The TOOL SHED

NUMBER 101 APRIL 1998

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

Primitives by Karl West

I was asked by Hank Allen to give my idea of how to identify a primitive tool. I don't know, but no one else does either. Whatever I offer as a description will be argued by others, but this will be a good jumping-off place for further thought. I guess to start with, to paraphrase a line in a song from Cabaret, "If you could see it in my eyes, it is not ugly at all."

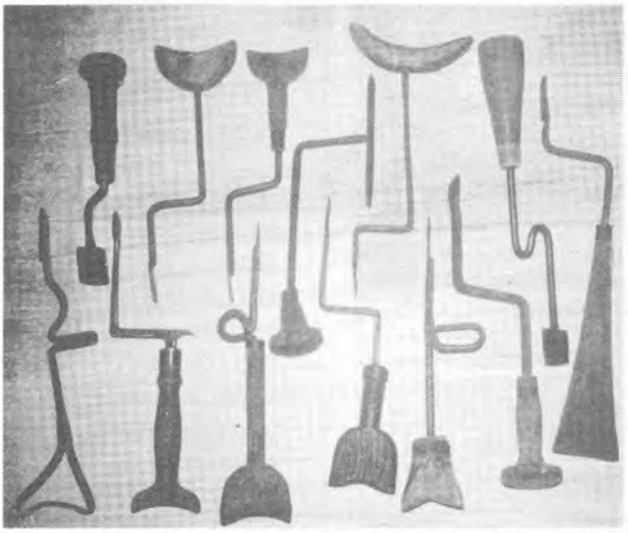

Photo 1. A variety of butterises.

Primitives are everywhere. In areas of the world such as the jungles of South America, there are tribes that are certainly primitive. Then we could look at paintings that we enjoy, that have been done by people such as Grandma Moses, and those are called primitives. But we are interested in primitive tools, and that, to me, doesn't necessarily mean very old tools. Certainly a plane made by Thomas Granford is very old and a delight to see. I would love to have one, but I wouldn't call it a primitive. This starts to help me with my definition. Thomas Granford was a planemaker which leads us to assume he was in the business of making and selling planes.

Definition: "A primitive tool is one made by a person because of a need for that tool, but is not a tool that the person reproduced for sale." For example, a primitive could have been made by a blacksmith in his regular line of work, but it is not a primitive if he made it each and every day to develop an inventory of that tool. There are two pictures of primitive tools in this article that originally appeared in articles I wrote for the *Chronicle*. Photo 1 appeared in Vol. 48 No. 1 (1995) page 27. It shows the ability of several blacksmiths who made butterises. Each blacksmith made a different design, based upon his skill and artistry. Look at the outlines. I think they are beautiful - so unique.

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April 5 - CRAFTS Meeting
High Bridge, NJ, Masonic Lodge
Bending and laminating wood and fibers around curved surfaces
Program by boatbuilder James Travis (see page 2)
☞ program starts at 1 p.m. ☜

CRAFTS of New Jersey

Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society
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

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CRAFTS Calendar of Events

March 31, 1998 - *ToolShed* (June issue) free ad deadline.

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

Apr. 5, 1998 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

June 14, 1998 - CRAFTS meeting, High Bridge, N.J.

Sept. 13, 1998 - CRAFTS picnic

Thanks to Bud Steere and Bill Spicer for changing their auction from April 4 to April 18 (see page 12).

Speaker's Profile - James Travis

Boatbuilder, racing enthusiast, and fine furnituremaker James Travis will be our April speaker. As a result of a noble concept in high school education in his hometown, Dover, Massachusetts, James was given a half year off to build a 50 foot, multi-hull racing trimarine. It was well-rigged, a nautical term meaning that its 61 foot mast exceeded its length.

Following high school he worked for a boatbuilder on Cape Cod, and then went to Florida to join a team building a fiberglass Catamarin for a trans-Atlantic race. Then off to Wisconsin to make mahogany runabouts, souped up boats for Lake Michigan's wealthy. But the mahogany was only 1/8 inch deep, being the outer layer of a laminated hull with layers of fir, spruce, or cedar below. I was surprised to learn that masts are also laminated around a hollow core. Finally he returned to Cape Cod to build the Ocean Surfer, a well known experimental venture that featured experimental masts and a variety of experimental fiberglass materials.

Next came his move to Peapack, New Jersey, but his occupation became furnituremaker. Until recently he worked for Frank Klausz, but now has his own business in Peapack. But boats remain a hobby. James races Hobie Cats in Division 2 from Syracuse to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. He has made the National Race three times with his best finish being eighth in 1996. He also built and races an iceboat. It's a 16 foot boat with a 16 foot mast, and is designed specifically for his weight. Its design comes from a Detroit News competition in the 1930s, and is known as DN Class. Its car-toppable and will be at our meeting.

James' topic will be about bending and laminating wood and fibers around curved surfaces. He'll talk about his experience in this area, and will bring hull cutouts from the boats he's built to illustrate techniques.

Help Wanted - Nicholson/Chelor Study

We all know of the importance of Francis & John Nicholson and Cesar Chelor to the history of American planemaking. You may recall that Marty and Emil Pollak made an inventory and study of 248 of these planes in the mid-1980s. We know there are more, and more to learn. Ted Ingraham has started on a new inventory by documenting information about 151 planes by these makers in seven important New England collections. He will be contacting other collectors known to have several Nicholson/Chelor planes. Ted is requesting CRAFTS members who have one or more of these important planes to write or phone him and offer to provide information about them for inclusion in his study, and this is an invitation to do that. Ted hopes to personally examine and photograph as many Nicholson/Chelor planes as possible. He will do this at major tool events. If this cannot be worked out he will send data sheets to owners to fill out. Contact Ted at P.O. Box 148, North Ferrisburgh, VT 05473 or at 802-877-0043.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The February meeting marked the start of CRAFTS twenty-first year; hats off to all those members over the years who help the group get to where we are today. I especially want to thank Stu Shippey and Hank Allen for all the work they have done in making the *ToolShed* a first rate publication. I would also like to thank all the members who have contributed to the many original articles.

The meeting provided a great display of stairmaker's planes and shaves. Carl Bopp our speaker brought a large number of planes from the set of one W.F. Smith who was listed in the New York City directories in the 1860s. Carl's talk covered why and how geometric staircases were built. While many of the planes in the group were made by known planemakers including several that were obviously custom-made, others were homemade or modified by Mr. Smith, and somewhat crudely at that. If found separately these modified planes wouldn't merit much more than a passing glance, however, when seen in context with the others, and with the knowledge of the owner's trade, it became more obvious as to why they were modified. Carl would appreciate hearing from anyone who has tools stamped with an owner's mark of W.F. Smith. Members Jack Whelan, Leon Kashishian and Paul Weidenschilling brought their stair planes and shaves, providing an even larger group of *tools* for Carl to use to explain the craft.

I would encourage members to bring items related to the scheduled topic to future meetings. Paul and Leon were able to temporarily reunite a pair of stair shaves and planes by B. Sheneman of Philadelphia; the owner's name stamps were the clinchers. There was no resolution as to how to permanently reunite the pairs, but I'm sure they believe there is some hope, now that they know where the mates are. Incidentally, I believe (and Carl Bopp agrees) that owner's marks are the next area of focus for collectors. An otherwise common tool becomes more interesting when you know the specifics of the owner and you already own some of his tools. I have purchased planes years apart from different individuals only to find that I have others with the same mark.

I also want to thank Mary Alice and Frank W. Kingsbury for their exhibit on wrenches and wrench books. A final note on the meeting; Ed Moduguo verified that a square he purchased at a CRAFTS auction was, in fact, a stairbuilder's square not a shipbuilder's as it was listed. Matching wits and knowledge at an auction is always fun and frequently rewarding. Did I say AUCTION! Don't miss our April auction. Bring a friend, and bring money, and remember the best buys are often at the end of the sale. See you there.

Note in the article on Cold Spring Village that they are looking for CRAFTS members to participate as exhibitors, demonstrators, & dealers in their June 27-28 weekend event "Tools Through Time." Call Clare Juechter at 609 898-2300 ext. 12 if you can help out.

Welcome to new members: Glenn Anderson, New Auburn, WI; Mike & Kathy DeGaetano, Eastchester, NY; Clifford Fales, Lakewood, CO; Richard Hunter, Phoenix, AZ; Trip Kahn, North Wales, PA; Tom Madden, Lakewood, CO; John Maita, Hohokus; Churck Marburger, New York, NY; Theodore Myers, Phillipsburg; Sean Richards, Waldwick; Gene Shaw, Lancaster, PA; Robert Skinner, Southampton, NY; Dave Terwilliger, Kempton, PA.

Joe

Meet Your Dealers

Jack Zimmerman

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

Jack Zimmerman and his wife Betsy both grew up in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, home of the famous Groundhog Day celebration. After careers that took them to Minnesota, Indiana, and Michigan they are back in Pennsylvania. They are now in Port Matilda, which is 15 miles west of State College the geographic center of the state.

Jack worked as a programmer analyst for 18 years, a position he left in 1987 to become a full-time tool dealer. Although he deals in all types of tools, some of which he locates for collectors of specialty items, his main product line has become Stanley tools. Stanley planes dominate the Stanley tool market and his sales, but he is very interested in other patented metal planes. Besides tools, Jack also buys and sells antiques, including furniture which often requires refinishing. His primary market for this line is Brimfield, Massachusetts, which also provides an opportunity to find tools.

Like many of us, he began collecting tools after a great find at a garage sale, a Stanley #45, a #50, and a #55 which he bought dirt cheap. He sold these and, of course, bought more tools with the proceeds. After he became a dealer he sold most of his own collection, but is now acquiring several good pieces for his second collection. Jack also collects surveying tools and spark ignition model airplane engines.

Jack can usually be found at most auctions and tool club meetings where he buys and sells. He belongs to several tool collecting groups including ATTIC, CRAFTS, EAIA, NETCA, PATINA, Mid-West Tool Collectors, and Ohio Tool Collectors.

You'll often see Jack with his good friend Dave Paling from San Francisco who, like Jack, attends auctions and meetings all over the country. When Dave buys large, heavy pieces in the east, he turns them over to Jack to handle, store, and ship to him as needed. Jack says he has a garage full of Dave's stuff now.

Like most dealers these days, Jack is finding it increasingly difficult to find stock. He spends a lot of time searching for it at auctions, estate sales, and flea markets. He says the most remarkable tool he has acquired was a Stanley No. 95 ivory rule in fine condition, which is exceeded in rarity only by the No. 97.

If you are looking for something special, let him know when you see him, or call him at 814-692-7691. His address is 395 Flat Rock Road, Port Matilda, PA 16870-9625

Besides tools, Jack must also collect jokes and can usually come up with a new one. Almost everyone knows Jack and if he has an enemy, I've never met him.

Bill McDougall

Primitives by Karl West (continued from page 1)

Next we come to scorps, or scups, which are primitive to me because every one of the early ones is different. Some were used to hollow out spoons, others for bowls, and some to make the seat of a pine bottom chair more comfortable. Some may have been made in factories, but many were made by the local blacksmith or the family handyman. The one shown in Photo 2 (bottom) has a very sturdy, comfortable handle and a blade made from a piece of a scythe blade. Often the blades were made from a worn out file. Photo 3 shows a variety of scorps that originally appeared in the *Chronicle* Volume 43 No. 1 (1990) page 6. Again their makers were artists with their designs of blades and comfortable handles.

In like manner, we have all seen dozens of drawshaves, but when one comes on the scene designed, as shown in Photo 2 (top), with rolled or spiraled steel handles - that's a primitive. I bet you won't find many like it for sale on tailgates. Unfortunately, not many people appreciate such items. This one was obtained at the Fred Courser Tag Sale, and many collectors had passed it by before I picked it up.

Photo 2 (center) shows a drawshave with two crude handles that is another unusual, or non-standard, tool. It functions like a drawshave, but was used on the interior corner posts of a room, or on the "summer beam" across the ceiling. It was used not to round off the edges, but to "fancy them up" to be more formal than a rounded edge. Note in the detail of Photo 4 that each of the three patterns produce a different size molding.

Not all primitives were made by blacksmiths. A good example is the apple parer in Photo 5. If you have ever studied these early examples you will find as many original designs as there are types of molding planes. This apple parer was not made in mass production, such as those made in Atrium, New Hampshire, but was the revision of many earlier models of less sophisticated wooden apple parers, and there were many more

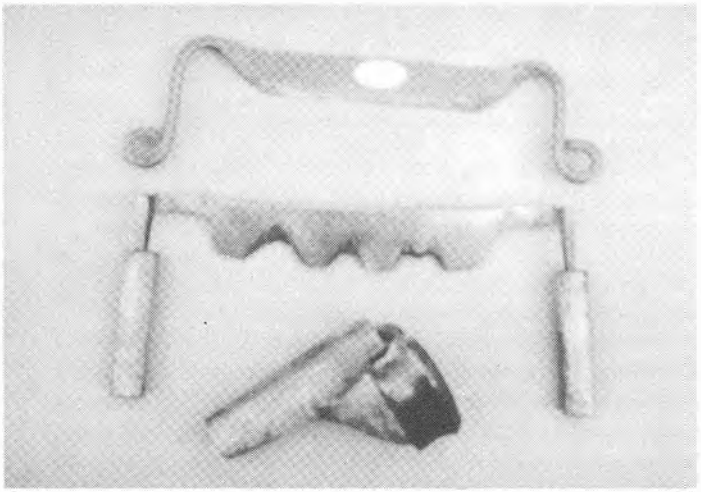


Photo 2. Drawshave, molding shave, and a scorp.

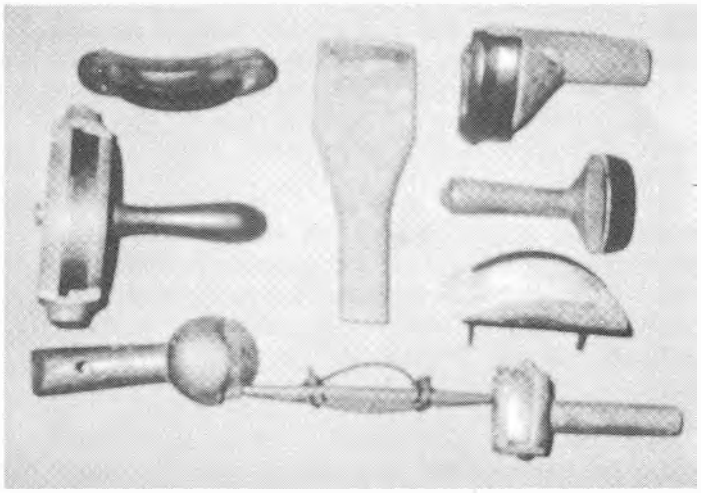


Photo 3. A variety of early scorps.

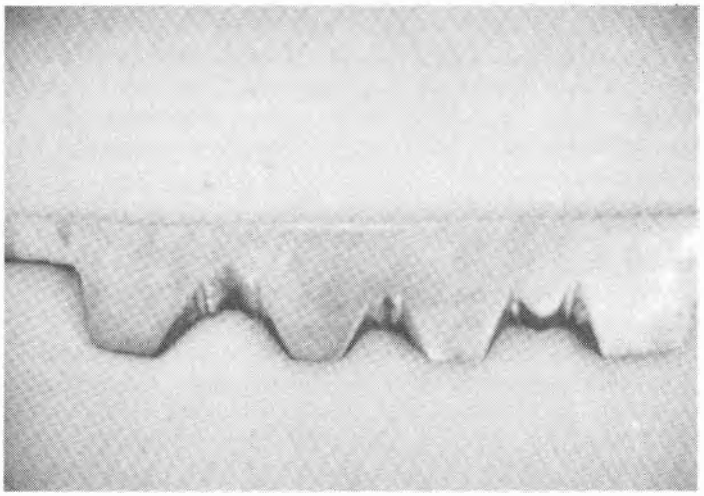


Photo 4. Close up of molding shave.

primitive revisions to come. I have seen early homemade wooden planes that are so ugly that "only a mother could love it." Maybe that's why they call some mother planes.

And we cannot forget the Native Americans. The Micmac tribe of northern Maine made crooked knives. If you examine them, many of the blades are from straight edge razors. (There was a razor manufacturer in Maine.) Each handle is unique, from a smooth, plain handle to an engraved handle, often with an animal outline illustrated. I was surprised to read that you can have one made to order by these Native Americans for as much as $200. See Photo 6.

Photo 7 shows a neat primitive gouge and craftsman-made wooden case.

Finally, when you see a Stanley plane you know it is a Stanley plane, and when you see a folding rule you know it is a folding rule. When you see a primitive tool, it often takes a bit of searching to determine its use. I will close with an item that was homemade, functional, and not in common use by the owners. It is the spruce gum harvesting knife which was attached to a long pole and had a bag connected below it. Lumber jacks collected the gum that was dripping off the spruce tree and later sold it. Another less-common primitive is the handcarved boxes made to store the gum. A picture of my spruce gum harvesing knife appears in the *Chronicle*, Volume 42 No.2 (1989) page 46.

Thanks to Dan Reibel, *Chronicle* editor, for persmission to reprint photos 1 and 3.

Ed: Thanks to Karl for beginning a discussion on primitives. Now we need other thoughts and opinions on the subject. Letters, articles, and photos are wanted. What is a primitive? Why are they in disfavor? Why have prices tumbled? Maybe they need more attention, like Ron Pearson's article on "The Primitive Wooden Brace" in the September 1996 *ToolShed*. If primitives are your thing, please give this some thought and let's hear from you.

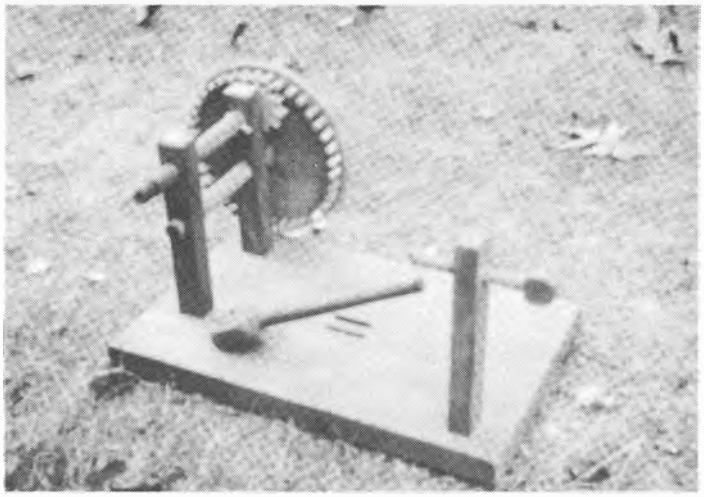


Photo 5. Apple parer.

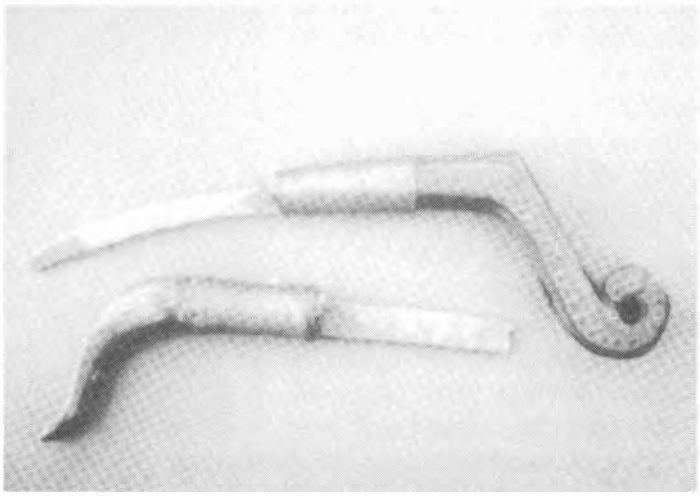


Photo 6. Two crooked knives.

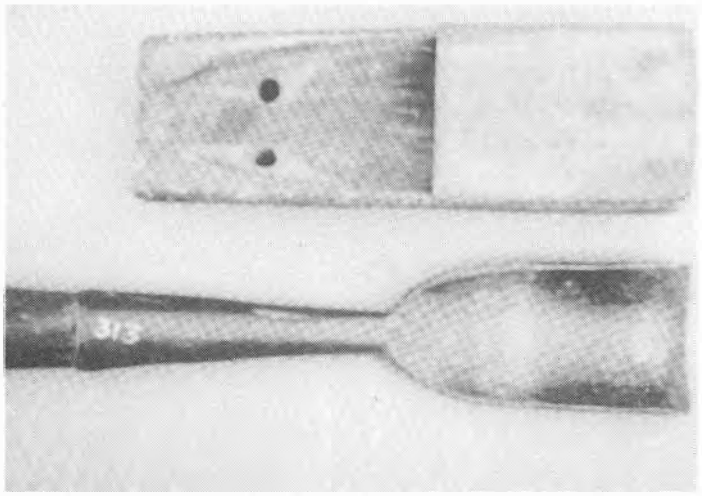
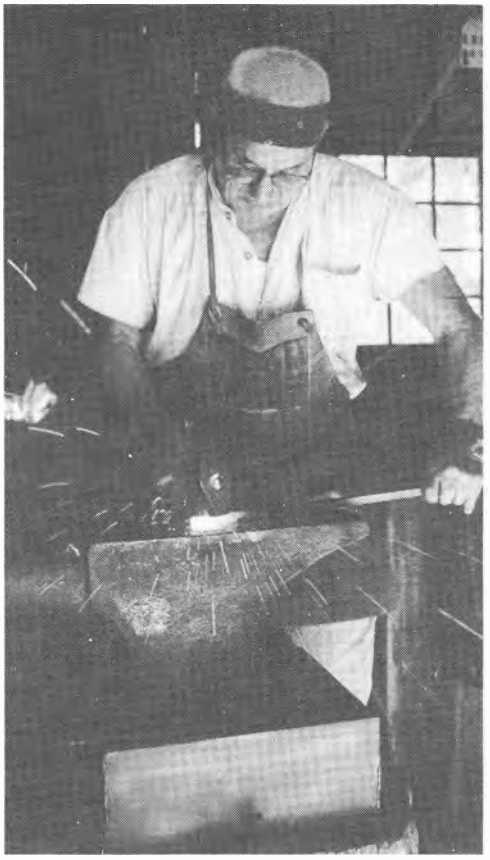


Photo 7. A craftsman had enough pride in this gouge to make a case for it.

Historic Cold Spring Village

Historic Cold Spring Village is a 19th century open-air living history museum dedicated to preserving the crafts, trades, lifestyles, and architecture of a small South Jersey rural community of the 19th century. It is located on Route 9 three miles north of Victorian Cape May and four miles south of Rio Grande [use southbound exit 4A on Garden State Parkway]. It's open daily June 23 through Labor Day and weekends from Memorial Day through September. For information call 609-898-2300 or visit their website at http://www.hcsv.org .



Cold Spring was a thriving town during the early 1800s. It received its name from the fresh spring of sparkling water that bubbled up through the salt marshes. A brief drive by carriage from Cape Island brought early tourists to a small shed where a bottle could be lowered into a clear pool. There was said to be no source of fresh water south of the spring. Cold Spring also had economic importance as it was the site of the first tidal grist mill. Rather than depend on a mill pond for power, the tidal mills operated on water trapped when a creek or stream was at high tide, thus ensuring a source of daily power. By 1840 Cold Spring was an important stop on the stage coach run from Millville to Cape May. The community boasted two churches, two stores, forty homes, and a tavern. There was regular commerce between Philadelphia and the towns of southern Cape May County.

Although little remains of the original hamlet of Cold Spring, the Village is a recreation of a similar town consisting of over 25 antique buildings from Cape May and Cumberland counties that have been moved and restored on a twenty acre site. They house a variety of craftspersons and interpreters who demonstrate basketry, woodworking, broommaking, tinsmithing, weaving, spinning, blacksmithing, ropemaking, printing, bookbinding, and open hearth cooking. In addition to the craft buildings, there are: the Corson-Grady farm complex, Marshallville one-room school, country store, bakery, ice cream parlor, and the well-known Old Grange Restaurant.

This all began when Dr. Joseph Salvatore and his wife Patricia Anne acquired Cold Spring Grange #132. Over the next ten years they assembled a collection of 18th and 19th century buildings on 22 acres of wooded land. The Salvatores and their children, Rick and Kate, collected furnishings, fixtures, tools, and implements for the buildings. Their objective was to provide visitors with a sense of stepping back in time to the 1800s. After eight years of development the Village was opened to the public in 1981. It was eventually donated into a public non-profit corporation owned and operated by HCSV Foundations Inc.

Nineteen weekend events highlight the Cold Spring Village calendar for 1998. Among them are: Railroad Days, Antique Auto Show, Olde Time Lumberjack Show, and more. New for 1998 is "Tools Through Time" scheduled for June 27-28. This weekend will focus on handcrafts men and women created during the 19th century. Village craftspeople will be there, of course, but the Village is looking for exhibitors to demonstrate more handcrafts. Also, the Village will set aside space on this weekend for Antique Tool Vendors. If you can help with an exhibit or demonstration, or participate as a dealer, please call Clare Juechter at 609-898-2300 ext. 12. The mission of the Village is certainly compatible with the objectives of CRAFTS, so please help Clare if you can, much as we assist the Mercer Museum each fall with their special tool weekend.

BOOK REVIEW by Roger K. Smith

Manufactured and Patented Spokeshaves & Similar Tools By Thomas C. Lamond.

Published by the author, 30 Kelsey Place, Lynbrook, NY 11563-1516. Hardcover, 452 pages, $75 + $5 shipping.

No disappointments here! This reviewer, along with scores of other collectors who know Tom Lamond and have observed him purchasing and studying spokeshaves for the last 20 years or so, has long anticipated this volume, and as expected, it was worth the wait.

There is an informative introduction that includes the 'real' origin of the word *spokeshave*. For years the theory has been passed along from source to source that it was derived from a tool used for forming spokes on wooden wheels. Now we know that a 'spoke' is the term for the block of wood used in making a cobbler's wooden last. Thus the tool used to shape the compound curved surfaces on a last became known as the *spokeshave*.

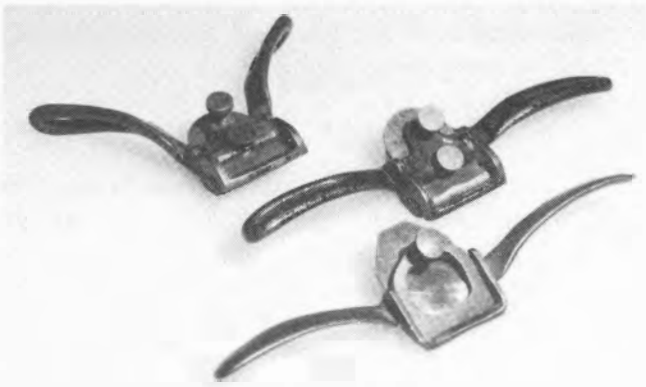
There is important information about patenting procedures and definitions of patent markings and a complete listing of all U.S. spokeshave patents granted between 1827 and 1929 and British patents between 1885 and 1912. The text is efficiently divided into seventeen chapters starting with the basic nomenclature of a metal spokeshave and sections on wood shaves, iron shaves, leather processing and heel shaves, etc. There are chapters on the important makers and lesser-known makers. It also includes chapters on beading and combination shaves, shaves for the cooper, carriagemaker, patternmaker and even a section on English and other foreign made tools.

This reviewer doubts that there are more than a handful of tool collectors in the country who don't have at least one spokeshave in their collection, and we warn you that after you read this book you will want more than just one!

Whether you collect spokeshaves or not you will want this volume handy to identify any rare shave you come across so you can trade it for that rare ivory rule or brass brace, etc.

The author provides us with fascinating information about the inventors and manufacturers. He unravels the web of mystery about important but until now obscure makers such as A. G. Batchelder of Lowell, Mass., E.F. Dixie of Worcester, Mass., Charles H. Weston of Nashua, N.H., James Y. Simons of Troy, N.Y. & Boston, Mass., A.A. Wood & Co. of Atlanta, Georgia, and Frank H. Humphrey of Warren, Mass. Others, including Walter D. Murray of Portland, Maine, John F. Magnuson of New York City, John Harlow Spear of Springfield, Mass., and George M. Conover of Cincinnati, Ohio, designed and manufactured shaves that were short-lived, but they definitely had influence on the more successful manufacturers such as Stanley, Millers Falls and E. Preston.

He also provides more insight into the well known makers such as L. Bailey, Bailey Tool Co., Stearns,



Magnuson folding-handle spokeshaves.

Cincinnati, Ohio Tool Co., Sargent, Union, Henry Foss & Philip Chapin, L & I. J. White, D.R. Barton, Birmingham Plane Co. and, of course, the leader of them all, Stanley Rule & Level Co., which at one time or other offered thirty-four different spokeshaves in their catalogs.

It has information for all, and, of course, those looking will find a few typos and transposition of photo captions. This reviewer would like to have seen footnotes, but these are all quickly forgotten when you delve into the wealth of information.

We counted over 1,000 different shaves photographed in hundreds of clear black & white photographs and eighteen exceptional color plates. Added are hundreds of catalog illustrations, trade magazine advertising cuts and the actual markings found on the tools are reproduced. All the graphics are superb – an example of good draftsmanship and computer skills by the author. There is a glossary of terms, a bibliography and an index.

The type studies for some Bailey and Stanley shaves in the appendix is another added attraction and will have collectors scrambling for the different types to add to their collections.

Every tool collector and anyone interested in the fascinating ingenuity of the American inventor trying to develop the 'better mousetrap' will want this volume in their library.

Four of nine known A.G.Batchelder combination shaves.

Harman Baugh - Philadelphia Toolmaker?

by Bob Nelson

What is required to justify a man being called a "toolmaker"? Must making tools have been his primary trade and source of income? Must he have made tools for sale vs. only for his own use? Must he have been the owner of the shop vs. only an employee? Different tool collectors have a multitude of personal opinions regarding what combination of answers to these and other questions entitle one of our forefathers to be classified as a toolmaker. From the information below, you can decide for yourself whether Harman Baugh deserves that recognition.

The hatmaker's form/stretcher pictured is clearly stamped "**H. Baugh/Elfreths Alley/Philad**." The nature of the tool and the mark, along with the fact that Baugh's name has not previously surfaced as a toolmaker, suggest that Baugh's primary trade was as a turner; subsequent research supported that suspicion. This might be the only tool that Baugh ever made, but this article might lead to more such items surfacing. Regardless, the fact that Baugh made and marked at least one tool, almost certainly for sale vs. for his own use, at least warrants his consideration as a toolmaker.

Harman Baugh's hat form/stretcher

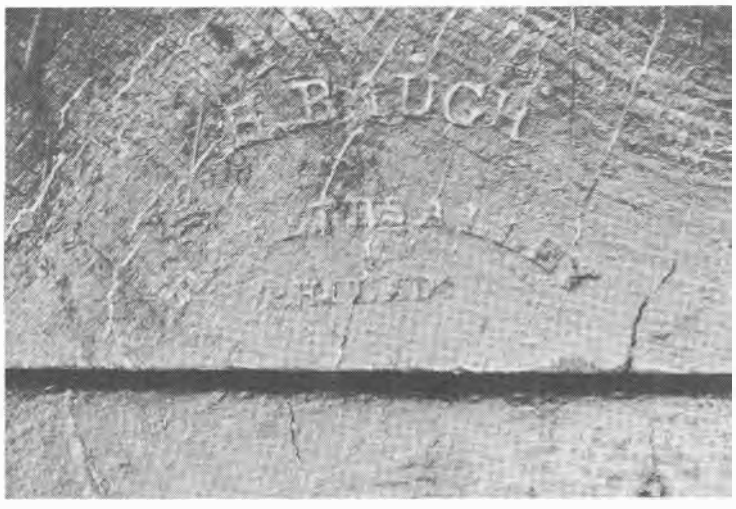
Elfreth's alley is a Registered National Historic Landmark. It was created ca. 1703 and still contains buildings constructed between the early 1700s and middle 1800s. In those relative terms, Harman Baugh was a latecomer to the Alley. The home that still stands at 125 Elfreth's Alley was built in or shortly after 1836. Although Baugh's name was first found in an 1844 city directory, there is reason to suspect that he was the original occupant of that house and also owned an adjacent (older) building at 127 Elfreth's Alley. Later directories use the home and shop designations of the 125 and 127 addresses somewhat interchangeably.

In the 1850 census the occupants of the Baugh home were: Harman Baugh (Sr.), 52, turner, born in PA; Caroline Baugh, 42, born in NY (Harman's wife); George Baugh, 29, turner, born in PA (a son); William Baugh, 16, born in PA (a second son); Harman Baugh (Jr.),14, born in PA (a third son); Mary Wilson, 22, born in PA; Mary Kerr, 20, born in Ireland: Caroline Ferguson, 16, born in PA; Ann E. Wilson, 2, born in Ireland; and Hannah Wilson, 2 months, born in Ireland. The relationships of the latter five females to the Baughs are unknown. The relative ages of Caroline and George suggest that Caroline may have been a second wife of Harmon. Neither this census nor later directory listings call the two Harmans Sr. or Jr.; that is done here solely to distinguish between them.

By 1859 Harman Jr. had also become a turner and was working with Harman Sr. George was still working as a turner, but at a different Elfreth's Alley address and apparently on his own. Two William Baughs were working in Elfreth's Alley, one as a machinist and the other as a printer. Which, if either, was Harman's second son is unknown.

In both 1865 and 1875 a single Harman Baugh was listed as a turner at the 125/127 address; whether this was Sr. or Jr. is not known. George continued to work as a turner, but not in Elfreth's Alley. Oddly, neither Harman Baugh was found in either the 1860 or 1870 census.

In 1952 the Association that administers the Alley's landmark status published a brochure that contains implications of the existence of detailed information about the elder Harman. Unfortunately, that data seems to have disappeared and the Association can not now identify what its source was or how accurate the brochure data is. The brochure calls Baugh a cabinetmaker and carpenter as well as a turner. It says he was a great *Bible* and Shakesperian student, a school director, and influential in his district. It goes on to describe how, if he saw women gossiping in the street, he would ask them, "Ladies, is your work done inside?"



H. Baugh mark

Whether Harman Sr. or Jr. was the one who made and marked the hat form can not be said for sure, but its older style would seem to make Sr. the more likely. It is not known what other products constituted either Harman's primary output as a turner (and, possibly, cabinetmaker/carpenter), but the stamp used on the hat form was surely used otherwise on some of those. Hopefully, the source of the 1952 data will eventually resurface and/or other data will be found that provide a more definitive picture of Harman Baugh's career as a turner and, perhaps, toolmaker.

PLUMB BOBS - PART 2

BY HANK ALLEN

Part 1 appeared in the November 1994 *ToolShed* and covered some history of the plumb bob and also the many ways that a bob's string was stored, including descriptions of several very complex internal line reels.

What about plumb bob points? Many bobs have points that are integral to the body of the bob. Certainly most bobs of the 1800s were made this way. Iron or steel points cast into the body probably came next. And then came the removable, reversible, and double points. These kinds of points were usually threaded and would screw into the bottom of the bob. The simplest one could be unscrewed, thrown away, and replaced by a new point if the old point was worn from being scratched on hard surfaces such as concrete or stone. Another kind of point could be removed and reversed, with the point screwed into the bob to protect it when not in use. The double-ended point could be reversed and the point at either end used. Some of these had different size ends for different uses; others had two identical points for use if one were worn or damaged. In more modern days, surveyors had plumb bob kits which included points of different sizes and of different materials. One had points of brass, lead, and copper, but none of iron as this would have affected the surveyor's compass.

If you run into a surveyor today, he might not even know what a plumb bob is. Today's surveyor shoots a tiny beam oflight from a laser to mark a point that would have been fixed by a plumb bob in days gone by. I stopped recently to chat with a young surveyor who was working on one of our local streets and this was my experience.

There are a few unusual point designs that I'll now describe:

(1) The Willis Vajen plunb bob, patented November 14, 1882, is a pear-shaped bob with a cap and point that could screw interchangeably into either the top or bottom of the bob. See Figure 1. With the heavy end down it was claimed that the point would settle or become still much sooner. It was also claimed that marking the point by dropping the bob would be more precise with the heavy end down. On the other hand, it was claimed that the point is easier to see with the heavy end up. Vajen's point could be reversed and screwed into the bob to protect it.

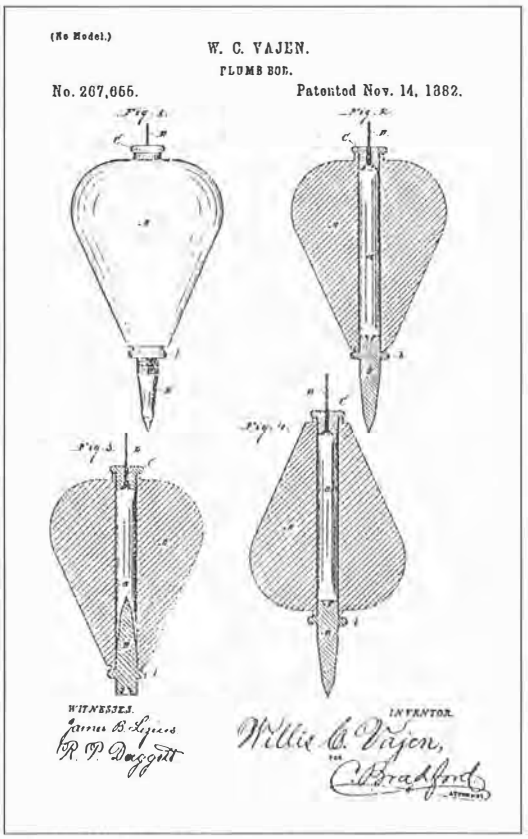


Figure 1. The Vajen bob.

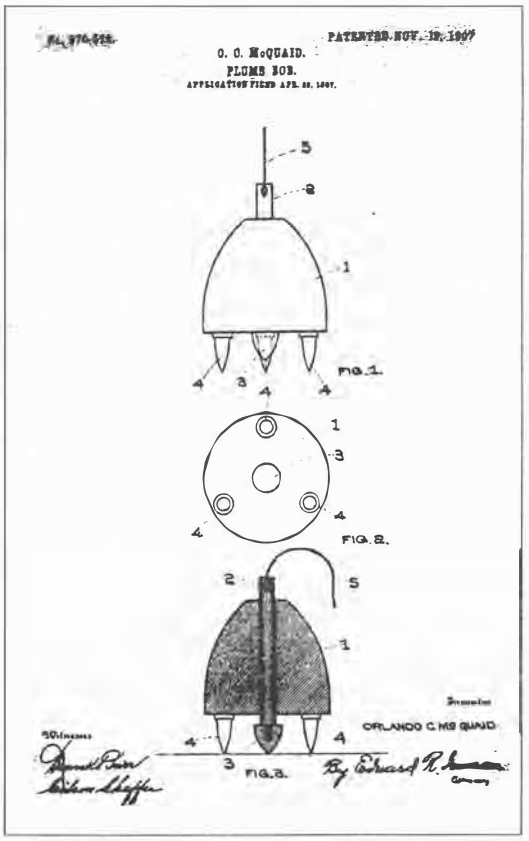


Figure 2. The McQuaid bob.

(2) Adam Leidgen patented, on March 3, 1885, a point that passed almost to the top of the bob through a central bore. The point could then be extended or retracted by means of a tubular clamp at the bottom of the bob. Its claimed advantage over other bobs was that when the bob is hanging the mechanic can make small adjustments in the length of the exposed point at the bob rather than returning to the place where the line is hanging and changeing the string.

(3) On November 12, 1907 Orlando McQuaid of Franklin, Pennsylvania, patented a flat-bottom plumb bob with three short points to serve as legs. See Figure 2. As the three leg points define a plane, the bob will always settle when lowered to a surface from above. The point, being shorter than the legs, will come close to the surface after the bob has settled. The point is marked on the surface by hitting the top of the stem with a hammer. Another feature of this bob is that its stem passes through a central bore and up through the top of the bob. The bob point has a larger diameter than the stem and is threaded onto the bottom of the stem, thus the body is held on the stem by gravity. With this construction the body can be separated from the stem by unscrewing the point,and thus the stem can be passed through small holes in a floor as might be needed in multi-story buildings. Once the stem is through the hole, the body can be reattached and the plumbing continued through lower floors

(4) One patented plumb bob and chalk holder has a small removable point that is mercury filled to increase the weight of the bob. (Mercury is about 75% heavier than steel.) Presumably this was done because the chalk-filled body is not as heavy as a solid bob. This may be one of the most worthless patent ideas in history!

(5) One other patented plumb bob has a point made of glass with a piece of phosphorus in it. It's claimed that this is useful in reflecting light in dark places.

Finally, lets look at two special-purpose plumb bobs:

1. John Lawlor of Scranton, Pennsylvania, patented a plumb bob for gas fittings on November 24,1885. Its purpose was to aid plumbers or gas-fitters to install a drop from a gas line above a ceiling in a perfectly vertical position before a gas-burning lamp was attached to it. The device consisted of a frame with a few female collars for threading the frame onto drop pipes of differing sizes. A common plumb bob was suspended in the frame directly under the center of the drop pipe. There was an upward-facing point at the bottom of the frame, so that if the drop pipe were perfectly aligned the bob point would be directly over this point. See Figure 5.

2. The plummet lamp is a plumb device adapted for a special purpose. They were devices that provided a visible reference point in underground surveying, especially in mining. In mining they would be hung from the roof of a tunnel. Early ones used burning fluid to create the light source; some from the 20th century were battery powered. Many of you have probably seen one at a major auction where they appear infrequently, and go for very substantial prices. Several were on display at an Albuquerque tool meeting that I attended. One example, made by K & E, is shown in Figure 3. It appeared in a David Stanley catalog, and we thank David for permission to reprint it. To learn more about plummet lamps see the article by Dale Beeks in the *Chronicle* Volume 45 No. 2, page 41.

Figure 3. Plummet bob.

John Roach of San Francisco patented his plummet Lamp on October 20, 1883. See Figure 4. The body of the bob provided a chamber to hold the burning fluid, or oil, and it was topped with a flange which was threaded on the inside and outside. A cap with a wick was screwed into the inner threads. A Chimney with glass windows was screwed onto the outside threads to provide a steady, clear flame. Air holes were provided in the chimney to aid combustion, and the line for hanging came through a perforation in the top of the chimney.

The ultimate reference on plumb bobs remains Bruce Cynar's *The Plumb Line* which was published in the early 1990s. Included were patent drawings for most plumb bobs; lists of manufacturers, distributors, dealers, and collectors; and many articles and pictures. A complete set of 16 issues is available for $45. Write to Bruce at 10023 Saint Clair's Retreat, Fort Wayne, IN 46825-2024. And, if you'd like a copy of the November 1994 *ToolShed* with Part 1, send $2 to Jack Whelan at his masthead address.

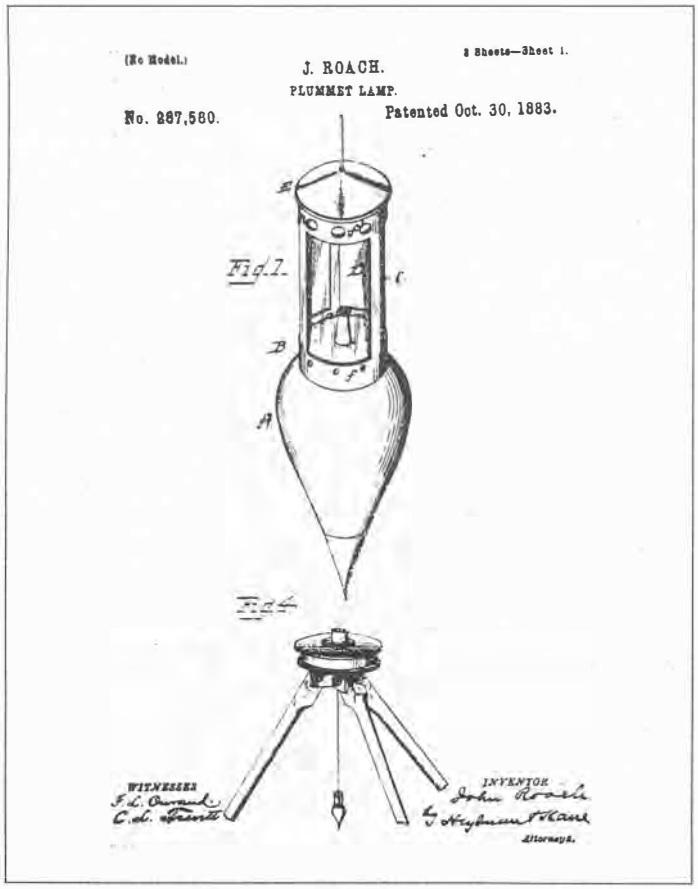


Figure 4. The Roach bob.

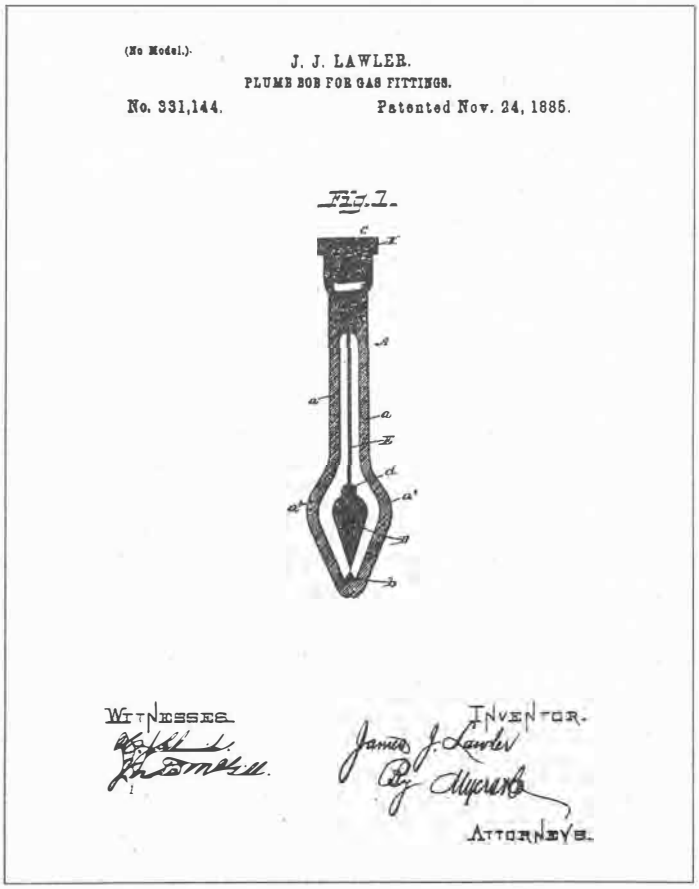


Figure 5. The Lawler bob for gas fittings.

Essay
by Mickey Holmes

Why are there tool collectors? Why and how does a collector get "hooked?" The reasons are almost as varied as the number of collectors. Some include: investment; satisfaction from successfully researching a tool group or a maker; satisfaction of being able to use the tools as they were meant to be used by the makers; making new friends; and knowledge that if you grow tired of the avocation, there is a quite eager, ready market out there looking for a tool deal that should allow you to retract from the activity with minimal, if any, financial injury.

Some tools do represent investment potential. After all, in the last couple of years major pieces have sold for from $19,500 to $27,000. (What isn't known now, though, is what they might bring the next time offered at an auction, or what an acceptable percentage of appreciation might be.)

Without doubt, the investment potential has been enhanced by the special interests of those who took the time to successfully research the history of a tool group or a maker. Of recent publications is Tom Lamond's *Manufactured and Patented Spokeshaves and Similar Tools*. [See review on page 7.] Before, of extreme importance to the growth of interest in tool collecting have been *Antique & Collectible Stanley Tools* (two editions) by John Walter and *A Guide to the Makers of American Wooden Planes* (three editions) by Emil and Martyl Pollak. The prolific works of Ken Roberts (i.e. *Wooden Planes in 19th Century America*, *Tools for the Trades and Crafts*, and *Some 19th Century English Woodworking Tools*, among others), were, without doubt, the cornerstone for all reference material available today. These books have added a very significant spectrum to tool collecting because blokes like you and me can, with confidence, become involved at virtually the same intellectual level as that of the authors or what we have the capacity to retain within our own mental process.

I have a friend who wondered if those old hunks of wood, made with such care and preciseness, really worked. So, he restored his home, doing the trim moldings using the delicate molding cuts of famous wooden planemakers. Now that the project is completed, he enjoys immensely pointing out various bits of trim as having been done by a plane carrying the mark of Jo Fuller or I.Sleeper, or whomever.

It is the comraderie benefit which, to me, represents the most positive by-product of my involvement with antique tools. There is no question that I now have more friends who I value more deeply than ever before in my life. These are friends who have become very special to me, particularly in the last year! They, in fact, have become my "support group." Oh, I got into wooden planes, particularly early plows, all the way up to my eyebrows. I also got into the other end of the hobby by becoming involved in the business when I said "Yes" to Bud Brown's query when he asked if I would like to buy his business.

Then I had an untimely stroke that cost me my eyesight. That is when the very special by-product reared its beautiful head - the support group was created. Needless to say, after the stroke (in sports vernacular), my dobber was really down and my head was far from being screwed on right. Obviously, some recognized that fact and set out to see what they could do to help rectify the situation- thankfully! It was just after I had been told, again, by a specialist that there was just too little to work with. Another "no hope" message. That is when the phone calls started coming. The messages weren't that of a marketing company trying to sell something, they were chats of encouragement. Because of the comraderie developed through tool collecting, I knew the encouragement was exceptionally genuine. Hardly a day went by but what I didn't hear from someone, and the rotation was something else, as well. It was as if the group of about 12 worked off of a calendar.

In my mind, there is no doubt this "support group" was largely responsible for yanking me through the toughest time I have ever been confronted with, allowing me to get my head in shape and charge ahead. Now, a year later, several continue to call periodically, which is great - I think that, during that interim, my friendship with each has grown even stronger.

Who are these people? Generally, they are people from whom I have bought or to whom I have sold pieces, or took the time to sip a beverage with at an auction or show. Bless them, they keep calling and keep me abrest with what is going on toolwise in their area of the country.

Yes, most of the conversations now start out, "Have you found anything good lately?" And, most of the chats are centered around only antique tools. The depth of this comraderie is infinite, like most associations which are the result of a strong common interest.

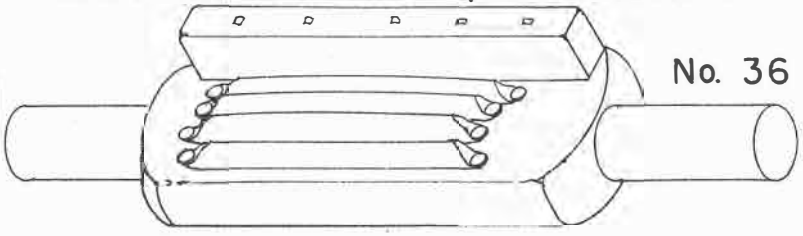
At tool events, it is these same friends who spend a great deal of time with me inspecting tools on the market, telling me where to feel as I get in my touchy-feely exercise to gain that warm-fuzzy feeling over a particular piece.

The many good times, shooting the bull over a beer or burger, are such a great part of this activity. The tried pranks don't even diminish the positives, when these so-called friends try to steer the blind man to a ladies restroom. Fortunately, the blind man can feel the difference between "Gentlemen" and Women" on the door. That experience, as much as anything, might have given me the impetus to learn Braille – quite a trick for an old dog to learn.

Yes, the sight may be gone from my eyes, but there is still plenty of spring in my step. Thanks in great part to the comraderie gained from collecting tools!

WILLY TELLUS WHATSIT

BODY ROUGHLY SHAPED, OAK
HAND FORGED IRON SCRAPERS, CRUDELY NAILED ON



No. 36

FROM HANK ALLEN 17" OVERALL

Death Notices

Larry Brundage	Jan. 19, 1998
Don Rich	Feb. 12, 1998

Auction Schedule

March 28 (no date yet for June), Gablesville AC, Boyertown, Pennsylvania, Barry Hurchalla's regular monthly auction. Call Barry 610-323-0333 to get on his mailing list.

April 4, Crafts Annual Tool Auction, Elks Club, Route 31, Flemington, N.J. Call Greg Welsh 908-439-3266 or Steve Zluky 908-534-2710 for information. Send $2 (noSASE) for auction list to Steve Zluky, Box 243, Whitehouse, NJ 08888.

April 17-18, Baxter's, Indianapolis, Indiana, Tom Witte's 2nd Spring Auction and Tailgate Tool Show. Call Tom 616-668-4161.

April 18, **May 30**, N. Kingstown, R.I. Bill Spicer's Tool Auction managed by Bud & Vera Steere. Call Vera for information 401-884-5049. Send $2 for list to 110 Glenwood Drive, N. Kingstown, RI 02852.

April 24-25, Holiday Inn, Nashua, N.H., Your Country Auctioneer's 19th Annual Antique Tool Auction and Show. Call Lee Murray for information 603-456-3705.

May 10, Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, Scranton, Pennsylvania. Barry Hurchalla's auction at EAIA meeting site. Select consignments accepted up to February 15. Call Barry 610-323-0333.

May 16, Hillsboro, N.H., Your Country Auctioneer's listed auction. Call Lee Murray for information 603-456-3705.

June 7, **August 30**, Fine Tool Journal absentee auction, call Clarence Blanchard for information 207-688-4962.

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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 973 701-2050, or E-mail stushippey@prodigy.net. Ads accepted if space permitting basis.

For Sale

EMMERT PATTERN MAKERS VISE. Asking $350. Contact Henry Urbanek, 516 McKinley Ave, Pitman NJ 08071-1864 or call 609 589-7232.

Lee Richmond and Hampton Williams would like to invite CRAFTS members to visit their web site at www.thebestthings.com; where the connoisseur shops for tools. Many rare tools available such as a Tidey beveling plane, a Stanley #1, and an Ohio Tool Co. #104 in curly boxwood.

Wanted

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FOLDING RULERS made by NYC makers especially KUTZ, J. & G.H. WALKER, and BELCHER Brothers. Please contact: John Hathaway, 18 Hopp Ground Lane, Bedford, NY 10506-1525 or call 914 234-6529.

OLD AUTOMOBILE TOOLS, signs, oil cans, etc. Anything old and car related. Call any time up 'till 11 pm. Bill Hermanek, 31 Wildwood La, Smithtown, NY 11787. Call 516 360-1216.

WOODEN CLAMPS, HAND SCREWS, BAR CLAMPS made outside Rhode Island, eastern Massachusetts. Also, catalogs of clamp makers, originals or photocopies. Milt Boyd, 27 Rosewood Drive, Haverhill MA 01832, or email ClampGuy@AOL.com or call (evenings / weekends) 978 469-0973.

PLANES and misc. tools by MARLEY, N.Y. Also, tools by PLANEMAKERS (floats, mother planes, etc.). Chuck Granick, 274 N. Bridge St., Somerville, NJ 08876 or call 908 685-1864.

SANDUSKY TOOL CO. wood and metal planes, catalogs, advertising, and any other tools or items made by Sandusky. Please send for my want list. John Walkowiak, 3452 Humboldt Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55408 or call 612 824-0785.