The TOOL SHED

No. 23 September - Oct. 1982

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

THE TAUNTON MANUFACTURING COMPANY
1838-1842
by Carl E. Bopp

The Taunton Manufacturing Company was a short-lived venture in making axes and other edge tools in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey. Records indicate that Taunton tools were of high quality. Yet, in spite of this, the company lasted only a few years.

As tool collectors we sometimes find a tool with an unfamiliar name on it and then try to uncover information about the manufacturer. With the Taunton Manufacturing Company, however, I did not start with a tool. In fact, I have never seen its name on a tool. My interest in the company began when I found its name in the Franklin Journals. These journals, published in two volumes each year, contain synopses of the Franklin Institute Fairs, which were held in Philadelphia.

For the year 1840, the Journal simply said: "To the Taunton Manufacturing Company, of New Jersey, for their edge tools, deposited by Livingston & Lyman. A Certificate of Honourable Mention."

Two years later, in 1842, it said: "Axes from the Taunton Co., D. Simmons, and Green & Co. These are really beautiful, and highly creditable to the makers. This article our own manufacturers have brought to such perfection, that the foreign article is entirely forgotten.

My first thought was that "New Jersey" was a misprint that should have read "Massachusetts." On the other hand, I knew that there was a hamlet called Taunton (now called Taunton Lake) in present-day Medford Township, Burlington County, N.J., and that an iron furnace and forge had been located there before the American Revolution.

Taunton Furnace was built in 1766-67. It was one of four Pine Barren bog-iron furnaces and forges built in the 1760's by Charles Read of

(continued on page 10)

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ZLUKY RE-ELECTED CRAFTS PRESIDENT

At the annual business meeting of CRAFTS of New Jersey, held on June 6, 1982, Stephen Zluky of Whitehouse, N.J., was re-elected President for the 1982-1983 year.

Also elected at the June meeting were: Harry J. O'Neill of Annandale, Vice President; William A. Gustafson of New Providence, Secretary; and C. Carroll Palmer of Plainfield, Treasurer.

Chosen to three-year terms on the CRAFTS Board of Directors were: Lewis C. Cooper, Chester; Alexander Farnham, Stockton; and Donald B. Lipsey, Belvidere. Emil S. Pollak of Mendham was selected to fill a two-year

(continued on page 10)

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SEPTEMBER 19th MEETING WILL BE AT FARNHAM'S. DETAILS ON PAGE 2.

CRAFTS of New Jersey

Collectors of Rare and Familiar Tools Society of New Jersey

President _____ STEPHEN ZLUKY, Whitehouse

Vice President _____ HARRY J. O'NEILL, Annandale

Secretary ____ WILLIAM A. GUSTAFSON, New Providence

Treasurer _____ C. CARROLL PALMER, Plainfield

Membership in CRAFTS is open to anyone interested in early trades and industries, and the identification, study, and preservation of tools and implements used and made in New Jersey. Annual dues are five dollars for the membership year of July 1 to June 30. Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer: C. Carroll Palmer, 725 Pemberton Ave., Plainfield, NJ 07060.

The Tool Shed

Published five times per year for members of CRAFTS of New Jersey. Editor: Robert Fridlington, 8 Keith Jeffries Ave., Cranford, NJ 07016. Contributions, especially about New Jersey tools and trades, are welcomed.

FARNHAMS TO HOST SEPTEMBER 19th MEETING

CRAFTS of New Jersey will open its 1982-1983 year on Sunday, September 19, with a picnic meeting at Alex and Barbara Farnham's studio and farm in Stockton.

In case of rain the meeting will be canceled. If you have any doubt as to whether or not the picnic will be held, call Steve Zluky, (201) 534-2710, after 9:00 a.m. on the morning of the 19th.

Festivities will begin at 11:00 a.m. with the "Swap & Sell," which will be followed by the picnic at noon. Each family is asked to bring a casserole, a salad, or a dessert—as well as its own chairs. CRAFTS will provide the hamburgers, hotdogs, soda, and beer.

Members are also asked to bring some favorite tools or crafts for display.

If the September 19 meeting should be canceled, the next meeting will be held on November 21.

Looking ahead: Mr. Tom Romano will speak at the November 21 meeting on "Bridle Making & Leather Tooling." All members are asked to bring some leather-working tools for display.

The remaining meetings of the 1982-1983 year will be held on February 6, April 10, and June 5. The programs for these meetings will be announced in the next issue.

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STENZLER RECUPERATING

While visiting in Italy this past summer Mrs. Erna Stenzler suffered an accident, resulting in a broken ankle. She is now home, but the injury is going to keep her in bed for two or three months.

Erna is down but not out—and she would appreciate seeing some familiar faces. So if you are in the neighborhood of 8310 Roberts Road, Elkins Park, Pa., drop in and say hello. And if you want to discuss tools, she is ready to talk!

We all wish Erna the speediest possible recovery.

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BEAUTIFUL TOOLS

For a special Early American Industries Association project that will result in publication Norton "Bud" Brown is searching for tools with asthetically pleasing designs.

The tools can be either exotic or commonplace (rare or familiar?) ones. But they should have unusually graceful or dramatic lines—something that excites both the eye and the mind.

If you have a tool of this sort, an especially "artistic-looking" piece, send a black and white polaroid shot of it to Bud, and he will then determine whether he can use a photograph for this project.

His address is:

Mr. Norton K. Brown
Green Blind Farms
Box 284, RD #5
Sinking Springs, PA 19608

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● We follow the exciting progress of CRAFTS through the Tool Shed..., plus occasional comments in Shavings. A membership of approximately 200. Terrific! Congratulations to all who have worked so hard to create so successful an organization. We are proud to be charter members.

Please extend our best wishes to all.

-Robert A. Garner
Norwood, NY

(Ed. note: The following letter was sent to CRAFTS President Stephen Zluky. Identical letters were also sent to Douglas R. Hough, President of EAIA; Kenneth Runkle, President of MWTCA; and Harold D. Berry, President of PATINA.)

● As a tool collector, as a tool dealer, as a member of EAIA, MWTCA, PATINA, and CRAFTS, as a participant in hundreds of auctions, as a tool user, as one who appreciates beautiful tools, I notice an appreciable increase in the interest of tool collecting and tool study.

There is a tremendous traffic in the exchange of tools—auctions, trading, dealing, mail ordering, and others. All the tool organizations have a basic interest for the dissemination of knowledge related to tools.

One area sadly missing for the comfortable exchange of tools is a common language related to the condition or grading of such tools. That is: Mint, Excellent, Good, Fair—A, B, C, D—1, 2, 3, 4. The idea of a common language for the assessment of tools and tool condition has been talked about, written about—but as yet no common bottom line.

About a year ago Patina published some good suggestions. Vern Ward in his Iron Horse publication of July, 1982, presented an editorial on the subject.

So, with a copy of this letter to EAIA, MWTCA, PATINA, and CRAFTS and as an active member of the above tool organizations, I am suggesting that a committee be formed by each organization to individually or jointly or both develop a mutually agreeable set of standards, a universally acceptable table of conditions for an effective grading system.

I offer my services as a committee member.

-Harry O. Ludwig
Reading, PA

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CRAFTS GOES INTERNATIONAL

CRAFTS of New Jersey extends a warm welcome to its newest member, Mr. R.B. Miller, 508 Broadway Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4G-2R8.

Mr. Miller is not only our newest member, but he is the first member of CRAFTS from outside of the United States.

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DR. ABRAHAM ALPERT

Dr. Abraham Alpert of North Plainfield, N.J., a founding member of CRAFTS, died on August 26, 1982. He was sixty-nine.

From the beginning, Abe Alpert was one of this organization's most dedicated members. He was part of the group that conducts the spring auctions. Last May, although in poor health, Abe showed up on auction day as usual, ready to work.

We have lost a good friend. He will be missed.

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THE A.H. CROCKFORD BIT-CLAMPS AND BIT-BRACE

by Dominic Micalizzi

In the April, 1982, issue of the Tool Shed I described a brace with an unusual chuck that I had recently acquired.

The side of the chuck was open. The bit slid into this side opening and was held fast by a thumbscrew that turned down from the top.

The brace did not bear a patent date, but it was signed on the thumbscrew. Corrosion had made the name nearly illegible, but it appeared to be Crockford Mfg. Co. / Newark, NJ.

I now have the patent papers for the "bit clamp" shown at right, patented by Alfred H. Crockford of Newark in 1878.

According to Crockford's specifications: "This invention has for its object to furnish for augers and drills an improved bit clamp, by which the bits may be centered and firmly clamped in simple and reliable manner; and the invention consists of a socket that is open at one side, and provided with an interior recess corresponding to the enlarged end of the bit shank, which is clamped by a centering screw at the upper end of the socket, so as to bear by a conical bottom recess on the conically tapering end of the shank."

As indicated by A' in the drawing at the right, "an angular offset in the handle of the stock prevents the contact of the hand with the clamping and centering screw."

Despite the "superior and reliable" features of his new bit clamp, Crockford was not satisfied. A year and a half later he elaborated on this invention and patented a "new and improved" ratchet brace that included some new variations for securing the bit (see patent drawings on page 7).

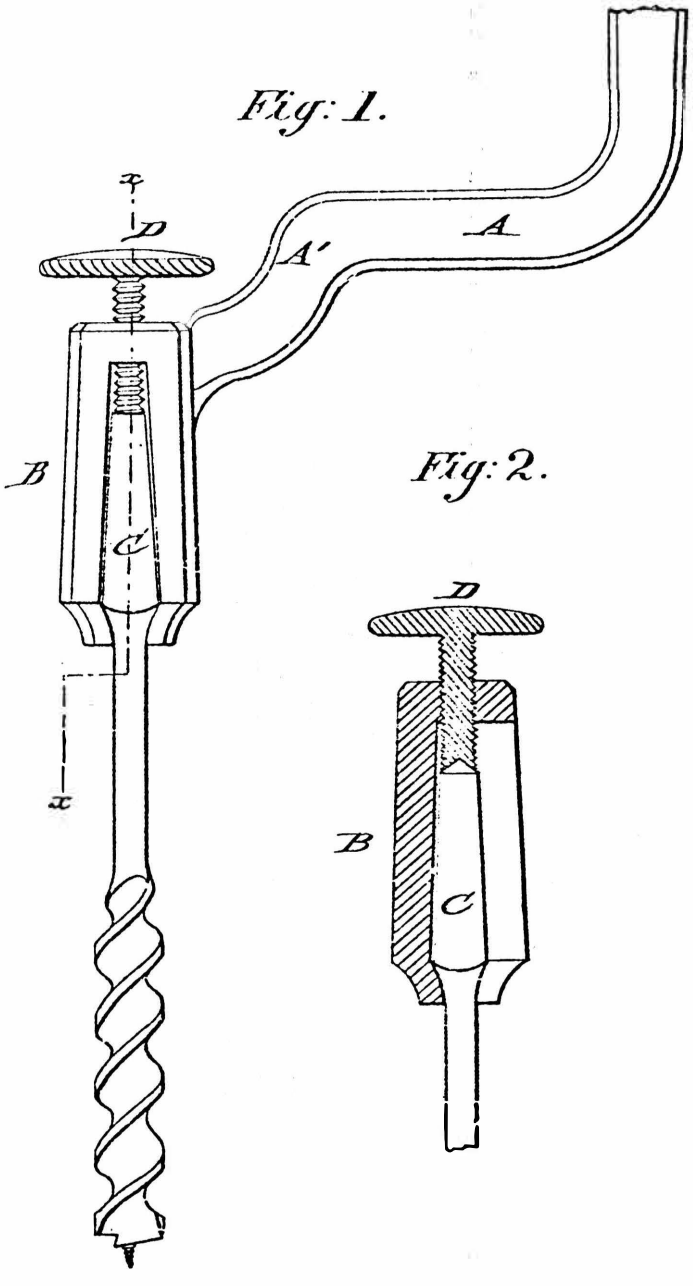
The ratchet arrangement, of course, allowed the tool to "be applied to work in places or positions where the brace-stock cannot have full swing." And the new chuck offered three separate ways "whereby the bits and drills may be centered and firmly secured within the brace."

The chuck or "socket" on the new brace is similar to Crockford's bit clamp. It is open on one side and has

(continued on page 6)

A. H. CROCKFORD
Bit-Clamps.

Patented July 16, 1878.



A GERMAN WHEELWRIGHT'S AXE

by Raymond R. Townsend

The particular wheelwright's axe shown in Figure 1 has an 11.7 inch cutting edge, and it belongs to the Beil family of German axes.

Beil is a German generic term indicating certain types or forms of axes. There are several characteristic differences between the German Axt and Beil when they are used as tools.

The Axt has a longer handle; the Beil a shorter one. The cutting edge of the Axt is beveled on both sides; the Beil, with but a few exceptions, only on one side. The Axt is used with two hands; the Beil generally with one. The Axt is used for rough work, such as felling trees, splitting wood, or roughly squaring timbers; the Beil is used after the Axt for cutting thin chips, as in fine hewing and smoothing wood. And the Beil usually weighs less.

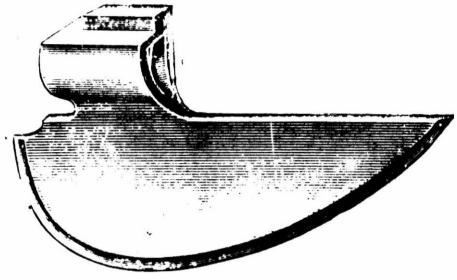


Figure 1: Stellmacherbeil, or Wheelwright's axe.

The Beil illustrated here is but one of several types used by the German wheelwright. It has the form of the German das Barte, or bearded axe.

Shown in Figure 2 is an almost identical type of axe that was used as a weapon. It is described and illustrated by M. Viollett-Le-Duc, Dictionaire Reasonne du Mobiler Francaise (Paris, 1871).

He writes: "We will speak here of a single weapon which can be ranked in the series of axes. It consists of a very wide blade handled from side by a socket [sometimes the handle may be as long as four to five feet].

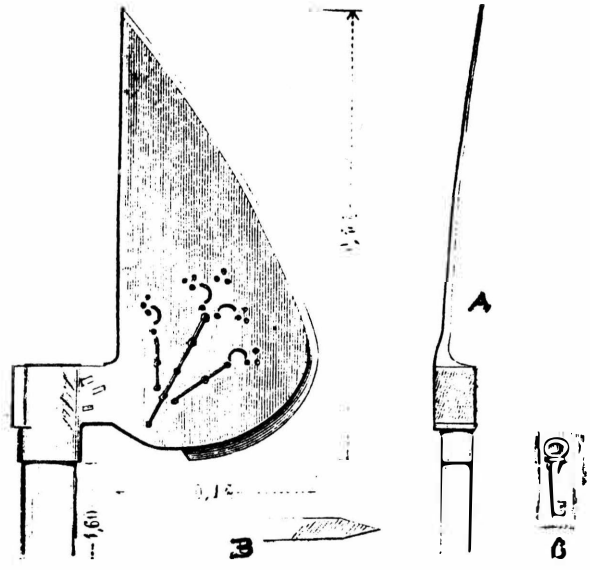


Figure 2

"It was an axe designated for assault of breeches... and dates from, we believe, the latter years of the XIV century. One will observe that the blade (see in A) with the edge, slants from left to right, which gives a greater strength to the thrusting stroke, since they can hold the handle with both hands; the right hand is behind, as for the charge of the Bayonet. In B is traced the beveled edge, and in C the maker's mark stamped three times near the socket.

"This weapon, well wielded, must be terrible. The steel is excellent, and the execution perfect. It shows at that time by what accurate observations the armourers succeeded in making armour of war, and how they knew to give them the most deadly forms."!

It is interesting to note that the slant of the blade was for a reason other than to protect the fingers. Was the slant first developed because the axe was used as a weapon?

Figure 3 shows three axes of the same type from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum. G. C. Stone, in

(continued on page 12)

BRUCKNER AUCTION IN NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

by Steve Zluky

Two tool auctions and a continuing tag sale—what a way to spend two days in Nashua, New Hampshire!

On August 27th and 28th auctioneer Richard Crane sold the collection of CRAFTSman Howard Bruckner, with some additions. The collection contained a great many outstanding items, including eighteenth-century planes, primitive braces, scarce Stanley items, and showy brass tools. These pieces drew enthusiastic bidding from the many dealers and collectors.

Generally speaking, the quality tools brought quality prices. A crown moulding plane by A. Adams sold for $1600; an I. Lindenberger plow plane for $1100; and an A. Howland rosewood plow plane with boxwood arms for $800.

But the star of the two-day event was a beautiful J.M. McCone & Co. rosewood plow plane with ivory tips. This exceptional piece brought $2350!

Among the other items, a framed pit saw went for $500; a dated 18th century wooden brace, $1300; a spelk plane, $300; and a plane for fluting columns, $525.

A four-fold two-foot ivory Stanley No. 89 rule sold for $500, and a rope caliper rule for $310. A Stratton Bros. 6 1/2" brass-bound rosewood level brought $275, while a foot operated 30" lathe brought $850. A shoot board plane by John Veit of Philadelphia went for $500.

Overall, Stanley tools brought good prices. The following items were especially noteworthy: a #444 dovetail plane, $1200; a #9 cabinetmaker's block plane, $1200; a #1, $600; a Bailey #9 3/4 block plane, $325; a #10 1/2C rabbet plane, $275; and a #2 plane, $200.

There were very few New Jersey tools offered, despite the collection's New Jersey origin. The most impressive—and the most expensive— item in this category was a plow plane by C. S. Cook of New Brunswick, which sold for $170.

A number of CRAFTS members attended the auction. All of them thoroughly enjoyed the fast-paced sale and the good fellowship of collectors from as far away as the state of Washington.

And all of them went home with something. One CRAFTSman, already known as the "Pit Saw King," was delighted with the opportunity to add a couple more specimens to his collection.

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(Crockford, continued from page 4)
a thumb screw at the top. Figure 1 (on facing page) shows a bit (C) that has been inserted through the side opening and is held in place by pressure of the vertical thumb screw (D).

Figure 2 shows the bit (C) inserted in the end of the "socket" and held "as is usual" by a horizontal thumb screw (E). The patent specifications point out that in this position the bit has a longer reach.

Figure 3 shows a bit (F) "with a presumably smaller head than bit C, so that being entered flat face foremost into the side opening, a, it could not be held in that position by the shoulders." Therefore, the bit, "after it is entered at the side opening, a, is turned diagonally, so that the corners or angles of two of its opposite shoulders shall enter the short triangular grooves d that are made in the shoulders c, and is therein firmly held by the cooperation of the screw D."

Whatever the merits of Crockford's "new and improved" brace, the inventor seems to have been singularly unsuccessful in selling it, and the Crockford Manufacturing Company in Newark appears to have been only a short-lived venture, which disappeared, almost without a trace.

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A. H. CROCKFORD.

Bit-Brace.

No. 223,484. Patented Jan. 13, 1880.

Fig. 1.

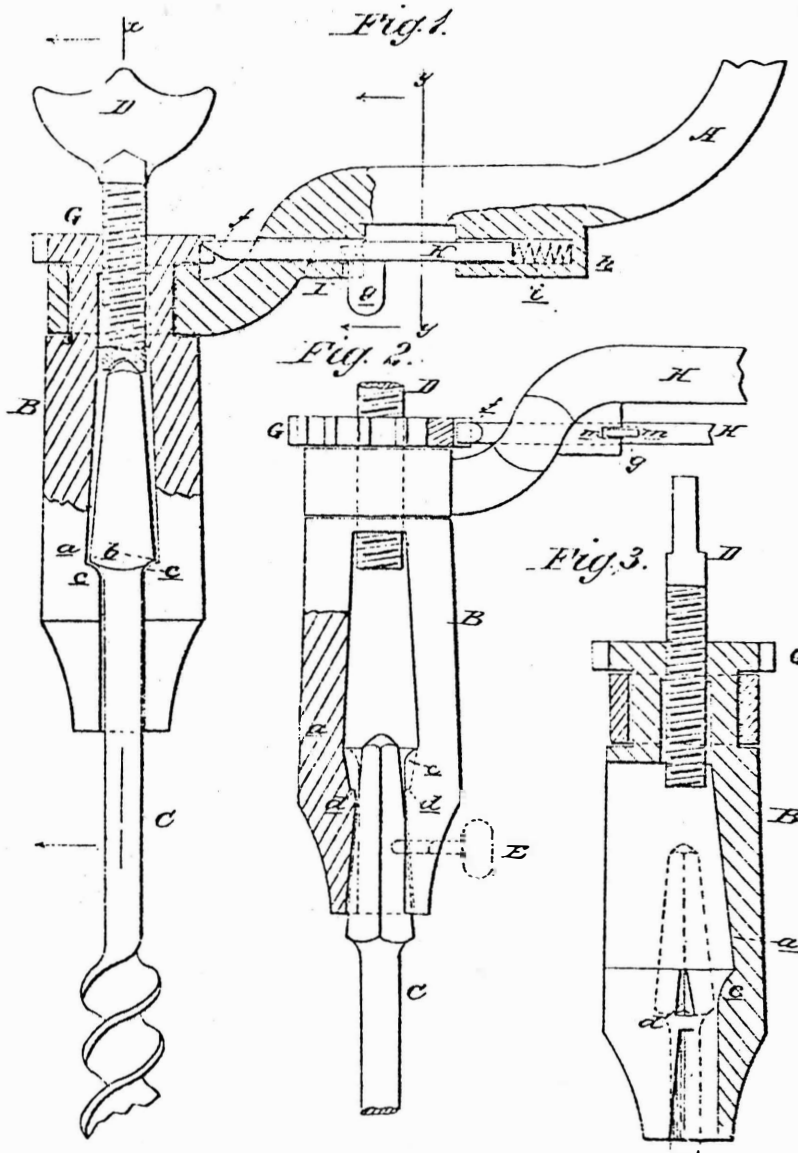


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

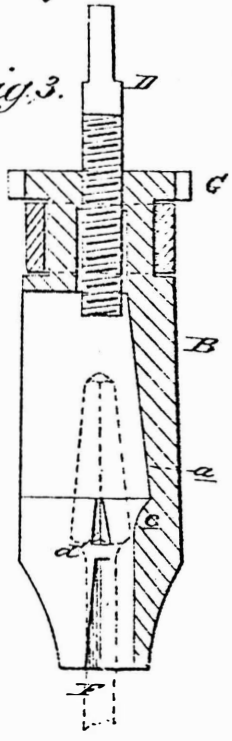


Fig. 4.

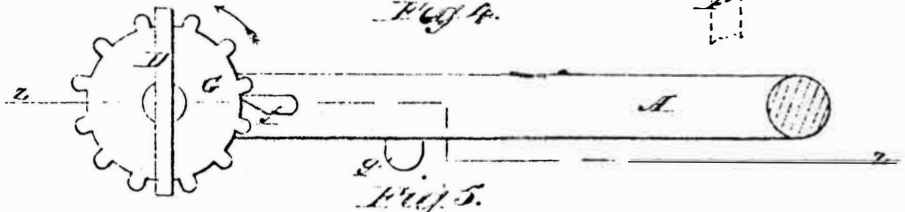
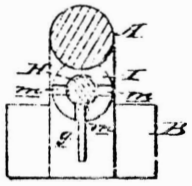


Fig. 5.



WITNESSES:

Francis Mallette.

C. Sedgwick

INVENTOR:

A. H. Crockford

BY Munn & Co

ATTORNEYS.

N. PETERS, PHOTO-LITHOGRAPHER, WASHINGTON, D. C.

CRAFTS CELEBRATES THE FOURTH OF JULY

Pictured above are a group of CRAFTS members who demonstrated early tools and crafts on July 4th at East Jersey Olde Towne in Piscataway. From the left are: Markay Zluky, Steve Zluky, Chuck Granick, Don Lipsey, Herb Kean, Carroll Palmer, Sue Gustafson, and Bill Gustafson.

Over the past several years the displays and demonstrations by CRAFTSmen have developed into a major feature of East Jersey Olde Towne's annual Fourth of July celebration, entertaining tool buffs, history enthusiasts, the curious and children of all ages.

The preparations for this year's demonstrations and other activities were covered in a lengthy article on CRAFTS of New Jersey in the New York Times on Sunday, June 27.

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MADE IN NEW JERSEY!

In the last issue of the Tool Shed (June, 1982) an article on the Rule Tool gauge appeared under the heading "Made in New Jersey?" You see, there was some doubt.

Carl Bopp now reports that the doubt has been removed. We can eliminate the question mark. The heading, he says, should have read "Made in New Jersey!"

Carl in his jaunts through the Pine Barrens has discovered a Rule Tool marked "Rule Tool Co., Newark, N.J." This tool bears the same patent date as those without the Newark mark— October 1, 1907.

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THE DISTAFF SIDE
by Dorothea Connolly

Collecting—what exactly is it? Is it a disease? A desire to possess? Or it it simply the feeling of security gained from looking at one's collection and knowing that you are holding the past in your hands?

Whatever their reasons, collectors are historians; they are archivists of objects instead of documents. Of course, they can also become human vacuum cleaners. Once the bug bites, you are stuck for life.

I have had a collection of some sort for as long as I can remember. I recall as a child saving my Uncle John Brutcher's cigar bands.

I admire the collector who can specialize, who can collect, say, one particular craftsman's tools. I can't. I have collections of salt glaze, knife rests, baskets, colonial kitchen tools, Victorian kitchen tools, paper weights, early lighting, craft tools, pitchers, boxes, advertisements, and so on. My house looks like McGee's closet.

In future issues of the Tool Shed I will be writing about the origin of phrases such as "done to a turn" and "watch your P's and Q's," early lighting, kitchen tools, tools for textiles, and other subjects that I hope will interest the women members of CRAFTS.

If you have suggestions, please let me know, as I love challenges and research.

(Editor's note: Dorothea Connolly is well known in New Jersey museum circles. She has been Executive Administrator of Clinton Historical Museum and Village, Clinton; Director of Crafts and Museums at Liberty Village, Flemington; and Director of Public Relations at Waterloo Village, Stanhope. At the present time she is Curator of the Township of Lebanon Museum at New Hampton.)

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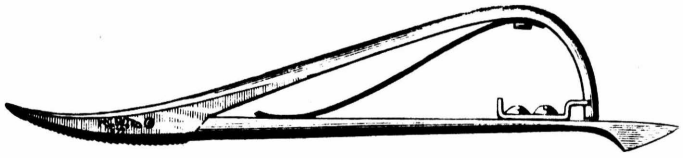
FOLLOW-UP ON "WHATSIT?": II

I. M. Bass of Bivalve, N.J., smelt something fishy in the identification of the "whatsit?" scissors in the June, 1982, issue of the Tool Shed.

Bass is not one to carp or crab. He only says that we made a whale of a mistake, and if he clams up about it we will continue to flounder around.

He identifies the "whatsit?" positively as a pair of sardine scissors—for opening sardine cans. Manufactured by C.S. Osborne & Co. of Newark, they are illustrated in Osborne's 1911 Standard Tools catalog (as pictured below).



Dr. Fetter's Patent Sardine Scissors.
With Clasp..... $12.00
" " Nickel 13.00
(Ribbed Handles.)

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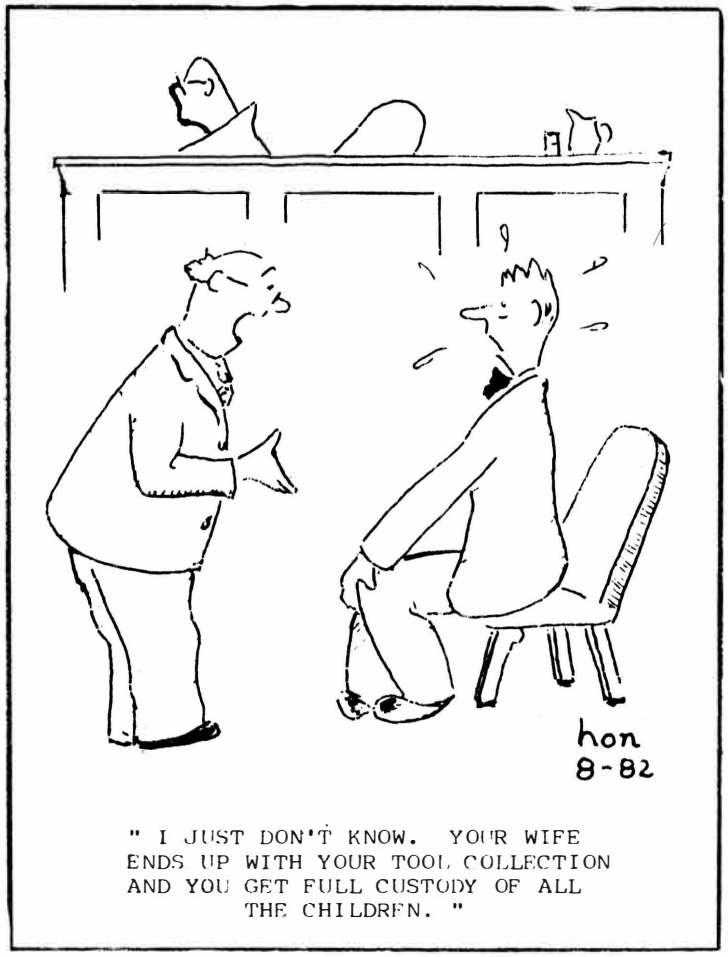

" I JUST DON'T KNOW. YOUR WIFE ENDS UP WITH YOUR TOOL COLLECTION AND YOU GET FULL CUSTODY OF ALL THE CHILDREN. "

(Taunton, continued from page 1)
Burlington, N.J. The other three in his chain were Batsto, Etna, and Atsion.*

I decided to try to find out if the New Jersey Taunton was the place where the axes were made. A trip to the local library brought forth two fine books: E.M. Woodward's History of Burlington County, New Jersey (1883) and the Medford Historical Society's Medford Pioneering Township (1975).

In 1883 Woodward said: "... Taunton, three and a half miles south of Medford Village, at and covering the headwaters of the southwest branch of Rancocas Creek. Taunton was named prior to the Revolutionary war, as there was a furnace and forge at this place during that trying period of the then infant colonies."

Woodward then lists some of the owners up to his time, when the property was a large cranberry bog. Although he does not mention the Taunton Manufacturing Company, he does say that "the trip-hammer or anvil-block is still standing (1883) to mark the location of the old forge."

Carter L. Larsen, who wrote the chapter on Taunton in Medford Pioneering Township, says that the land was sold in 1838 to the Taunton Manufacturing Company for $10,000. Larsen did not know what the company made, but he states that the property was sold at a sheriff's sale in 1842 "for a nominal sum."

I had now found a Taunton Manufacturing Company, which was in the proper time period, but I still had no positive proof that this company was the one that made axes.

I next turned to fellow CRAFTSman Peter T. Corrigan, who does title searches, to see if he could get a copy of the deed for the land. In just a few weeks Peter gave me a copy of the 1842 sheriff's sale deed. The deed is an abstract from the Burlington County Courthouse and fails to show the owners of the company. But it does show that the land (946.68 acres and two other acres) was sold in May, 1838, for $10,000 by Jesse and Margaret B. Varney to the Taunton Manufacturing Company.

In October, 1842, a Sheriff Hilliard sold the land and buildings to one James Casey of Philadelphia for $567.14 in order to recover that sum for Joseph Leeds against the Taunton Manufacturing Company. Casey had held a small mortgage on the land and was protecting his investment.

The deed also contained that elusive piece of information that I had been seeking, the proof positive that this was the company that made the axes and edge tools.

The deed says, in part: "... By erecting buildings, furnaces, machines and other works for the manufacture of axes and other iron and steel instruments."

*For more about the early bog-iron furnaces in the New Jersey Pine Barrens see Arthur D. Pierce, Iron in the Pines (1957), which has a chapter on Charles Read and his various iron enterprises.

Also see Charles S. Boyer, Early Forges & Furnaces in New Jersey (1931), which contains a chapter on Read and covers the early history of Taunton Furnace.

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(Election, continued from page 1)
unexpired term.

The membership also adopted a change in the organization's bylaws, making the editor of the Tool Shed an ex officio member of the Board. Robert Fridlington of Cranford was reappointed editor.

Other CRAFTS directors whose terms of office carry through the 1982-1983 year are: R. James Aber, Glen Rock; Carl E. Bopp, Audubon; Charles Granick, Bridgewater; Herb Kean, Morristown; and Frederick A. Shippey, Madison.

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CRAFTS SURVEY OF NEW JERSEY TOOL DISPLAYS

CRAFTS is conducting a survey of tool displays and/or demonstrations in the state of New Jersey. We would like to locate all displays that are available to the public, whether they are in museums, restorations, public buildings, or commercial establishments.

If the results of the survey are good, a directory will be published and distributed to members.

So if you know of a display or of a place where demonstrations are given, please fill out the enclosed form and return it to:

R. James Aber
58 Hillman Ave.
Glen Rock, N.J. 07452

Below is a sample form.

SUSSEX county

LOCATION: McDonalds

ADDRESS: Route 23, Montague, NJ 07827. Three tenths of a mile south of Exit 1 of Interstate 84. Exit is marked "Port Jervis - Sussex".

TELEPHONE: (201) 293-9990

HOURS: 7 a.m. to midnight (summer) 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. (winter)

ADMISSION: Free.

DESCRIPTION: Eight panels of tools mounted on plywood paneling and framed with 1"x2" lumber painted an antique red. There are pages from old catalogs and from Eric Sloane's books mounted on the panels with the tools. There is a panel of laundry tools; one of wagon parts such as a double tree and single trees; blacksmith tools and horseshoes; saws — a two-man crosscut, an ice saw and a blade from an old circular saw; three panels containing a total of seventeen carpenter's tools such as wooden planes, wooden clamps and metal braces; a panel with wrought iron carriage parts and wrenches. Each panel is about 2½ ft. by 3½ ft. with the exception of the saw and wagon parts panels.

COMMENTS: These were probably commercially prepared panels offered as a decorative motif option by McDonalds when the store was built. I saw similar panels in a McDonalds in Albany, NY. Don't drive a long way to see them, but if you're in the area they are a nice bonus with your Egg McMuffin.

SUBMITTED BY: Jim Aber

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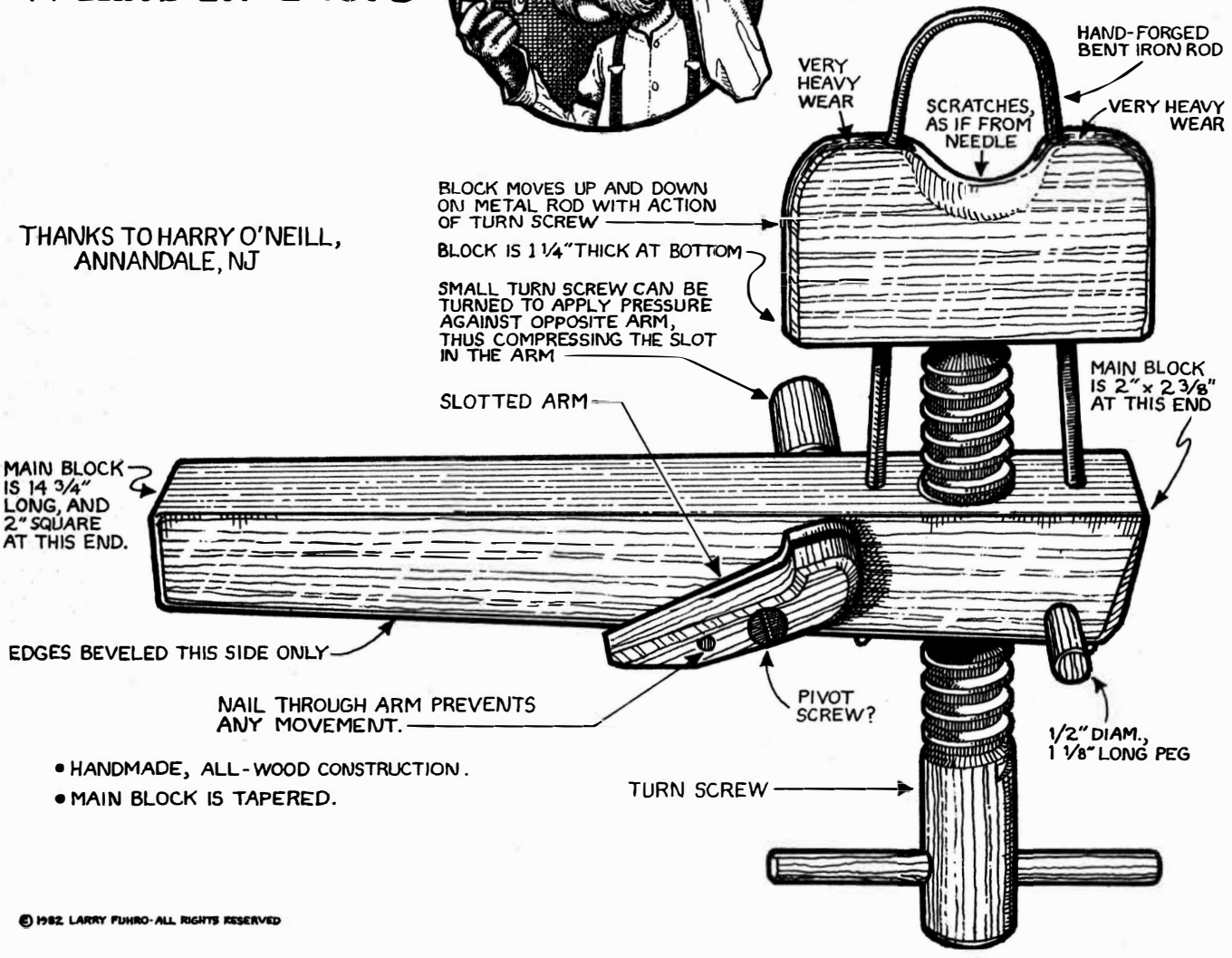
Pop Rivet's What's It? No. 5

by LARRY FUHRO



THANKS TO HARRY O'NEILL, ANNANDALE, NJ

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GADGETS · DOOHICKEYS · THINGAMAJIGS · AND WHATCHAMACALLITS

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(Axe, continued from page 5)

A Glossary . . . of Arms and Armor in All Countries (New York, 1924), gives the following description. A battle-axe of the 15th century, the head of which is rounded below and pointed above. It is sometimes called a Wagoner's Axe."

It has always been rather ironical that man in his love of beauty will go out of his way to place designs on his tools of war! Does this ease the wrong of wanton destruction?

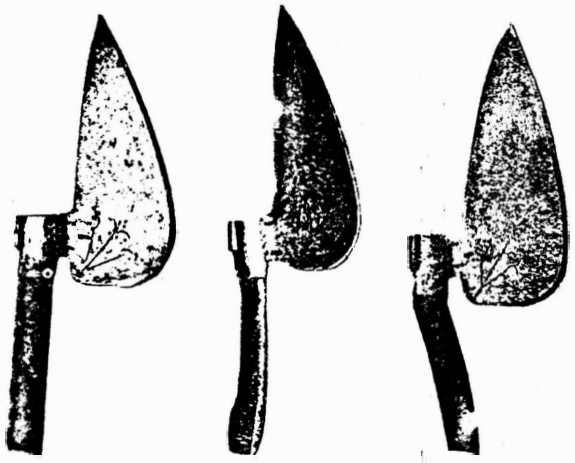

Figure 3

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