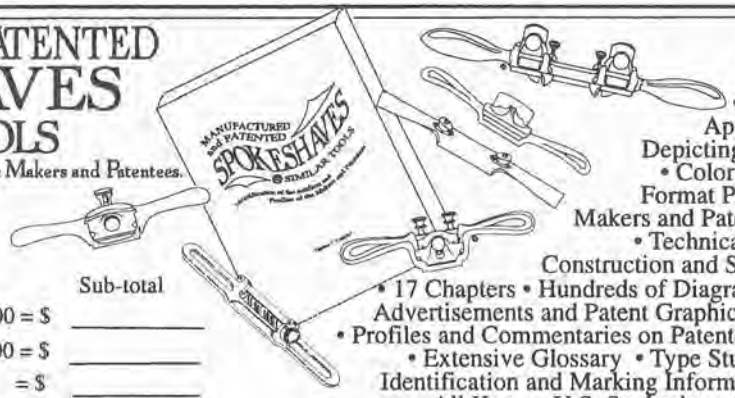
by Thomas C. Lamond



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