The TOOL SHED

NUMBER 161 SEPTEMBER, 2010

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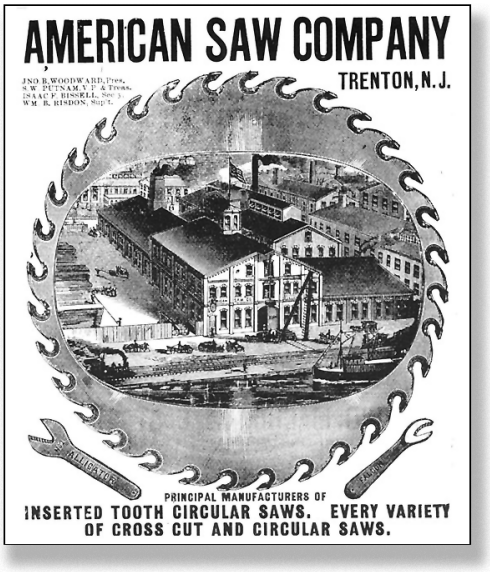
# THE AMERICAN SAW COMPANY

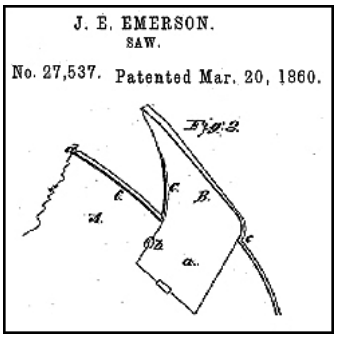
*By Bob Garay*

The American Saw Company was one of the early innovators in circular saw blade design during the second half of the 19th century. They helped to put Trenton, New Jersey, on the map as an industrial city right along with other well known names such as Roebling, Lenox, and Fisher Anvil. The company was well known world wide for its top quality saws, applying new technologies in saw design and manufacturing processes. Yet the company had a relatively short run of only about thirty years. To tell the story of the American Saw Company it is important to trace the history of its chief founder, James E. Emerson. As the first superintendent of the saw factory he led the company to become one of the largest in the country.




He was born in 1823 and raised in Maine where he worked in saw mills and became a house carpenter. He started a business making woodworking machines. His first invention was a machine used in cotton factories, which performed the same work that had previously required three machines to execute. In 1852 the reports of opportunities presented to enterprising men in California proved alluring, and Mr. Emerson left Maine and sailed for California.

In San Francisco he became superintendent of a saw mill and then a proprietor of saw mills in various counties. During this time he was often frustrated by the down time and cost related to chipped and broken circular saw teeth when the blade would hit an iron spike embedded in a tree. This problem encouraged him to manufacture a circular saw blade with insertable teeth that could be replaced when broken. By 1859 he formed a company with Nathan Spaulding in Sacramento, California. He left the company shortly after, most likely due to a flaw in the patented design of his insertable tooth saw. (More on this later.)




*Emerson's patented inserted tooth*

He left California in the early 1860s, and returned to Trenton. Here he formed the company Emerson & Silver, which had a prolific, brief appearance fulfilling government contracts during the Civil War including swords and sabers for the military. During this endeavor he supplied over

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## NEXT MEETING

**November 7, 2010 – 1PM**
HOST Masonic Lodge Highbridge, NJ

*Please mark your calendar*

## Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society of New Jersey


| | |
|---|---|
| President | BOB GARAY, Hopatcong, NJ<br>e-mail, takeadip@optonline.net |
| Vice President | DON KAHN, Hackensack, NJ |
| Secretary | ANNETTE VLIET, Danielsville, PA |
| Treasurer | HANK ALLEN, Glen Rock, NJ |


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 fifteen dollars for the membership year of July 1 through June 30. Membership fees may be sent to: Hank Allen, 524 Harristown Rd. Glen Rock, NJ 07452 (write check payable to CRAFTS of New Jersey).

CRAFTS of NJ meetings are held at the HOST Masonic Lodge in High Bridge, N.J.

Take 1-78 to Route 31 exit at Clinton. Go north on Route 31, two miles to second traffic light at the High Bridge exit. Turn right and go about half a mile to Dennis Avenue. Turn left, then straight to the Masonic Lodge (on the left).

Tailgate sales in the parking lot begin at 10 A.M., meeting starts at 1 P.M.


**THE TOOL SHED**

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e-mail- Jim@JimBodeTools.com

Articles, especially about early tools and trades, are encouraged and may be sent to the Editor.


**CRAFTS WEBSITE**
**www.craftsofnj.org**
Containing general information about CRAFTS and its activities including: meeting schedules, *Tool Shed* articles, etc.

## New Members

Frank Bruno  Branchburg,NJ
Bob Hicks  Sewell, NJ
David Johnston  Butler, PA
Sharon Vatsky  Teanack, NJ
Jonathan & Susie Worthington  Califon, NJ

■ ■ ■

## President's Corner

This issue marks the end of another fine summer. It seems summers always go by so fast and before you know it you are looking back and saying where did it go. Living on the lake it means a change of boating purposes. Instead of going out to cool down and enjoy the sun and swimming we put on the sweaters and check out the changing of the leaves. It has been a busy summer as I try to figure out my retirement routine and try my hand at becoming a semi-retired tool dealer. I have hit a few flea markets to sell tools with enjoyable results. Besides the pleasure of gaining some spare cash the interaction with other people interested in old tools is fun. I have met many CRAFTS members at these flea markets and have enjoyed time spent discussing tools.

In July Hank Allen and I made the trip up to Connecticut to visit the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum. It was a fantastic trip and one of the tool highlights of the summer. His new full color book showing some of the rare planes of the museum is a must buy for every tool collector. It is an outstanding value and will sway you to attend his museum.

I attended Martin Donnelly's 3-day tool extravaganza at his headquarters in Avoca, NY. There were 3000 lots sold in three days. It was a staggering amount of tools, all well organized under giant tents. It was like being a little kid again and attending a circus. Now Martin knows how to do things right, so Friday afternoon he had a pig roast with all the fixings. After two full days at the auctions it was a splendid time to relax and talk with friends over some cold ones.

In August my daughter and I went to Washington, DC for a sightseeing visit. We spent four days trying to see everything we could. I was upset that the Smithsonian Arts & Industries Museum was closed for renovations. But there was plenty more to see. I think what most impressed me was the architecture of the buildings and the monuments. While in the Museum of American History my daughter enjoyed the exhibit of Julia Child's kitchen and the inaugural gowns of the first ladies. I spent this time viewing the Gunboat Philadelphia and exhibit on Power Machinery. Needless to say our interests were a little different. I look forward to another visit, although this time with my son, who will hopefully be more interested with the technological exhibits.

Lastly, as I do a lot of work getting articles for the Tool Shed I am always looking for people to help out. A publication like this depends on members and non-members contributions. A recent article from Mel Miller highlighted his collection of Davis levels. I received an email from Don Rosebrook letting our readers know that more information on Davis Levels as well as other level manufacturers can be found in his book – American Levels and their Makers, Volume 1, New England. I hope in the future Don can write an article telling us about his research on New Jersey level makers. If anyone else has an idea for an article please contact me. I would enjoy working with you so our members can learn more about their favorite topic – antique tools.

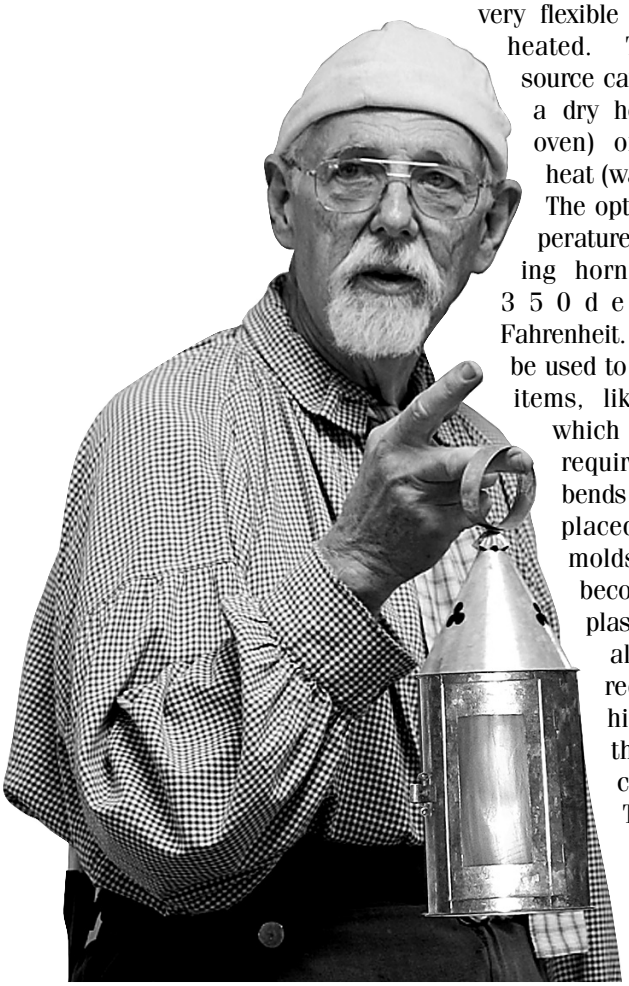
I look forward to seeing everyone at the CRAFTS picnic September 12th. ■

**If your mailing label shows "June 30, 2010" this will be your last *Tool Shed. T*o renew your membership send a check for $15 for 1 year or $30 for 2 years to Hank Allen, 524 Harristown Rd., Glen Rock, NJ 07452-3408. If you change your email address please send your new address to hankallen@verizon.net**

# Jim Newell – Hornsmith

The craft of working horn into utilitarian objects is literally thousands of years old. Our earliest ancestors used the meat, hide, bone and horn of animals in their daily lives. So, as Jim Newell told us, "horn smithing has been around for as long as there have been people". Today we think of horns as something that keeps liquids out. The Old Testament references horn as being used to carry ink and other liquids. Those who practice this craft are known as hornsmiths, or horners. Hornsmithing, highly developed in Europe, evolved under the Guild system and because of that horn work went beyond utilitarian, some of which became very artistic in nature. English hornsmiths are still making spoons today.

Getting good horn material is very difficult in the US. Because most cattle are raised for their hides as well as for their meat, they are dehorned very early in order to prevent the hides from getting scarred either accidentally or on purpose. A vestigial horn grows back but is absolutely useless for horn work. Horn is a material which becomes very flexible once it is heated. The heat source can be either a dry heat (in an oven) or a liquid heat (water or oil). The optimum temperature for heating horn is about 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Water can be used to shape thin items, like spoons, which don't require severe bends and can be placed into molds. But to become a truly plastic material horn requires a higher heat than water can provide. Tallow can be melted and readily brought up to 350 degrees. At that temperature horn can be flattened using a heavy weight (Jim uses a book press) and then can be split so finely that it becomes translucent and with sufficient pressure becomes transparent. Hornbooks, initially used by grammar school students to practice writing by tracing their letters, were made from this transparent horn. Early lanterns also used these thin plates of horn as windows.



*Jim Newell showing a horn windowed lantern*

Newell informed us that during the 1700's there were three things that were important to keep dry. Powder horns were used to carry gunpowder and keep it dry. When traveling, you needed a waterproof container for your salt since salt attracts water. In those days, salt was a valuable commodity and wasn't given away; you had to provide your own. Sewing needles were scarce and also needed to be kept in containers to prevent rust and keep them safe from damage so the horners provided needle cases. In addition to these three items, horners produced a seemingly endless variety of items used in everyday life. During the Revolutionary War, soldiers were issued two combs, a large toothed comb for general grooming and a very fine comb, called a nit picker, to keep down the head lice population which evidently was a big problem. Dice and other game pieces such as dominoes, checkers and chessmen, were made from horn and bone. Ear wax spoons were said to be carried by every gentleman during the eighteenth century to clean their ears.Buttons and drinking cups, thimbles, thread winders and tatting shuttles were all products of the hornsmiths.

*Large power horn*

Jim had on display several different sizes of powder horns. The largest was required by the military as they were customarily out in the field for weeks at a time. The smallest was called a priming horn and was thought to be used to prime the pan on a flintlock rifle. A mid-sized one was somewhat of a puzzle until very recently and the consensus by the experts is that it was a day horn, used when you went hunting for a few hours and didn't need enough powder for more than a few shots.

*Continued on page 11*

# THE AMERICAN SAW COMPANY

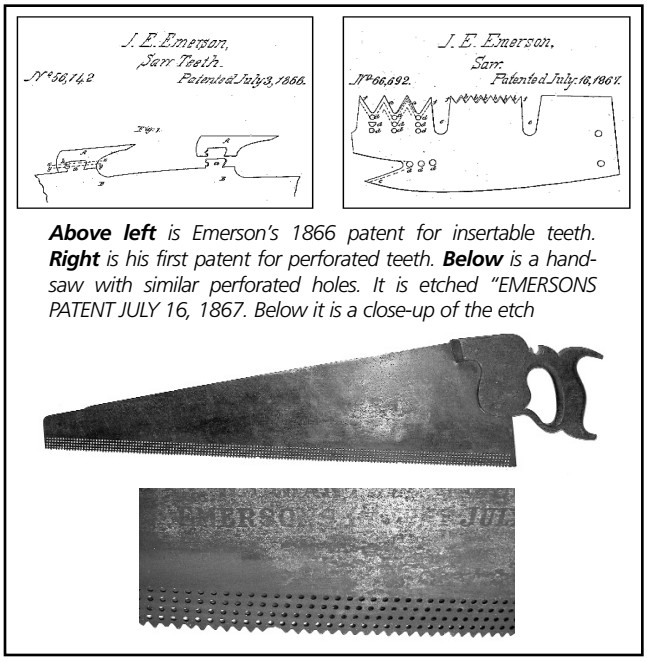
*Continued from page 1*

27,000 Calvary sabers and 12,000 officers swords, all of the highest quality. Soon afterwards he became the superintendent of the American Saw Company. The company was organized under the laws of New York in January, 1866, with a capital of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The manufactory was located at the foot of Broad Street in Trenton, New Jersey, with a general office in New York City. Its factory location was very close to the Delaware River and had canal access next to the factory. (The advertisement artwork on page one shows a large ship in a river next to the factory, but that was advertising propaganda.) The factory did have the Delaware Railroad run right next to the factory for easy shipping. Also of importance was that the factory of J.A. Roebling & Sons was right next door.

Its officers, at the date of its organization, were James C. Wilson, president; Henry G. Ely, treasurer; Samuel W. Putman, secretary - all residents of Brooklyn, New York; and James E. Emerson, superintendent, of Trenton. No change in its officers occurred until January, 1869, when Mr. James E. Emerson resigned the position of superintendent, and was succeeded by William E. Brook.

James Emerson first patented the insertable saw tooth in 1866 and assigned it to the American Saw Company. He patented many more variations of the insertable tooth saw, which were assigned to the American Saw Company and to himself.

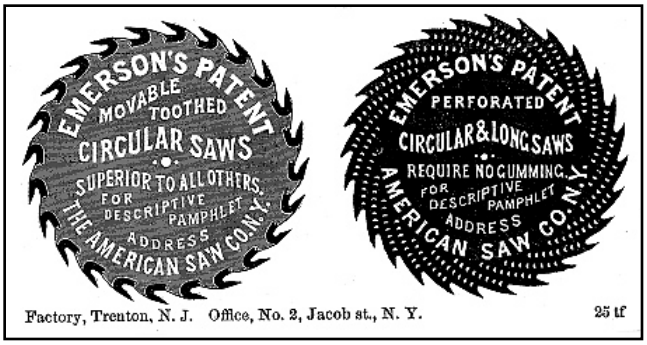
Another early invention by Mr. Emerson is the perforated saw blade. The perforations lessen the amount of filing




***Above left*** *is Emerson's 1866 patent for insertable teeth.* ***Right*** *is his first patent for perforated teeth.* ***Below*** *is a handsaw with similar perforated holes. It is etched "EMERSONS PATENT JULY 16, 1867. Below it is a close-up of the etch*

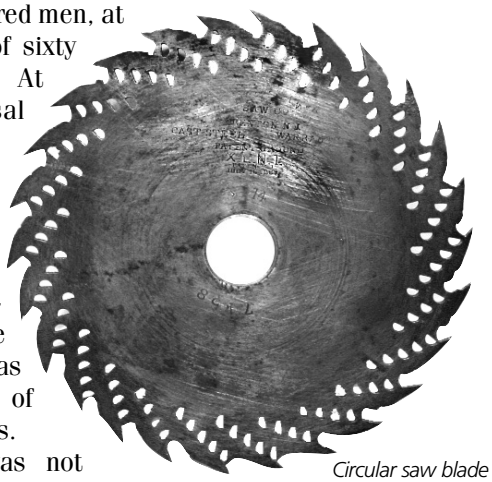


and prevents expansion and contraction of the rim by heat. They also prevent the blade from fracturing below the teeth, which invariably commences at a sharp corner made by the file. In case a fracture commences in this blade, it can only break through the bar between the aperture and throat of the tooth, and the aperture serves the same purpose of a round hole drilled at the end of a crack, which is the only means of repairing a fracture in any kind of blade. The aperture also serves as a permanent guide in filing, and enables the operator to keep the teeth all of uniform shape and equal distances apart.



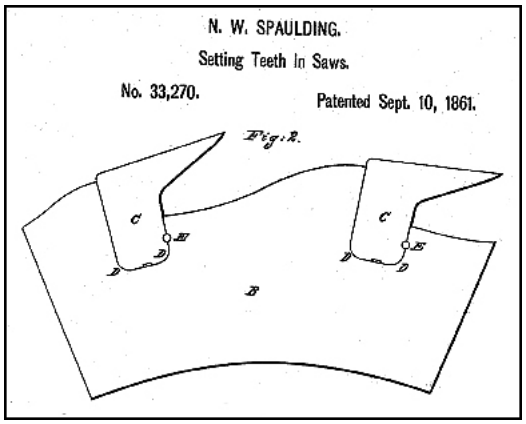

*The above ad is from the June 20, 1868* Scientific American.

The American Saw Company had become one of the more important businesses of Trenton, employing one hundred men, at an annual payroll of sixty thousand dollars. At the 1867 Universal Exposition in Paris they exhibited a saw eighty-eight inches in diameter, which is believed to be the largest circular saw ever made up to that time. It was prepared at a cost of two thousand dollars.



*Circular saw blade with Emerson's patented perforations made by the American Saw Co.*

The company was not without problems. In 1868 Mr. Emerson's former Sacramento business partner, Nathan W. Spaulding filed suit - Spaulding Vs./ Tucker & Putnam agents of the American Saw Company. Putnam and Tucker went to California to sell saws made by the American Saw Co. consisting of the Spaulding patented

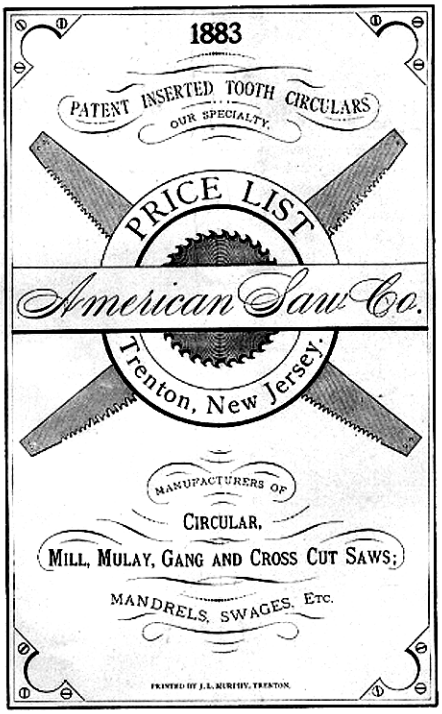



*The above Spaulding patent included a curved radius at the base of the inserted tooth. This prevented strain and fracture at the base.*

design. Mr. Spaulding patented his insertable tooth saw on Sept. 10, 1861 solving the problem with Emerson's earlier 1860 design. It was an expensive battle and the American Saw Company hired the best patent lawyer from New York City. Yet The American Saw Co. lost and had to pay Mr. Spaulding quite a bit for the patent infringement. Shorty after, in the 1869 records, Mr. Emerson is no longer listed as Superintendent of the company. Was there a falling out due to the patent problems? Emerson moved to Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania to start up his own saw manufacturing company. The area of Beaver Falls was well known for its fine iron manufacturing and here he partnered up with local businessman John P. Ford to form the saw making company Emerson, Ford & Co. Ford left and he took on a new partner, a Mr. Smith to become Emerson, Smith & Co. He retired during the later part of the 19th century and died in 1900 in Columbus Ohio. His legacy on saw design can be seen by a careful study of the book—Grimshaw on Saws, where Emerson's patented designs are often mentioned and displayed.

The American Saw Co. factory was destroyed by fire February 7, 1870, involving a loss of about one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Within four weeks new buildings were erected and work resumed as usual.

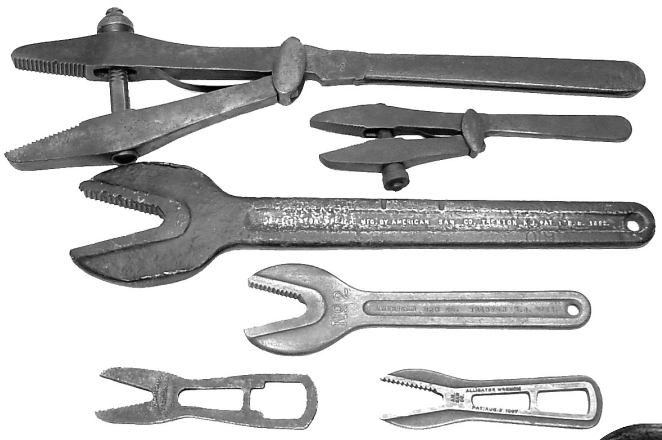
Hoping to diversify and widen their product line during the mid 1870's the company manufactured different patented wrenches for sale. First they offered the G.W. Waitt patented small alligator wrench. It was an easy match for their current facilities as it was effortlessly produced with metal already being used for saws and it was a simple stamped forged design. This basic alligator design was patented earlier by others but the American Saw Company got a trademark on the "Alligator" brand name. They expanded this basic design to larger sizes and in 1897 & 1898 S.T. Freas patented similar designs and assigned them to the company. They also offered an ingenious adjustable Alligator wrench patented in 1890 by A.J. Curtis, which could be used in pipe work. They manufactured other wrenches such as the Stevenson 1892 patented wrench and the 1892 Brooke patent for a bicycle wrench.



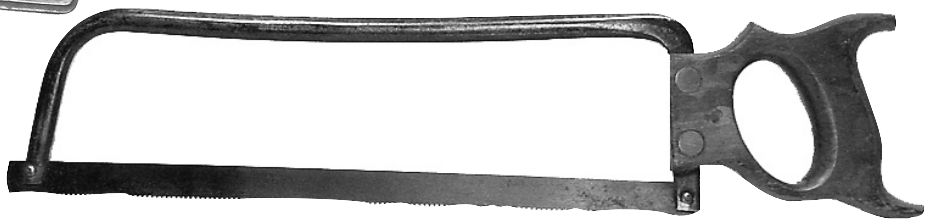

The New York Times reported in their paper August 3, 1898 that due to the general depression and bad outlook of the building trade the American Saw Company of Trenton, N.J. had to shut down indefinitely. It was employing 100 people and had been in business for 32 years manufacturing saws. Soon after this was a lawsuit by the American Saw Company on November 17, 1897, charging their secretary Isaac F. Bissell with misappropriations of funds over a three year period from 1891 to 1894 for approximately $1700.

The company sold its patent rights and saw business to Henry Disston & Sons in 1901. They closed their factory when they sold their patent rights and wrench business to their long-time neighbor, John A. Roebling Sons in the same year.

It was reported in the 1911 Obsolete American Securities and Corporations that in 1906 the American Saw Company Charter was void for nonpayment of taxes. This seems to log the ending of the American Saw Company of Trenton, NJ. Their contributions to the saw and wrench industries were impressive. Their work was carried on by two giants of industry—Disston & Roebling. Even though they were in business for just over thirty years finding tools made by this company is rare. Finding a saw is just about impossible. But that is what makes collecting tools so interesting—the hunt! ■



***Above** are some of the patented wrenches offered by the American Saw Co. Top are two Curtis pipe wrenches patented in1890. Center are two alligator wrenches patented in 1898 by S.T. Freas. Bottom left is small stamp forged alligator wrench patented in 1875 by G.W.Waitt. Bottom right is later 1897 patented design by S.T. Freas.*

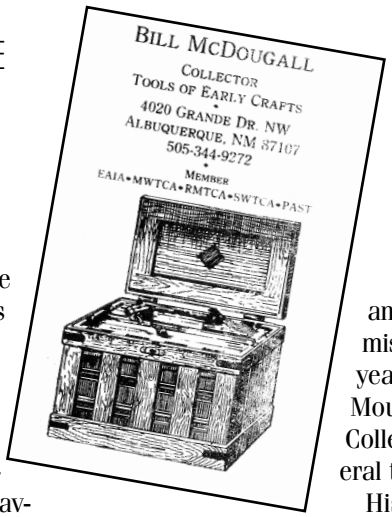


*Butcher's saw made and stamped by the American Saw Co.*

A REMEMBRANCE

# Bill McDougall

COLLECTOR




Bill McDougall, my friend and a legend in the antique tool world, died on July 10 at the age of 83. He was born, lived and died in Albuquerque, but his presence was felt far beyond the borders of New Mexico. He was a carpenter and then for many years a manager of large-scale construction projects all over the Southwest. Bill began collecting antique tools in the mid-1970s and joined EAIA and M-WTCA at that time. The traveling required by his work led him to find many tools before most of us were even thinking about them.

In 1964 he built his home of adobe block. It included a hall about 70 feet long and 10 feet wide with a 10 foot ceiling and a stained glass window at the end. Some of you may remember the picture of his collection displayed in that hall in the February 1991 issue of Smithsonian Magazine. That picture was on his card and is included with this remembrance. I was there and it was more impressive seeing it than just seeing the picture.

We met in Nashua, maybe 15 years ago, I don't remember the year. An instant friendship began, and I told him that he had to join CRAFTS. For the next 15 years he came to my home in Glen Rock twice a year before the Nashua auctions. Before the auctions we visited tool collections and other places of interest, such as Shelburne Museum, Stanley-Sloane Museum, Old Sturbridge Village and the Edison Museum. Some of you will remember the articles he wrote for the Tool Shed about those places. There were also articles by us about our visits to see the collections of Russ Ellis, Ted Hopkins and Bud Steere. He was a major contributor to the Tool Shed with seven articles.

Bill traveled extensively looking for tools and making many friends along the way. He was a regular at the Brown and Live Free auctions, and made 17 trips to England for the David Stanley auctions. He even attended a CRAFTS auction. He rarely missed a San Diego winter meeting (winter in NJ!) with his brother Jack of Las Cruces, also a CRAFTS member.

*Bill at the Stanley-Sloane Museum*

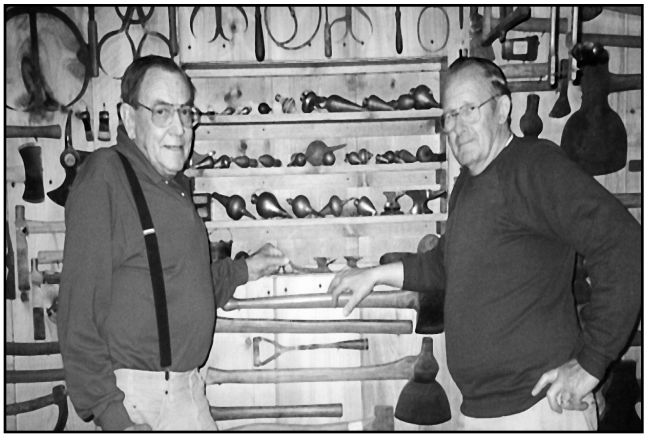
He was a Director of M-WTCA and once told me he had never missed an annual meeting in 30+ years. He belonged to Rocky Mountain and Southwest Tool Collectors, serving as President several times.

His many friends will always remember his quick wit and his endless jokes. The blacksmith demonstrating at a CRAFTS picnic asked if there were any questions. "Is that a Chestnut tree you're working under," he asked. We visited Bill Phillips a few times to talk tools. He knew that Bill would hand him a cool beer as soon as he entered the barn. Those were fun times.

Bill was a student of the English language. I always sent him the William Safire columns in the Times Magazine section. He then passed them on to his brother, Jack. He knew the origin of tinker's damn, cash on the barrelhead, to be at loggerheads and any other you might ask about. He read extensively. When he stayed with us he was always up early. When I finally found my way to the breakfast table he and my wife, Anne, would be discussing books they had read and the national news of the day. We visited several places he had read about such as Grand Central Station, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Battleship New Jersey and Hyde Park.

We had been to Nashua so many times that he knew every Holiday Inn employee. They treated him royally. Killarney's Pub at the Inn was his favorite place to relax and talk with other collectors. When we arrived, there would always be a sign at the same Pub table, "Reserved for the tool guys!" Importantly, he always had the room closest to the Pub, which I have inherited.

My Glen Rock grandsons loved Bill. He wore cowboy boots and called them "Dude." He always brought them some foreign coins from countries that he had visited

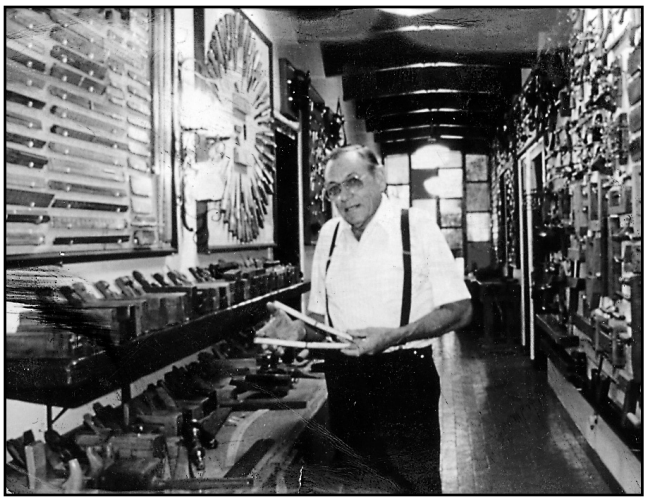


*Bill with Bud Steere in Bud's Tool Room*

after the Stanley auctions, and even some tools after he learned that my grandson, Jonas, had started a tool collection. He was their friend and they thought he was "Cool"!

Bill's obituary noted that he knew the evolution and use of every tool in his collection. His collecting objective was to have a complete set of tools for every trade and I think he was successful. After he disposed of his collection a few years ago, he still kept his dental tools including a very early dental chair that he found in New Haven on one of our Nashua trips. Some of you will remember his Tool Shed article, "Please Don't Collect Dental Tools." HE wanted them.

I am saddened by Bill's death, of course, but no matter what I do, or where I go, or who I meet in the tool world there will always be reminders of the great times we had together. It was a unique friendship. ■



*This photograph of Bill appeared inthe Smithsonian article*

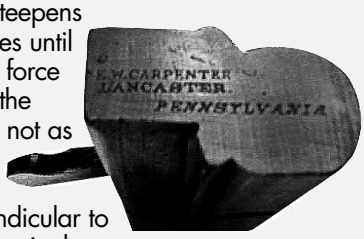
# GUNSTOCKER'S PLANE – FOLLOWUP

**By Jack Whelan**

Hampton Williams kindly provided pictures (Figs 1-2) of his gunstocker's made by R.A.Parrish (Philadelphia 1807-45). Of particular interest is the owner's mark on the heel, J.H.Lewis. Ham found a Joseph Lewis listed as a percussion gunmaker practicing in Pike county PA circa 1830-1850 in Gluckman's American Gunmakers. Hardly a sure-identification, but interesting.

This plane and the others shown in the June Tool Shed are designed to cut a smaller radius than that of the rifle barrel. Several other planes have been reported with irons, like gunstocker's, capable of cutting beyond a half-circle - but only in grooves of larger radius than useful to a gunsmith. The photographs of Figs.3-4, provided by Robert Brown, show planes of this type and pose the question – what were they used for?

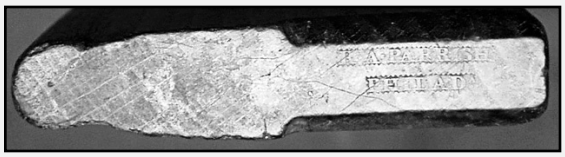
In cutting a full semicircular groove with a full round, the profile steepens as the cut progresses until the last few strokes force the outer edges of the plane iron to serve not as a cutter, but as a scraper. The cutting edge is perpendicular to the cut, and behaves in the same manner as would a vertical scraper moving forward at 45 degrees. The cut suffers.




A careful worker can improve this by turning the edge of the plane iron just as one sharpens a cabinet scraper. Herb Kean was forced to do this in making the model of the rifle stock shown in the June article. It works, but the edge doesn't last long, and requires further edge turning.

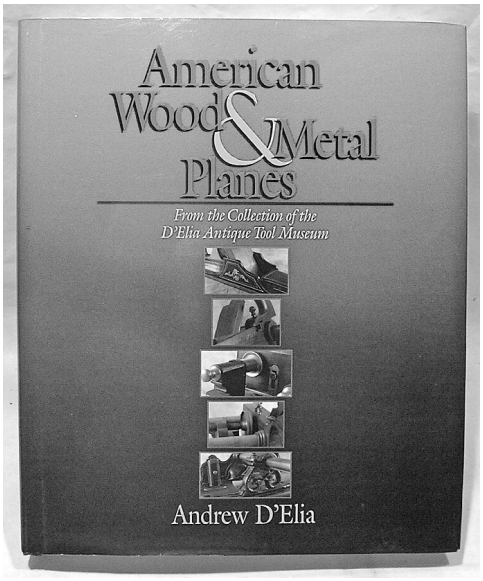
One possible explanation for the configuration shown by the planes of Figs 3-4 is to provide an extended edge to the plane iron, allowing an extended section for turning the edge. Tilting the plane body does not change the shape of the cut. The final strokes of the plane are made with its body rotated to permit use of the extended scraper-like edge.

I would be happy to hear your opinion of this suggestion, or to offer your alternate explanation.



# THE D'ELIA MUSEUM

*By Bob Garay*



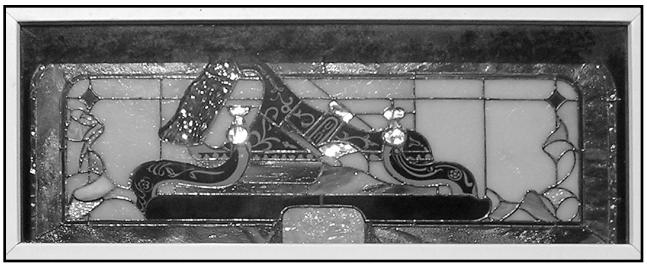

At our June CRAFTS meeting a member had just returned from the Mystic Seaport EAIA meeting. A special part of this event was a trip to the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum. Thus, at our meeting he showed us the new book "American Wood & Metal Planes" It is a collection of over 400 color pictures with descriptions of planes from the D'Elia Museum. I was amazed with the amount of rare and unique planes in the book. I was also impressed with the quality of the 342 page book, with all color photography of these rare planes. As soon as I got home I ordered a book for myself. When I got it in the mail I immediately opened it up and sat down spending the next two hours going over every plane in the book. Being completely absorbed in the book when I was done, I knew I had to set up a visit to the museum and see these planes in person.

*Library and D'Elia Antique Tool Museum in Scotland, CT*

Thus, July 27th I picked up fellow CRAFTS member Hank Allen and headed to Scotland, Connecticut to visit the museum. It was an easy ride along the coast. Then we headed inland thru some country roads in a very historic area of Connecticut. We easily found the Scotland Library & D'Elia Museum and turned into its graceful curved driveway revealing the museum in a quiet wooded setting with attractive modern architecture. This museum all came to be while Andy was searching for a home for his extensive collection of antique tools. He suggested to the town of Scotland joining the public library and his tool museum in one locality. He and his wife Anna Mae generously donated the funds to put a new structure on an existing town owned parcel of land. The result is a lovely library occupying 7,000 sq. ft., and the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum is in a separate 1,000 sq. ft. room.

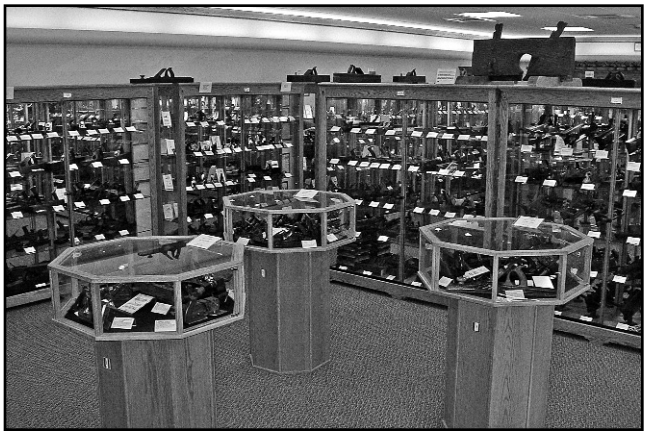
Entering the library, I was captivated by the expansive layout, with fine wood furnishings. I was pleased when I learned that the architect was from New Jersey. When we got to the museum, Andy opened it up just for us so we could explore the many rare and unique planes inside. What I found out once we were inside is that Hank and Andy were old high school chums and they spent most of the time talking about younger days. This left me on my own to explore all the planes in their oak cabinets. Each plane is presented with information relating to its history. At anytime I wanted Andy would open a cabinet and let me hold the plane for closer inspection and photograph it.

Andy's extensive collection of over 1,400 planes has many examples of patented planes from 1820 to 1940 featuring inventors such as Knowles, Holly, Loughborough, Bailey, Rodier, Worrall, and many other rare inventors. The collection also consists of uncommon planes made by makers, Stanley, Sargent, Chaplin, Gage, and a number of Dutch and English planes. Also on display is a collection of early 18th century wooden planemakers such as F. Nicholson, Chelor, I. Nicholson, I. Jones, Jo. Fuller, Jn. Tower, and others. He has over 150 different Connecticut plane makers as well. All of the antique planes were acquired by Andrew D'Elia over the last 40 years. He even has the first plane he collected, a crown molder by E.B. Jackson. He paid $35 for



*Stained glass window of Miller plow plane*

# & BOOK

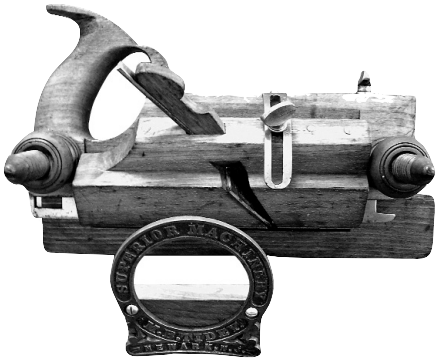


*Showcases of planes as you enter the museum*

it at the Newfane, Vermont flea market. The collection of patented planes is probably the most extensive ever assembled in one place. A number of the patented planes are represented in great depth.

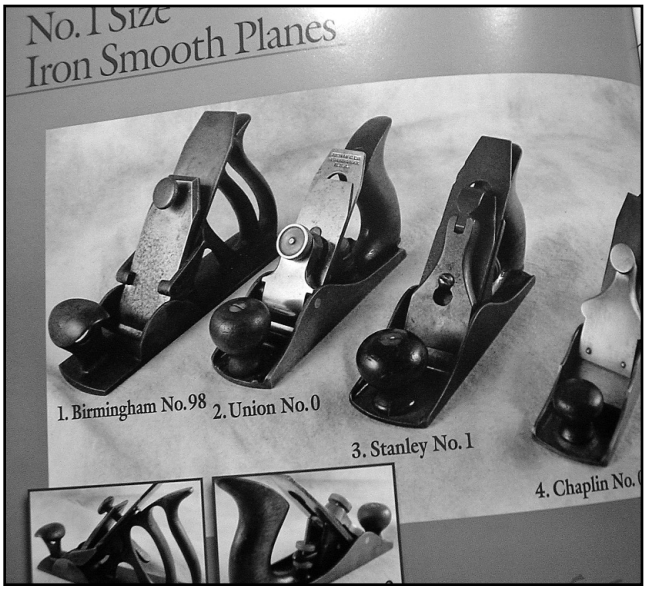
The museum opened in 2006 and is open weekends 10:00AM – 4:00PM or by appointment. Over each of the museum's five windows are unique stained glass panels depicting a number of rare woodworking planes. The maker of the glass, Stained Architectural Glass, of CT. had to borrow the planes and take them to NJ to match up the colors with the stained glass they were going to use. Also in the

*Roy Underhill (right) presenting the Melancholia plane that he made to Andy D'Elia, at EAIA's 75th anniversary meeting in Albany, NewYork, Photo: Paul Van Pernis*



*Rare M. B. Tidey patent double beveling plane and logo ring*

museum are paintings of plane inventors and blow-up copies of rare planemaker marks. The planes are all housed in over 20 fine oak framed glass cabinets with mirror backs and are well lighted. These cabinets are all custom made by a California company following Andy's specifications. It is well laid out and has a spacious feel.



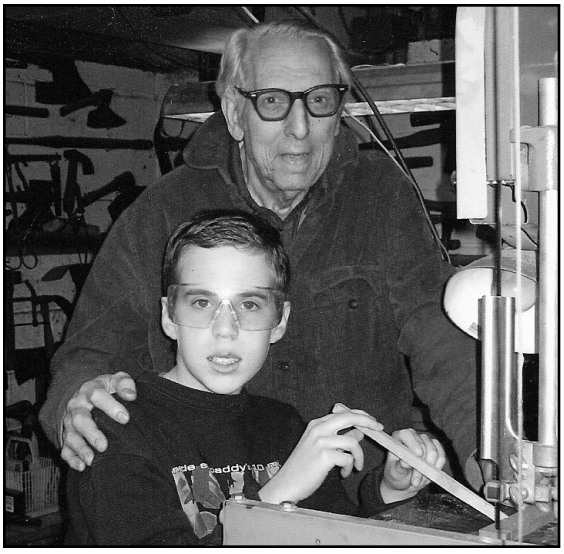

*Page from book showing No. 1 planes*

Now if our visit to the museum wasn't enough to make a great day, Andy invited us to his house for some lunch. He lives only minutes from the museum in a colonial house built in 1720. His wife Anna Mae made sure we had plenty to eat before we left for our trip back home. Especially fine was the home made cake topped with ice cream for desert.

*Continued on page 10*

## IT'S PAYBACK TIME

There are some people in the tool collecting community that are not aware of how lucky they are. They have not stopped to analyze their lives — with and without the activity of tool collecting. I personally have always considered tools a blessing. They give me something interesting to do; they are challenging at times; and sometimes I even make a few bucks off them.



But I never realized how much a part of my life tools were until Doris passed away. Right now tools are one of the most important parts. I know others that are in the same situation. They also never felt the real importance of tools until tools became the best fun that they had during their daily routines.

But let's talk about the average collector, who is not alone. He also has a lot more fun from his hobby than he might realize, what with the club meetings, flea markets, auctions and such. Tools have become a part of his life that is worth "big money" . So, is it time to give back some of this value? Of course, but how?

There are quite a few ways, many involving monetary donations. But that's too easy. I am going to suggest a way, that has real guts to it: **TEACH A CHILD ABOUT TOOLS.**

In today's education system, the manual training shop, and the metal shop are gone. A few wood shops are left at the High School level, but they are on their way out with budget cuts and parents demanding pre-college curricula. Our children are graduating with very little knowledge of how to use their hands to fix things around the house. Their ability to use tools is so slim that hanging a picture becomes a project. Where can they get this knowledge, if not at school or from their parents? - From a person that has spent a good part of his adult life collecting and using tools. From grandfathers who grew up learning from their fathers and teachers at school. From people like you and me!

I have taught Boy Scouts the use of tools and also a few relatives. But some time ago my close neighbor's boy mentioned to his folks that he would be interested in woodworking, after seeing some of the things that I made. I was willing to take on the boy, but explained to his parents that I didn't give it much hope. Why? Because all the kid wanted to do after school was to play with his electronic toys. (He was 10). But we all agreed it would be worth a try.

I'll shorten this up at this point, and give you the end result. Brian has been with me almost every Saturday morning for nine months now. He has become not only a knowledgeable woodworker, but he has learned ways of life that his parent's generation missed. He realizes that working with your hands is not only challenging but enjoyable. He has produced things that have sold on eBay for some surprising money. I'm sure that when he steps into adulthood, he will be a better man than his "electronic" friends.

So, if you want to "give back" for the enjoyment that you have had with tools, **TEACH A CHILD ABOUT TOOLS**. ■

## The D'Elia Museum & Book

*Continued from page 9*

Now I have always thought tool collectors were special people, well a trip like this supports that position. ■

Andrew D'Elia and the D'Elia antique Tool Museum can be reached at 860-423-2016 and email – www.deliatoolmuseum.com

*Rare Lowes patent filletster plane Newark, NJ*

# Jim Newell – Hornsmith

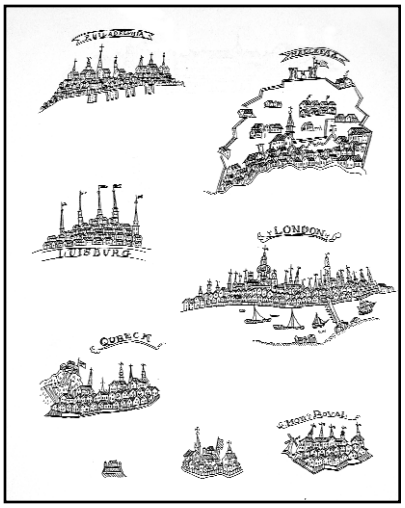
*Continued from page 3*

The process of making a powder horn today goes something like this: you begin by selecting a horn with a proper curve; something comfortable that will hug your body when slung over your shoulder. Most raw horn today is imported, primarily from South America and Africa. Before it comes into the US it must first be polished in order to eliminate the cracks and fissures that could harbor insects and the other unsanitary things that the health department would like to eliminate. If, however, you happen to acquire a horn that needs to be cleaned, the first step is to boil the horn to clean out any dried blood or other foreign matter. Second, measure the tip of the horn which is solid. You'll want to leave about an inch of the tip attached to the horn so that a removable plug can be inserted; the remainder of the tip can then be removed. A hole is then drilled for the plug. At the large end of the horn any cracks, chips or unevenness is cut off. Scraping follows, to smooth out the horn, followed by sanding which starts at 60 grit and is worked through the grits all the way up to 1200 grit.

By the way, if you'd like to die a most painful death, just let your wife catch you boiling your horn on her stove. According to Jim's wife, the smell is just awful. Jim told the story of how he made that mistake, once. His wife said that, on that day, she was in the car on her way home and noticed a foul odor in the air when she was about four blocks from the house and kept getting worse the closer she got. Jim said that her reaction, when she came into the kitchen and found out what he was doing, was to scream. Why didn't Jim anticipate a problem? Well, he had a cold and couldn't smell very much anyway. How does he do it today? His instructions are: go to farthest edge of a very large field in an unpopulated area…well you get the idea. Finally, to complete the horn, a plug is made for the large end of the horn and is attached by pegging it through the horn.

The dust and chips from working horn can be boiled down in hot water and rendered into a paste which can be molded and then applied to decorate horn items, much like slipwork on pottery. Any engraving on horn, which is similar to scrimshaw on whale's teeth, was usually done with a knife. On display, Jim had a book entitled, A Sketchbook of Early Colonial and Early American Powder Horn Design 1740 – 1800 by Lee A. Larkin which provides a glimpse into some of the amazing designs horners used on their work. Views of major cities were popular. Horn could be decorated in other ways. For example, Berks County, Pennsylvania horns were frequently decorated with a distinctive iron oxide stain.

*Berks County powder horn with iron oxide decoration*




*A page of designs from the Lee A. Larkin design book*

Horn combs always had competition from combs made of boxwood A page of designs from the Lee A. Larkin design bookwood, tortoise shell, ivory, hard rubber and cellulose (early plastic). With the rubber shortage during World War Two no rubber combs were produced and because horn could be boiled and thus sanitized, hospitals would only use horn combs. After the war, inexpensive plastic and rubber combs along with the increased cost of manufacturing spelled the end of large scale horn comb production in the US.

Jim Newell came to the CRAFTS meeting dressed in period garb as he is a reenactor in two wars, the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War as member of a German regiment. These activities help to keep the traditions of hornsmithing alive. As a horner, Jim started late in his life, sometime in the mid eighties. He is a member of the Honorable Company of Horners and the Horn Guild which are helping to preserve the traditions of horn craft. Contemporary hornsmithing has moved toward greater artistic expression. To see the amazing work of these contemporary craftsmen take a look at the following website, www.hornguild.org. There you'll find some wonderful examples of the hornsmith's art. Also, Jim told us about Chuck Dixon's Muzzle loading Shop, in Kempton, PA, which sponsors the annual Gunmakers Fair where seminars on several crafts related to muzzle loading rifles, including hornsmithing, are presented and horn material is available for purchase. Their website is: www.dixonmuzzleloading.com.

Finally, as a post script, some of you may remember a presentation on comb making by Troy Boyer, at a CRAFTS meeting a few years ago. He outlined the history of the Crouse family of comb makers, whose ancestors settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in the 1750"s, some of whom fought in the Revolutionary War. Sadly, Jim told us that this last PA family of comb makers, despite trying to keep things going, could no longer continue in business and had sold all of their equipment. ■

The TOOL SHED

CRAFTS of New Jersey
15 N.River styx Road
Hopatcong, NJ 07843

## Upcoming Tool Events

**Sept. 12** - CRAFTS annual picnic, Camp Brady. Tailgating and picnic lunch. Judged tool displays with prizes. Bob Garay (973)398-5875, takeadip@optonline.net

**Sept. 13-23** – EAIA 2010 Tool Tour, Switzerland. www.EAIAinfo.org

**Sept. 17 & 18** - Live Free or Die Antique Tool Auction, Holiday Inn Everett Turnpike, Nashua, New Hampshire, Martin Donnelly, 800-869-0695 - email- www.mjdtools.com

**Sept. 19** - EAIA regional meet with ATTIC, (antique tools and trades in Connecticut). The EAIA will hold a regional meeting in Lebanon, Connecticut, co-hosted by ATTIC at the Lebanon Historical Society Museum.

**Sept. 22** - Tony Murland Tool Auctions Combined International and General Tool Auction, England. www.antiquetools.co.uk, 011-44-1449-722992.

**Sept. 25** – 56th David Stanley International Auction, England. www.davidstanley.com

**Sept. 25 & 26** - Old Sturbridge Village, "Crafts at Close Range." Full and half day workshops. Old Sturbridge Village Web site - www.osv.org. or call 508-347-0234

**Oct. 22-23** – 37 International Show/Auction – Brown Auction Services, Sheraton Inn, Harrisburg, PA. Clarence Blanchard, 800-248-8114, www.finetools.com

**Nov. 7** – CRAFTS general meeting, Host Masonic Lodge, Highbridge, NJ. Bob Garay (973)398-5875, takeadip@optonline.net

## Want Ads

**VINTAGE TOOLS** for woodworking, machining, leatherwork and more. See us at New England area tool meets and online at www.TimelessToolsandTreasures.com or write jane@janeb-butler.com.

**WANTED-** Bell System tools and electrician's pliers. Ted Davidson (609) 731-6915.

**NEED HELP** disposing of your tools or home items? Entire or partial house clean-outs available. Call Steve Zluky, (908)534-2710.

**JIMBODETOOLS.COM** The Largest Antique Tool Website on Earth Buying and Selling Fine Antique Tools Ph: 518-537-8665 email: jim@jimbodetools.com

**JUST A NOTE** to advise anyone interested that I have just added a number of articles and other information to the web site Yesteryears tools.com Thanks, Tom Lamond - Tom@yesteryearstools.com

**TOOLS FOR SALE** – Stanley planes, patented braces, Disston Saws, and more. Visit my eBay auctions, new tools every week. eBay seller – TAKEADIP - or Email me at - takeadip@opton-line.net

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**Next Meeting • November 7, 2010 –1PM • HOST Masonic Lodge • Highbridge, NJ**