The TOOL SHED

No. 28 September - Oct. 1983

A Journal of Tool Collecting published by CRAFTS of New Jersey

SOME TOOLS FARMERS USE

by Frederick A. Shippey

In the introduction to Dictionary of Tools R. A. Salaman urges: "Anyone whose boyhood began before the First World War will remember that at that time, whether one lived in the town or the country, one could watch men working at a dozen different trades within a mile of one's door-step."

Since first reading these words, several years ago, I have frequently wondered about their relevance to the American situation. As a contemporary of the distinguished author, I grew up on an eighty-acre farm in the eastern United States. There was nothing but farm land in all directions for several miles distant from the Shippey door-step.

Even in the nearby village, only two craftsmen plied their trade: a wheel-wright and a blacksmith. The former labored behind perpetually closed doors. But the blacksnith shop was always open. Often I watched the sparks which flew from a busy anvil and inhaled the acrid odor of hot iron pressed against horses' hooves. To me, this place was man's country. The strident ring of the hammer and the shuffling sound of ungulate beasts of burden captured the awefilled attention of village children. In America the glimpses of tradesmen at work were exciting but uncommon. Unfortunately, farm boys always had chores to do, and hence they had to hurry home from school.

During childhood I received scant exposure to the trades, probably for two reasons. First, there were only a few hand tools on the Shippey farm: never a workbench (if a flat and solid surface were needed, a wagon bed or the barn floor was used); no electrician's tools, because the farm had no electricity; no plumber's tools, because the farm lacked running water and bath facilities; no machinist's tools, except a file and a cold chisel; no blacksmith's tools, except a ball peen hammer; no cooper's tools, although we had several cider and vinegar barrels; no tinsmith's tools; and few carpenter's tools, including a broken level and a bent tack puller. As a lad growing up on the farm, I never saw a plane, a wood chisel, a spoke shave, or a finishing nail.

[Continued on page 8]

ALEX AND BARBARA FARNHAM TO HOST SEPTEMBER 18th MEETING

CRAFTS of New Jersey will kick off the 1983-84 year on Sunday, September 18, with a picnic meeting at Alex and Barbara Farnhams' studio and farm in Stockton.

In case of rain the meeting will be canceled, and the next meeting will be on November 20 at East Jersey Olde Towne. If you are in doubt as to whether or not the picnic will be held, call either Steve Zluky or Joe Hauck after 9:00 a.m. on the morning of the 18th. Zluky's number is (201) 534-2710); Hauck's is (201) 236-2072.

The day will begin at 11:00 a.m. with the "Swap & Sell," and we will eat at noon. Each family is asked to bring a casserole, a salad, or a dessert. And be sure to bring your own chairs. As before, CRAFTS will provide the hotdogs, hamburgers, soda, and beer.

Joe Hauck, the picnic chairman, asks members to bring some favorite tools or crafts for display. There will also be games, surprises and a Chinese auction.

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 ..... BARBARA FARNHAM, Stockton

Treasurer ..... JOHN M. WHELAN, Murray Hill

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 seven dollars for the membership year of July 1 to June 30. Membership fees may be sent to the Treasurer: John M. Whelan, 38 Colony Court, Murray Hill, NJ 07974.

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.

CRAFTS OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 1883-1984 Year

CRAFTS of New Jersey held its annual business meeting and election of officers on Sunday, June 12, 1983, at East Jersey Olde Towne in Piscataway. Stephen Zluky of Whitehouse was reelected President.

Other officers elected at the same meeting were: Harry J. O'Neill of Annandale, Vice President; Barbara Farnham of Stockton, Secretary; and John M. Whelan of Murray Hill, Treasurer, The elected officers automatically serve on the Board of Directors of the organization.

Also elected at the June meeting to three-year terms on CRAFTS Board of Directors were: Charles Granick of Bridgewater, who will be serving his second term, and Emil Pollak of Mendham, who has just finished a one-year term on the Board. Taking a seat on the Board for the first time will be Dominic Micalizzi of Brooklyn, N.Y., the first non-Jersey resident to be so honored.

Zluky announced the reappointment of Robert Fridlington of Cranford as the Editor of The Tool Shed. As Editor, Fridlington is an ex officio member of of the Directors.

Other members of the Board of Directors whose terms in office carry through the 1983-1984 year are: Carl E. Bopp of Audubon; Herb Kean of Morristown; Frederick A. Shippey of Madison; Lewis C. Cooper of Chester; Alexander Farnham of Stockton; and Donald B. Lipsey of Belvidere.

MEETING CALENDAR: 1983-1984

The opening meeting of CRAFTS 1983-1984 year will be held at Alex and Barbara Farnham's Farm in Stockton on September 18. This is the annual picnic meeting.

The remaining meetings of the year will be held at the Indian Queen Tavern of East Jersey Olde Towne in Piscataway. The dates of these meetings are:

November 20, 1983
February 5, 1984
April 8, 1984
June 3, 1984

As usual, Chairman Fred Shippey and his Program Committee have planned a series of outstanding presentations. Although the speakers have been confirmed, there are still some problems to be worked out in scheduling them. The list of speakers and the titles of their programs will be announce in the next issue of The Tool Shed.

"How long have you been collecting Tools, Mr. Wilson?"

LETTERS

[Larry Campanell's article, "A Plane Spelling Lesson" (The Tool Shed, No. 27, June-August, 1983), drew the following letter from one Oliver Moalding (no return address), and Mr. Campanell asked us to print his rather lengthy reply. The publication of this correspondence for the edification of our readers does not imply approval of the views expressed. We print 'em as we get 'em—the Editor]

Larry Campanell
c/o Letters to the Editor:

I am glad you claim to be the world's worst spellor. That at least puts you at the top of somthing.

Theirfore I claim to be the second best of the worst spellors of the world, not the champian.

Why did you use the word "moulding" and not "molding" to describe an ov---plane? Was that intentianal or was that exersizing your perogative as the champian?

Now I hope you are more thoroughly confused than I am, because I am only the second best confused person in the world.

Yorse truly,
Oliver Moalding

Dear Oliver:

I only claimed to be "one of the world's worst spellers." If you keep trying, you might wind up on top. I used the spelling "moulding" because it was and is the correct American way.

Now why did you omit the u in "moulding"? Did you cheat and look the word up in a dictionary? Bah! What did Mr. Webster know about tools! Next time look it up in Henry C. Mercer's Ancient Carpenter's Tools (page 130), and you'll see how it is really spelled.

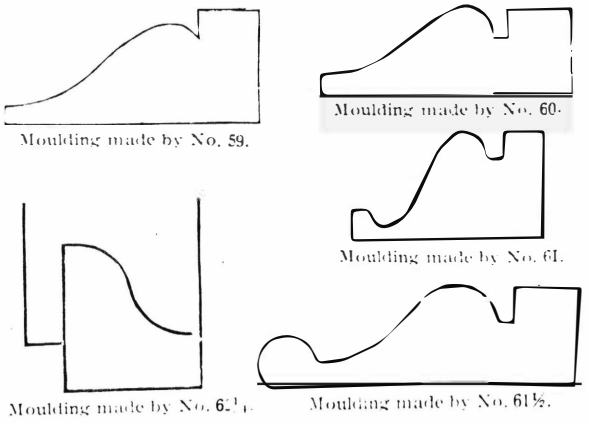
And please Oliver, don't tell me that the spelling in England was/is "molding," but the American spelling was/is "molding." Any rhykenologist who doesn't have his wedge in too tight can tell you that it ain't necessarily so.

The majority of American tool catalogs (not catalogues!) used the spelling moulding. The following is a small sampling for you to check. CRAFTS could not afford to print my full list. Herman Chapin (1839), Ohio Tool Co. (1910), Greenfield Tool Co. (1872), and Sears Roebuck and Co. (1900). Could you get any more American than that? If you want a more modern example, then check Stanley Tools Consumers Broadline Catalog (1982), which under miter machine (p. 48) says: "Mouldings less than 4" in width can be sawed...."

If you still think moulding is the old English way of spelling the word, then check Joseph Moxon's Mechanick Exercises (1703). Moxon writes kind of funny, Oliver. He makes his s's look like f's, but you probably wouldn't know the difference. But you can see that it is your spelling that is old English, not mine.

Larry Campanell

[Ed. note: To bolster his argument, Mr. Campanell submitted the two examples reproduced below. The top is from the Ohio Tool Co. Catalog (1910) and the bottom is from Moxon's Mechanick Exercises (1703).]



§. 9. *Of* Molding-Planes.

THere are ſeveral other *Planes* in uſe amongſt Joyners, called *Molding-planes*; as, the *Round*, the *Hollow*, the *Ogee*, the *Snipes-bill*, the *Rabbet-plane*, the *Grooving-plane*, &c. And of theſe they have ſeveral ſorts, *viz.* from half a quarter

SOME RECENT ADVANCES IN THE STATE-OF-THE-ART OF SHARPENING EDGED TOOLS: PART I

by Lew Cooper

A very long time ago when I was about five years old, my grandfather built a sturdy wooden box for me to stand on so that I would be at the correct height to work at his workbench. Then each year or so as I grew taller, he would saw off an inch or two until finally it was discarded. So although I was not literally born with a wood-working tool in my hand, I had an early start. These were, of course, the years of the Great Depression, and so whenever I pleaded with my grandfather to buy me a new toy, he would urge me to pick a piece of wood out of his scrap bin and make my own.

My specialty became flat-bottomed battleships, and eventually I had quite a fleet. As one of the founding fathers of vocational education in America, my grandfather knew what he was doing. However, one thing I did not learn was the hands-on art of sharpening. True, I turned the crank on his hand grindstone and watched him do it, but apparently he felt I was too young to try it myself. And by the time I reached the proper age, my interests had veered off into chemistry, physics, and electrical engineering.

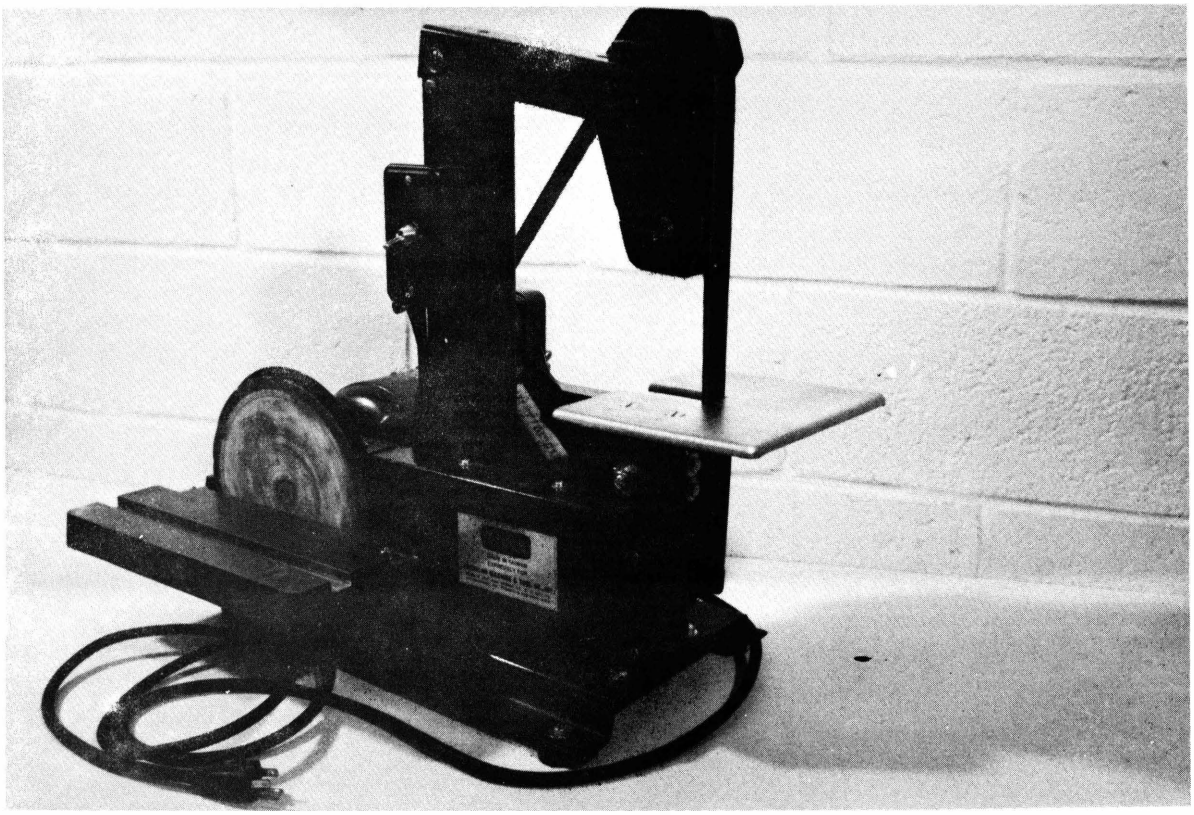
In recent years when I became involved in upgrading my woodworking shop to a professional level, my deficiency in sharpening expertise led me to look at the problem from a fundamental point of view. The information and conclusion presented below are the fruits of that endeavor.

Mortimer Schwartz, owner of The Fine Tool Shops, Inc., stated the situation very well in a recent flyer:

"Prior to the introduction of Japanese water stones to the U.S. market only a few years ago, those who wrote about sharpening techniques spoke only of oil and arkansas stones or bench and belt grinding and finish buffing. Oilstone advocates considered that one combination stone was sufficient to properly sharpen an unabused blade. Opinions on sharpening techniques expressed by one author were frequently contradicted by another. Areas of disagreement ranged over almost every aspect of sharpening: whether oil was the correct lubricant and if so, what formulation; the correct grinding and sharpening angle; the desirability of a second, or micro, bevel; the direction of blade movement (sidewise, lengthwise, or figure 8); the method of removing the wire or burr; whether to first flatten and smooth the bevel, or the back; and finally, the desirability of using power tools thereby risking loss of temper and loss of tool. Apparently, the technique each author-craftsman advocated worked best for him. One might properly deduce therefrom that there is no absolutely correct way to sharpen a chisel or plane iron."[1]

First, I want to say a few words about grindstones. The familiar gray silicon carbide discs mounted on a double-shafted motor (coarse at one end and fine at the other) strike me as refugees from a machine shop which do not really belong in a woodworking shop. First of all, they have a great tendency to burn temper out of tool steel. One reason they do this, as Harold Fountain pointed out to me, is that they run too fast—typically 1725 or 3450 RPM. Our farmer ancestors used a white natural sandstone about two feet in diameter running in water to sharpen their scythes—a practice we would be well advised to resurrect. A smaller version was marketed by Sears for years, and similar devices are still available. But judging by the infrequency of encountering them at country auctions, I guess they never gained the popularity they deserved.

About ten years ago, I became aware that there was an alternative to the tool-burning silicon-carbide wheels: a white aluminum-oxide stone made by Bay State Abrasives[2] and sold through Woodcraft Supply's mail order catalog.[3] It turns out that Norton has made the same thing for years, but their marketing technique (abrasive specialist distributorships) has successfully maintained secrecy about this product and precluded its general availability in



AMT Sanding Machine with 1-Inch Belt

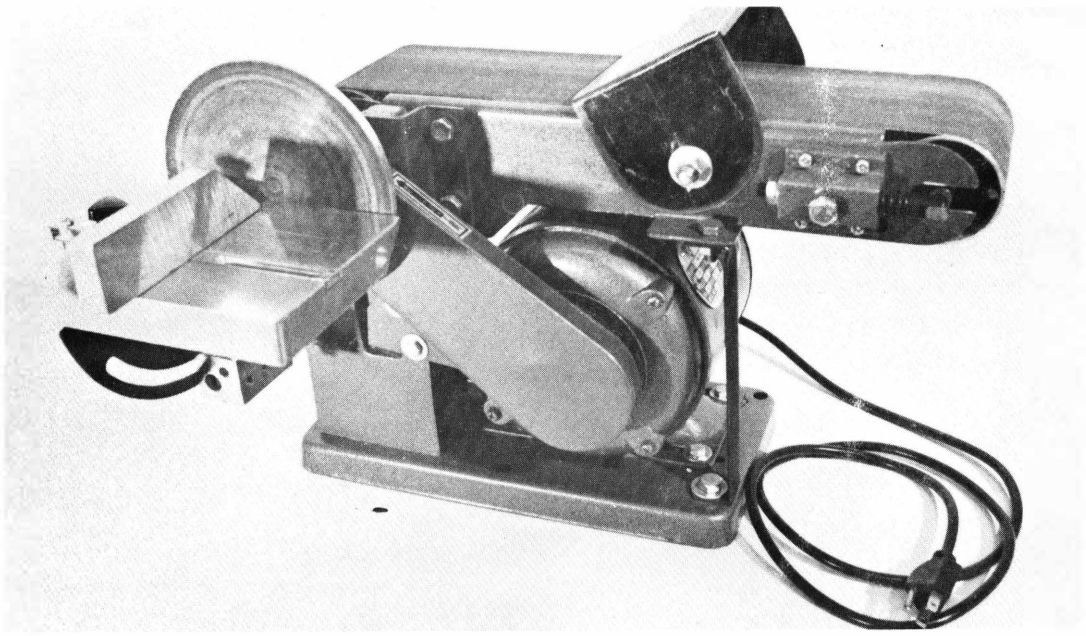
the retail market.[4] Anyway, I have been using these white stones for perhaps ten years now with great satisfaction. They do abrade away more rapidly than silicon carbide wheels; it is possible to lose temper if you are extremely careless, and they do cost more. With all that, I still consider them extremely cost-effective.

One important comment about grindstones: they inevitably produce a concave grind. The curvature depends on the radius of the stone, which decreases as the stone wears away. This is the famous "hollow-ground" effect which most people seem to think is so great, but which I suspect is nothing more than a compromise with readily available technology. I found my brother-in-law using a butt chisel with a convex bevel, which he said he had learned from a Japanese carpenter on the West Coast. I tried it but did not care much for the results. I finally concluded that what I really wanted was an absolutely flat bevel. In addition, the back of the tool (I'm talking about chisels and plane irons) must also be ground absolutely flat with no rust pits along the cutting edge.

With a flat bevel, the entire beveled surface is in contact with the abrasive surface, instead of just at two points. There is less tendency to rock back and forth or grind one side more than the other—in short, better control. Heat dissipation over the larger surface area is improved. Indeed, I can't find anything to say against the flat bevel if one has the technical means to produce it.

I am indebted to Mr. Sawdust for first demonstrating the use of a table-mounted belt sander to produce a flat bevel.[5] A guide can readily be constructed to hold the blade at the proper angle. Both Toolkraft and Sears have sold 6" x 48" belt sanders for many years. More recently, smaller units have been marketed, usually made in Taiwan. I bought the AMT Model 4150 for the remarkably low sale price of $88 (without motor).[6] I had a little trouble assembling it because, contrary to the instruction sheet, the threads on the nuts and bolts are not American. The same unit is available from Sears at $190. Then I received a flyer from Harbor Freight Salvage listing a 4" x 36" sander with 6" disc at $99 (with motor),

[Continued on following page]



Harbor Freight Salvage Sanding Machine with 4 x 36-Inch Belt

which I liked better. A similar product, possibly made by the same factory on Taiwan, sells for $149.95 in Channel Home Centers. Whichever unit one chooses, the relatively large belt surface provides sufficient heat dissipation to avoid ruining the temper. Replacement belts are available from Industrial Abrasives Co., P.O. Box 1252, Reading, PA 19603.

The next step along the path to the absolutely flat bevel is the Japanese "Kanaban," which is nothing more than a flat steel plate that is mounted in a vise or screwed to any convenient horizontal surface. I made mine from a piece of scrap metal. Wet the surface and sprinkle on a little carborundum powder[8] to form a slurry. This cuts with surprising speed, but care should be taken to use the entire surface of the Kanaban in order to avoid wearing a depression in it. A jig to hold the blade will avoid any tendency to a rocking motion and assure an accurate bevel of the proper angle. Miller Falls used to make a pretty good one (No. 240), but I guess they didn't sell many. I inherited mine and have never seen another. The Record No. 161, which has a single ball-bearing roller, is totally unsuited for any use with water and grit, as the bearing quickly clogs and corrodes. General makes one which is so large the roller runs on the table top, thus requiring adjustment when using stone of different thicknesses. The most convenient and cost-effective guide generally available is the Eclipse.[9] The Japanese make a husky version with handles at $14.95.[10]

Notes

[1]The Insider's Letter, Vol. 3, No. 9, p. 1, (quoted with permission).

[2]Woodsmith, No. 20, March 1982, p. 6.

[3]Woodcraft Supply Corp., 41 Atlantic Ave., P.O. Box 4000, Woburn, MA 01888.

[4]On my last visit to Force Machinery Co., I was unable to find a single Al_2O_3 stone among their extensive array.

[5]His real name is Wally Kunkel, but he answers better to Mr. Sawdust, proprietor of the Mr. Sawdust Schools of Professional Woodworking, P.O. Box 4, Schooley's Mountain, NJ 07870.

[6]American Machine and Tool Co., 4th Ave. and Spring St., P.O. Box 70, Royersford, PA 19468.

[7]Harbor Freight Salvage Co., 7110 Case Ave., P.O. Box 3275, North Hollywood, CA 91605.

[8]Known as "Kongsha," it may be purchased from Woodline the Japan Woodworker, 1731 Clement Ave., Alameda, CA 94501. A greater range of grits (80, 220, 500) may be obtained from lapidary supply houses, such as Grieger's, Inc., 900 South Arroyo Parkway, Bin 41, Pasadena, CA 91109.

[9]Available from The Fine Tool Shops, Inc., P.O. Box 1262, Danbury, CT 06810, and several other mail-order houses.

[10]Available from Woodline (See Reference 8 above).

[In the next issue Mr. Cooper will discuss his favorite sharpening devices—Japanese stones.]

ABSENTEE BIDDING

by Herb Kean

Although absentee bidding is a common event in stamp, coin, gun and decoy auctions, it is still not fully recognized at tool auctions. There are only about five or six known tool dealers in the United States and Canada that solicit for absentee bids, and at least two or three others who take bids on an unsolicited basis. These are all highly knowledgeable and respected men in the antique-tool world. Even so, absentee bidding can be confusing and somewhat scary to the neophyte. It's really nothing more than good common sense. You are hiring a professional to be your eyes and mouth, and you give him basic directions. It costs you about 10% of the hammer price (in some cases 10% of your top bid price), but it provides you with a buying opportunity that you otherwise would not have.

Some of the most common questions are:

Q: What happens if the piece is damaged or poorly described and not as it seems in the catalog? Am I stuck with it?

A: Remember, you are buying service and along with it goes experience and integrity. No dealer wants an unhappy customer. In almost all cases the dealer will exercise his option to "no bid" any piece that is not right or obviously not worth the price. You have to trust his judgment or you shouldn't be doing business with him. It pays to start out small on your first try to get the feel of it and learn the thinking of the man that is representing you. If you are in accord, you can move up to more expensive lots at the next auction.

Q: Can I depend upon the dealer to inspect the piece outwardly and inwardly?

A: Outwardly, yes; inwardly, only to some minor degree, such as removing the cap on a Stanley plane. But if a hairline crack shows up after you clean the piece, you certainly can't return it. Remember, the final responsibility rests with the customer as long as prudent discretion has been exercised by the dealer.

Q: Must I always give a top bid or can I give an "open bid" (i.e., go as high as it takes)?

A: Some dealers will not take open bids, so be prepared with a top bid. Most dealers will go one bidding increment over top bid if they are "sequenced out," i.e., have the competition land exactly on your top bid. If you do not want that, just specify that your top bid is firm.

Q: What happens if other customers of my dealer are using him to bid on the same piece?

A: Simple—if you are lower, you will lose it. The dealer will not advise you beforehand where you stand relative to other bids, and it is in bad taste to press for this information. You will be notified after the auction. Remember, it is possible to have the hammer price under your bid and still lose it, as the dealer will give it to his highest bidder. However, he will make his name available to you upon request.

Q: Are there any other charges involved?

A: Yes. Some dealers charge a minimum fee of $5 for a total of all items. Some charge $2 per lot for packing. And of course, all charge for postage and insurance. There may even be a deposit required.

Q: Where can I find these dealers?

A: Their names and phone numbers are printed in the front of most auction catalogs.

Q: Do I have to use a dealer for absentee bidding?

A: Some auctions will allow absentee bidding directly to the "desk" or auctioneer's clerk. There is generally no charge for this, but you cannot expect the "desk" to provide you with the same careful scrutiny and service as a private dealer does.

Hopefully, this will clear up some of the most frequently asked questions and perhaps make it a little bit easier for anyone who wants to try absentee bidding.

[Some Tools, continued from page 1]

Second, the exposure was meager for another reason. When confronted by a task or a problem, the Shippey boys (four brothers) were expected to improvise a solution. The common excuses of ignorance and/or technical complexity were unacceptable. Rather, the boys were taught to find a solution, to make do with the available paraphernalia.

Many readers of this article are experienced tool collectors and/or craftsmen in various trades. They know tools and can delineate customary usage. In recognition of the competence of these friends, I have selected twelve problem situations drawn from boyhood days to illustrate practical improvisation. In each instance cited here, an appropriate tool was needed. If this implement were not available, what could one do? The work had to go on. Hence, the paragraphs that follow indicate what was done by resourceful rural people. Let attention now be turned to some ~~tools farmers~~ use.

(1) A peavey can help move the heaviest logs in the farmer's wood lot. Lacking this tool, a sturdy hardwood sapling was utilized to accomplish the task.

(2) A marlinspike and/or a fid could facilitate the repair of a broken rope on a hay fork. Deprived of an appropriate implement, a twenty-penny common spike was used to open the strands of rope in making the necessary splice.

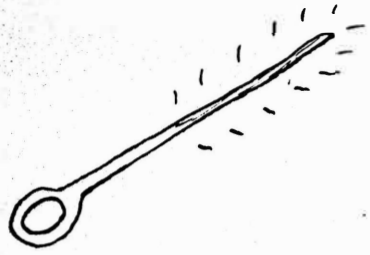
(3) A carriage jack was needed to raise the vehicle high enough to remove one wheel at a time in order to grease the dry axles. Without proper equipment, a hay-rigging boom and a nail keg were pressed into service for this essential jacking operation.

(4) A pinch bar can pry open a damaged barn door for repairs. Lacking the bar, however, the leaf from a broken wagon spring proved to be a reliable substitute.

(5) A leather punch could make adequate tongue-holes for buckles in several straps of horse harness to finish an urgent repair job. Lacking the proper tool, the farmer improvised a solution by means of a hammer, an eight-penny nail and a backup block of wood.

(6) A dibble could facilitate the setting out of five-hundred strawberry plants in a freshly prepared field. Without it, a broken broom handle was sawed off twice and the sharpened to a dull point on one end to improvise a pair of home-made "dibbles."

(7) A burn auger can make bolt holes through a barn door for strap hinges. Lacking the tool, a straight iron poker, heated red hot in the grate of the kitchen stove, provided an adequate resolution of the task.



Stove Poker

(8) A reliable rule was needed to measure the width and length of a plank to repair a damaged horse stall. On the farm, a yardstick, given free to patrons by a local hardware store, yielded a solution to this mensurational problem.

(9) A rasp and/or a hand scraper can be used to replace the broken handle of an axe. However, to accomplish this helving task, several pieces of broken glass were used to scrape and fit properly the hickory replacement.

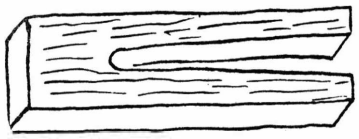
(10) The use of a slaughtering beam was required early in the process of butchering hogs on the farm. To meet this essential need, a home-made gambrel stick with appropriate notches was chopped out of hardwood and shaped by a drawknife. With a rope attached to the stick's center, the process of scraping, cleaning and butchering went forward on schedule.

Gambrel Stick

(11) A plumb bob can set in perpendicular plane the door jamb of a newly built chicken house. Bereft of the tool, a piece of store string with a ten-penny common nail attached to one end was

improvised to accomplish the task.

(12) In a home-repair project, a a clapboard-siding marker was needed to fit siding snugly against the corner boards of the farmhouse. A device, nicknamed "the preacher," was hand-made on the job and utilized to achieve satisfactory results.



"The Preacher"

In conclusion, several comments are perinent. Farm activity cannot be reduced to a dozen problems. Further, usually chores and farm work cannot teach a boy a trade. Nevertheless, a country lad often becomes a respected jack-of-all-trades. A rural boyhood involves the facing of some important vocational problems. To cope adequately with such tasks, one seeks to become an experienced inprovisor. Finally, learning to work with hand tools yields personal satisfaction for many people.

THE "Wm PENN" AXE

When Bob Fridlington wanted some information on the Supplee-Biddle Hardware Company of Philadelphia, the maker (or seller) of a Rockaway-pattern "Wm Penn" axe in his collection, he turned to Carl Bopp, well-known South Jersey plane collector, for help (See label rubbing below).

It was Carl who found the 1893 advertisement of the Oil Well Supply Co.—maker of the "Oil Well Chief" axe—for Bob last spring (The Tool Shed, June, 1983).

As Philadelphia is a suburb of Carl's

[Continued on page 12]

In a recent conversation with Harry O'Neill he said you might be interested in my third child in the museum field. So I am going to tell you where I now spend three days a week.

The little schoolhouse that is the Township of Lebanon Museum, at New Hampton, N.J., was built in 1823, on land donated by Henry Dusenberry , which was forever to be used for educational purposes. Once a one-room schoolhouse, its activities encompassed the area children for both school and Sunday school. The school was totally supported by the students' parents.

In the 1870's the school was found to be too small, so an extension to the lower portion and a second floor were added. It continued to be used as school until 1929 and as a Sunday school until 1939. For several years it was used as a meeting room and then lay dormant until 1972. At this time the Township of Lebanon Historians contacted the Board of Education to ask permission to use the building and began a campaign to restore the schoolhouse for use as a museum. When work was finished in 1981, they asked me to be the Curator.

The first floor of the building recreates an 1870's schoolroom, complete with books, blackboards and pot-bellied stove. The desks are reproductions of early 19th century versions found in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan.

The second floor is used as an exhibit area and lecture hall. Exhibits rotate regularly. If you have a collection and are willing to exhibit it for two months, let me know. Speakers are scheduled in the spring and fall series. One permanent exhibit is of New Jersey Indian artifacts, donated by Dr. Herbert Kraft from his personal collection.

The Museum is supported by the

[Continued on page 11]

AUCTION NEWS: THE LEE MURRAY COLLECTION

by Herb Kean

At times you wonder why some things struggle along and others are instant successes. Lee Murray's recent auction didn't leave anything to wonder about. It had the sweet smell of success from the very start. Even before the main collection was seen, there was a heavy air of excitement in the crowd.

The less valuable pieces were auctioned the first day, and they were a harbinger of things to come. It started early with a primitive sun plane, made from a solid circle, going for $220. The crowd buzzed—was it a fluke? Another unique tool for shaping oar handles almost duplicated the above price at $210. It was no fluke! Unique items looked like they were going high. The next indicator was a series of rules that went from $110 (boxwood) to $325 (ivory). The measuring-instrument collectors were well represented and quite serious. Instruments are definitely the new hot item. The "smart money" was buying on the anticipation of a market surge in this area, which is expected when some of the books on this subject are released. An example of one is Jim Hill's fine work, based upon one of the greatest measuring-instrument collections in the world. Another signal came when a "ho-hum" molding plane went for $125, with two more behind it going for $125 and $85. Why? They were New Hampshire makers. A run of 12 lots of heavy items—pedal-operated saws, etc.—went from $150 to $600, almost twice what I expected, due to their unusualness.

So the die was cast, and the first day finished out with uniques, rules, and New Hampshire makers going high, some brass and English tools and "repairs" on the low side, and Stanley holding its own. There were many good quality items that first day, but nothing like what was to follow.

Dick Crane, the auctioneer, was never in better form than on the second day. He started strong and never let up. He had the crowd loose and laughing and spending. Oh, were they spending!

The early lots of 18th-century planes went at reasonable to slightly high prices, with two great examples of

Dick Crane in Full Swing

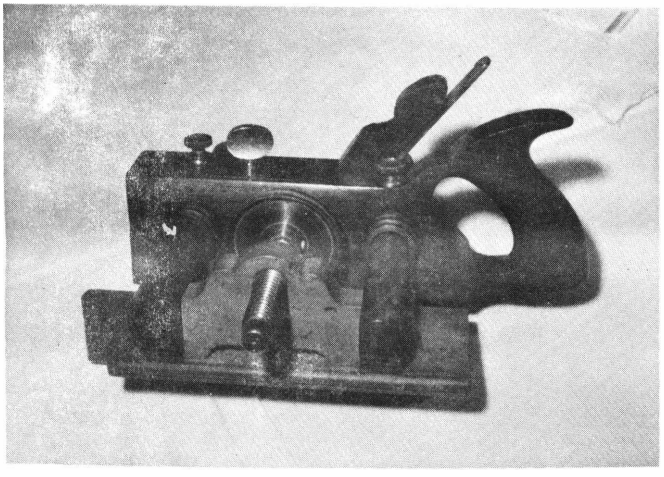
E. Clark and I. Lindenberger going for $375 and $370 respectively. A couple of rosewood plows appeared to come in very low at $225 and $300; but I looked at those planes and they had some problems, although they were worth the money.

It didn't take long for the fireworks to start. Unusual, patented squares went from $75 up to a new record of $1,550! Hazelton rules, squares, etc., were in the thick of the bidding, as they were being "kept in New Hampshire." The much-talked-about Sandusky centerwheel plow (rosewood body) closed with a resounding $3,500—another record. It was mind-boggling from then on—great stuff, an auctioneer who had the bit in his teeth, and plenty of available money. What a combination! I should be so fortunate some day.

Records fell like toy soldiers: e.g., a masonic ivory rule, $1050; an 18th-century brass plumb bob, $370; a geared breast drill (shown in Kebabian's book), $1750; and finally, the Contoocook eagle stamp for $1500. It hardly mattered to me that I was no more than a bump on a log—I was in on history and getting some great stories to tell this winter.

Yes, there were bargains, and many non-unique things went low. Although an ebony Ultimatum went for $550, a beech brought only $350 due to a chuck problem. Two primitive braces went for $150 each because they needed minor fix-up. A large open pit saw, with no apparent defects, went for $125. Some of the

Sheffield braces were excellent buys. Two-pole and three-pole cage heads went for $125 each. The brass shoulder, chariot, Bullnose, etc., were low. Just about the only Stanley plane of the second day, a #72 Chamfer, went for $150.



Sandusky Centerwheel, $3,500
(How Many Would You Like?)

There were plenty of miniature planes, as they were Lee's favorites. Thirty-eight of them in ten sequential lots went at an average of $67 each. My choice of the auction was a boxwood and ebony bowsaw, with a 6" blade. The workmanship and patina were the best I've seen. It went for $650. I didn't get it.

The sale closed out with fine pieces even at the end. Where the last piece at most auctions is generally a junker for $5 or $10, this one was a beautiful sash jig for $400. I think the total of $74,837 is a one-day record, but don't quote me.

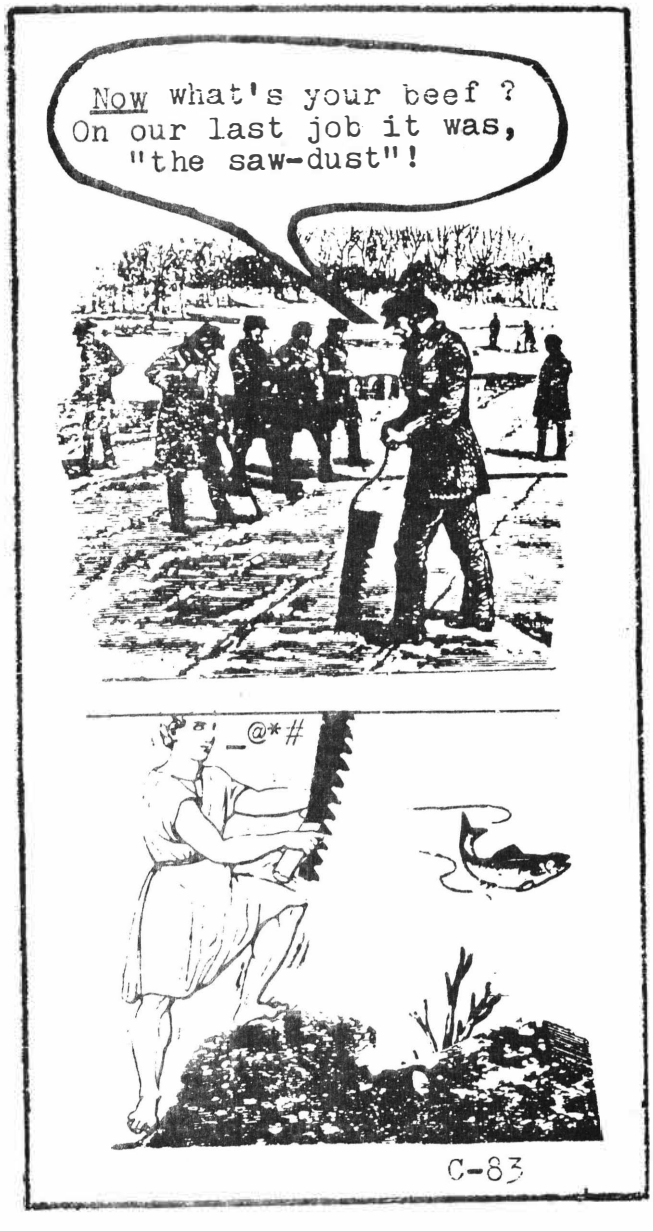
Harry O'Neill, Don Lipsey and I drove home the next day with a record also: Harry bought the lowest priced tool at the auction, a $10 primitive adze (I think that is all Virginia gave him to spend). We had enjoyed ourselves no end, as these auctions are more than a place to buy good tools; they are a social event, where good people get together.

[Distaff, continued from page 9]
Township of Lebanon. It is located on Musconetcong River Road, one-half mile east of Route 31, Hampton. Hours are Tuesday, 9:00 to 5:00; Thursday and Saturday, 1:00 to 5:00. Why don't you come and visit us? I am sure you would enjoy the experience.

THE MERRY ICE-CUTTERS

"These ice-cutters are a merry race, full of jest and sport, and when I went among them they were wont to invite me to saw pit-fashion with them, I standing underneath."

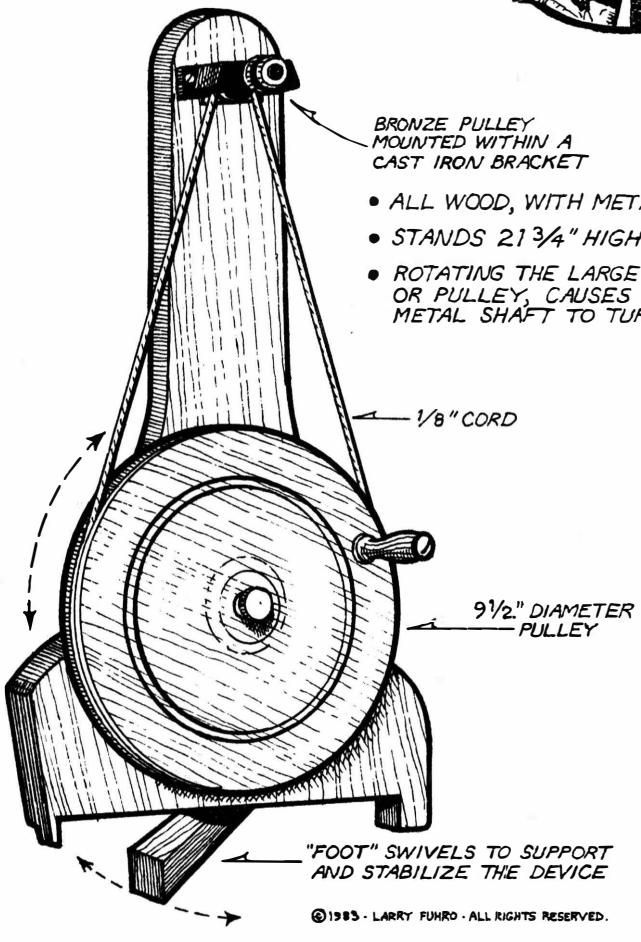
—Henry David Thoreau,
Walden (1854)

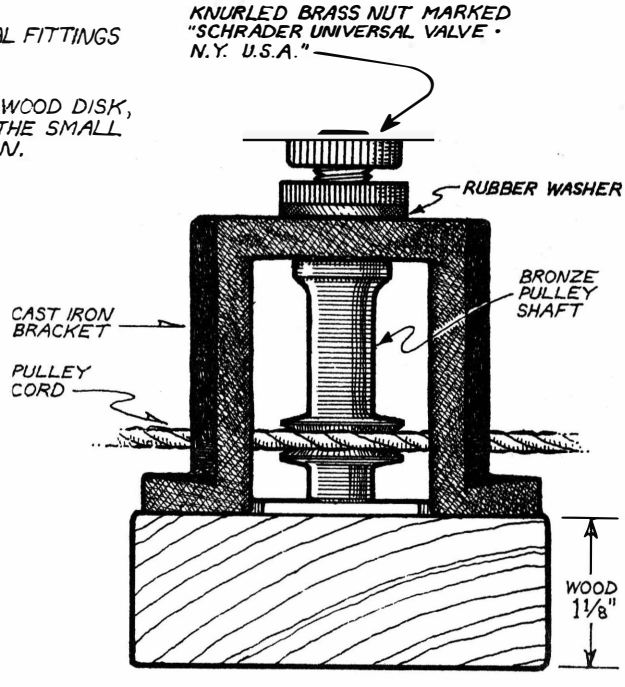


Pop Rivet's What's It? No.10

by LARRY FUHRO

Another curiosity from the Old Red Mill Museum Clinton, N.J.





Detail of Pulley (Seen from top down)

GADGETS · DOOHICKEYS · THINGAMAJIGS · AND WHATCHAMACALLITS

["Wm Penn," continued from page 9]
hometown, Audubon, N.J. the Supplee-Biddle hunt was relatively simple, although he has not yet completed his investigation.

But as an interim report, he writes that Supplee-Biddle was a merger of two companies in the early 1900's. It continued until 1936 when the name was changed to Supplee-Biddle-Steltz. This latter company went out of business in 1936.

Now, with a new interest in life, Carl is thinking of disposing of all of those planes and starting a collection of axes.

PATENTED "WHATITS": ONE LAST COMMENT

Paul Weidenschilling of Boonton informs us that he is general agreement with the comments made in the June issue of The Tool Shed to the effect that patented items cannot properly be classified as "whatsits." But he adds, one has to be a little careful.

Not everything marked "patented" really was, he says. If there is a patent date included, you are probably safe in assuming it is legitimate. If it just says "patented," be wary.