

The Gristmill

A Publication of the Mid-West Tool Collector's Association

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Marshall-Wells Hardware Company

[Headquartered in Duluth]

At the ZENITH

Where Rails and Water Meet

[1893 to 1958]



DULUTH

SPOKANE



PORTLAND

WINNIPEG

The Marshall-Wells magazine, The ZENITH, displayed the company's large headquarters on its back page in 1910. Cover story on page 10.

CHAFF

Nothing Beats Being There in Person

Yesterday's mail brought a breakdown by state of those who attended the June meeting in Omaha. About 550 tool collectors were there browsing the wide aisles in the trade room and swapping stories of their latest finds in the lobbies and hallways.



regularly travel great distances were there. The contingent from England came, also a couple from Australia and some from Canada. Even with the large number in attendance, there are many members who have not had the opportunity to attend a national meeting.

I urge you to make plans for the Cincinnati meeting George Elsass is planning. Like many first-time attendees, you'll find the number of tools mind-boggling and the breadth of information almost beyond imagination. Oh, I know that a lot of information is available in books published by members, but it's just not the same as listening to a long and entertaining tale of the discovery of a tool by a member such as past president Ivan Risley.

— Mel Ring

Most know that the semiannual meetings are held in different cities, generally within 400 miles of our membership center that is in central Illinois. The Omaha meeting, hosted by Al Fetty and Fred Leu, was planned so that more people in the west could attend, and it proved successful. The list of members from Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa was much longer than usual. Of course, many who

SEPTEMBER, 2000 • No. 100

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Oh, my oh my, Omaha! It was a dark and very stormy day – but these Omaha clouds had silver linings. Coverage of the spring Omaha national meet begins on page 4.

Cover story Duluth's Marshall-Wells Hardware Co., at the zenith where rails and water meet. Page 10.

Tooling around England & France John Wells reports on his recent European tool odyssey. Page 14.

THE GRISTMILL

N. 100

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THE GRISTMILL is the official publication of the Mid-West Tool Collectors Association, Inc. Published quarterly in March, June, September and December. The purpose of the association is to promote the preservation, study and understanding of ancient tools, implements and devices of farm, home, industry and shop of the pioneers; also, to study the crafts in which these objects were used and the craftsmen who used them; and to share knowledge and understanding with others, especially where it may benefit restoration, museums and like institutions.

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COMING UP



Mid-West Tool Collectors Association National Meetings

Fall, 2000

Oct. 12, 13, 14, 2000. Cincinnati, OH. George Elsass (614) 888-0591.

Spring, 2001

June 15, 16, 17, 2001. Battle Creek, MI. Lars Larson (313) 382-0594 or Mike Slasinski (517) 781-1152.

Fall, 2001

Sept. 27, 28, 29, 2001. Franklin, TN. Kerry and Lynne McCalla (615) 791-6198.

Spring, 2002

June 13, 14, 15, 2002. Decatur, IL. Dave and Judy Heckel (217) 345-9112.

M-WTCA Area & Other Meetings

Area A/B Meeting

Sept. 9, 10, 2000. Rochester, MN. Hollis Feeser (507) 282-3175.

Area D Meeting

Sept. 17, 2000. Cosgrove, IA. Charles Gartzke (319) 828-4338.

Area M Meeting

Sept. 22, 23, 2000. Waleska, GA. Doug Fowler (706) 629-8604.

Area D Meeting

Oct. 22, 2000. Papillion, NE. Alan Fetty (515) 337-5612.

Area C Meeting

Nov. 4, 2000. Dearborn, MI. Lars Larson (313) 382-0594.

Area N Meeting

Nov. 4, 5, 2000. Barberville, FL. Phil Baker (941) 485-6981.

Area J Meeting

Nov. 5, 2000. Springfield, MO. Paul Reichert (417) 831-1425.

Area Q Meeting

Nov. 11, 2000. Charlotte, NC. Bob Fields (704) 393-1282 or John Shaw (704) 938-7009.

Area E Meeting

Nov. 12, 2000. Virden, IL. Jack Howe (217) 438-3776.

Area N Meeting

Nov. 18, 2000. Blountsville, FL. Willard Smith (904) 674-8055.

Area P Meeting

Jan. 27, 28, 2001. York, PA. William Warner (717) 843-8104.

Area A Meeting

Feb. 10, 2001. Medina, MN. John Walkowiak (612) 824-0785.

Area E Meeting

March 24, 2001. Rockford, IL. Gary Johnson (815) 636-1464.

Area J Meeting

April 1, 2001. St. Louis, MO. Mike Urness (314) 434-4325.

Area E Meeting

April 8, 2001. Macomb, IL. George Wanamaker (309) 836-6872.

Area A Meeting

April 28, 2001. Hastings, MN. John Walkowiak (612) 824-0785.

Area D Meeting

May 6, 2001. Humboldt, IA. Forrest Johnson (515) 573-7586.

Area H Meeting

June 4, 2001. Springfield, MA. Don Riley (860) 354-0231.

Dates must be cleared with Gary Johnson (815) 636-1464. E-mail tinstools1@aol.com.

Pack your Tools, Curiosity and Appetite for Cincinnati Meet

It's fall and time for tool collectors to get together again, this time in Cincinnati.

The dates are Oct. 12, 13 and 14 at the newly renovated Radisson Hotel and Convention Center.

Host George Elsass hopes for a lot of displays along the easy theme of "Ohio Tools." The Auxiliary theme also leaves room for plenty of displays, as well as imagination, with "Plain and Fancy."

Program speakers will be M-WTCA members: Russ Heerner, talking about Stonehenge, which dates back to the Stone Age; Clarence Blanchard, photography; and Jack Devitt, Ohio tools. A tour also will be offered.

Elsass said, "It's easy access from the north, east south or west. See you in Cincinnati."

October 12, 13 & 14
Cincinnati, OH, Radisson
"Ohio Tools"

A New Look Created For the 100th Gristmill

To mark the 100th issue of The GRISTMILL, the magazine has a new look. The redesign was done by Malcolm McDowell Woods, layout and editorial assistant, to update and keep fresh The GRISTMILL's format.

"I've tried to create a clean, easy-to-follow look which draws from the rich tradition of old tools," said Woods. New typefaces were selected for headlines, text and section headings. The look is meant to be

slightly reminiscent of the typography and design of old tool packaging, yet still lend a clear, modern feel to the publication.

The first GRISTMILL was published in June, 1974, with Bill Holden as editor. Through the years, it has changed from a lighthearted newsletter to the professional tool publication it is today. Mary Lou Stover is the current editor.

Other editors were: Jerry Grismer, Tom Ward, Bill and Suzanne Gustafson, Barbara Pontius, Bonnie Weber and Mel Ring. Three issues of the organization's first publication, The SCRIBE, preceded The GRISTMILL and were edited by Laurent Torno.

More about the magazine will be forthcoming in the Special Publications Committee book, "The GRISTMILL - The First 25 Years," edited by Dave Heckel.

M-WTCA NEWS

Winning Omaha displays survived funnel clouds, flooding

By George Wanamaker

The winning display at Omaha survived a tornado warning that sent hotel guests to the basement as well as a flood.

It took the judges from 3 to 9:45 p.m. to get their job done because of the interruptions. It was around 6 p.m. when the outdoor sirens sounded and the hotel buzzers and flashing lights went on with hotel staff scurrying to lead guests downstairs. When the judges returned to the display room, water was pouring through the roof onto several exhibits. Dale Clark's display survived the deluge to win Best of Show, Nebraska-Made Tools.

Best of Show, Turn of the Century Tools award was won by Dick Kates with "Look-Alikes, the Turn of the Century." It featured a pair of pedal jigsaws, and best of all not a drop of water got on them.

Best of Show, Out of Theme award went to John Goss for "Patent Model Improvement in a Mowing Machine." This device was attached to a mowing or harvesting machine to disengage the sickle bar cutter and turn it parallel to the draft in case the driver fell from the seat. Luckily, little of the water hit this display or it would have washed away. Nice exhibit.

Wayne Gustafson's "Fale's Patented Plane" was chosen Best One Tool display. The gunmetal plane with all of its attachments filled one eight-foot table.

Jim Shold put together the Most



Omaha meeting hosts: from left, Fred and Sally Leu and Al and Rose Fetty. Mike Slasinski photo.

Unusual display, "Nebraska Lumber Yards." It contained advertising, aprons, yardsticks and tools that had come from the yards in the past 75 years or so. It was truly unique in concept and design.

The Fred Curry award for the Best Stanley display went to the father-son team of Bill and Brian Kolm. It replicated a Handyman Tool hardware store display. They spent nine years collecting the mint tools, and they built from a catalog picture the display front itself. It looked original. Many hours and father-son togetherness must have gone into this.

From the 27 displays, the committee also chose 10 for Judges Choice awards. In alphabetical order, the winners were:

Alfred Egbers with "Nebraska-made

Tools Before 1920," displaying both manufactured and homemade tools from his family's homestead.

George Elsass, "Cage Head Braces and Augers 1700-1900," which displayed and described a number of cage-head braces.

Cliff Fales "The Roots of the Yankee Screwdriver," dealing with the history and design of the spiral screwdriver.

Dave Heckel, "Traut's Patented Adjustable Dado, Fillister, Plow, Etc., and Adjustable Dado." It showed the differences in the Stanley 46 and 47 planes. It also had the longest title.

Cecil Holmes, "Metallic Levels From Massachusetts," featured Davis fancy cast iron levels and those made by other early iron level manufacturers

Don Jordan's, "Jointer Gauges," brought a huge display of fences used to plane a precise, set angle on a board.

Tom Lamond, "Box Scrapers and Pull Shaves," an interactive exhibit in which you could even try one out. Tom explained that the tools were very common because every change in ownership of merchandise required a change on the boxes. This meant removing the old name.

Bill Lindstromberg with his "Stanley Scrapers" showed the variations in scrapers made by Stanley. It's hard to believe one company changed designs so often.

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Omaha award winners: from left, Ron Pearson, Bill Linstromberg, Tom Lamond, Don Jordan, Dave Heckel and George Elsass.

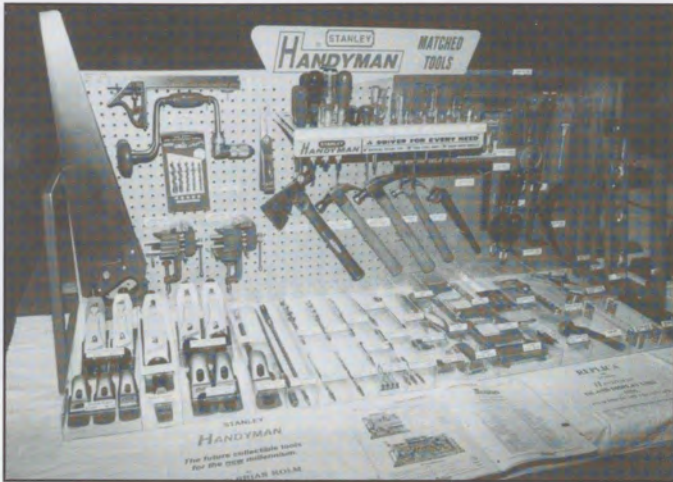


Omaha award winners: from right, Dick Kates, Dale Clark, John Gross, Brian Kolm, Bill Kolm and George Wanamaker.

M-WTCA NEWS

Winning Omaha Displays

Photos by Mike Slasinski



Fred Curry Award: "Handyman Tool Hardware Store," Bill and Brian Kolm.



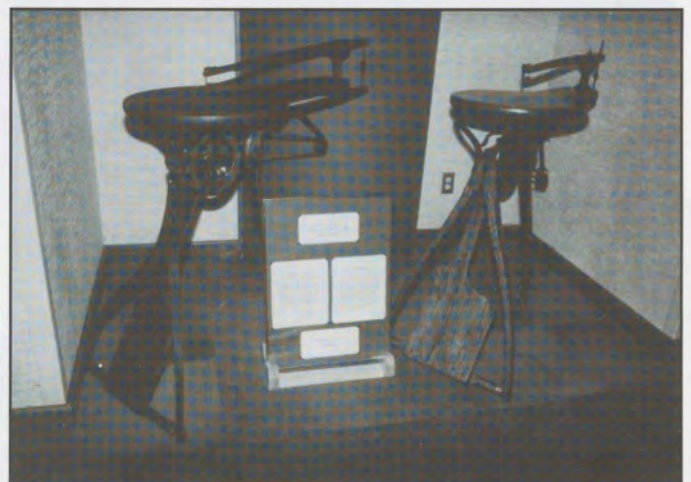
Best One Tool Display: "Fales Patented Plane," Wayne Gustafson.



Best of Show in Theme: "Nebraska Made Tools," Dale Clark.



Most Unusual Display: "Nebraska Lumber Yards," Jim Shold.



Best of Show in Theme: "Tools of the Turn of the Century," Dick Katis.

Display Winners

Continued from page 4

Ron Pearson's exhibit on Shelton and Osborne planes featured beautiful ivory-tipped plow planes.

George Wanamaker, "Unique Measurement Tools," showed a number of measuring tools for different purposes.

The judges want to encourage members to bring displays. Planning and putting them together is fun, they say, adding that educating each other is an important part of tool collecting.

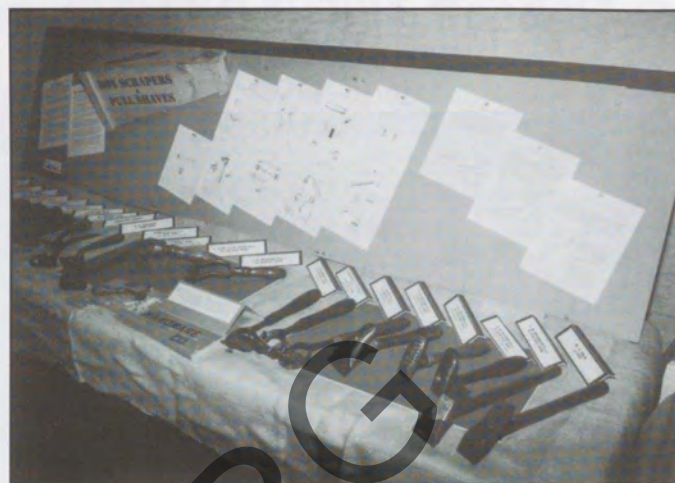
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Winning Omaha Displays

Photos by Mike Slasinski



Judges Choice: "The Roots of the Yankee Screwdriver," by Cliff Fales.



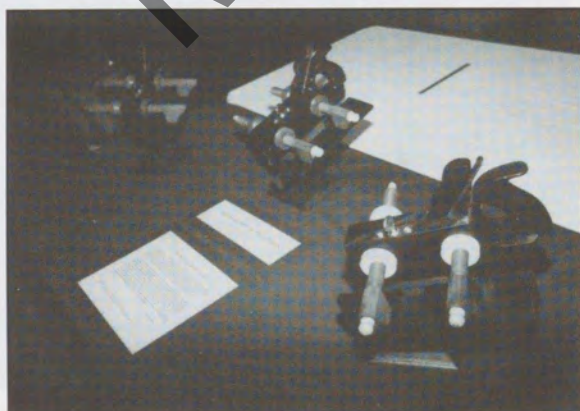
Judges Choice: "Box Scrapers and Pull Shaves," by Tom Lamond.



Best Out of Theme: "Patent Model Improvement in a Mowing Machine," John Goss.



Judges Choice: "Unique Measuring Tools," by George Wanamaker.



Judges Choice: "Shelton and Osborne Planes," by Ron Pearson

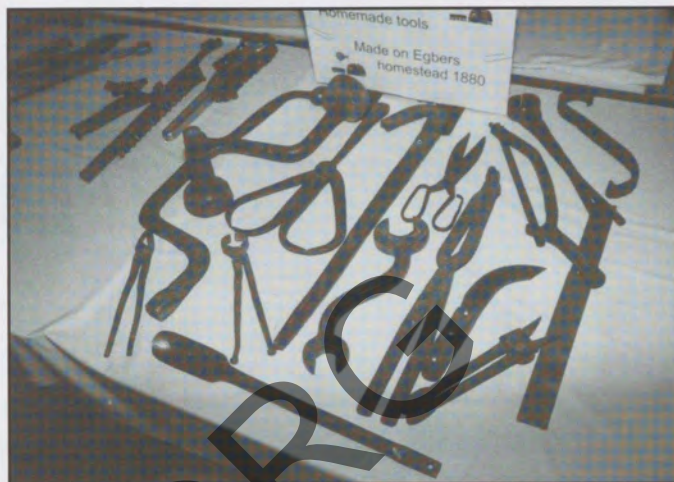


Judges Choice: "Stanley Scrapers," by Bill Linstromberg.

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Judges Choice: "Metallic Levers from Massachusetts," by Cecil Holmes.



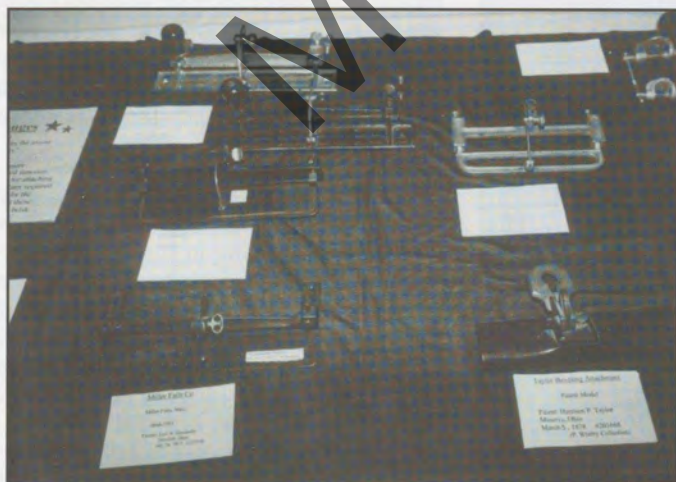
Judges Choice: "Nebraska Made Tools," by Alfred Egbers.



Judges Choice: "Cage Head Braces and Augers," George Elsass.



Judges Choice: "Traut Planes," by Dave Heckel.



Judges Choice: "Jointer Gauges," by Don Jordan.

Officers to be Elected

Officers will be elected at the Cincinnati fall meeting.

The board of directors has approved the following slate, all current officers: president, Mel Ring; vice president meeting planning, Don Tubman; vice president elections, Doug Cox; vice president scholarships, Ron Cushman; treasurer, John Wells; secretary, Willie Royal. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

M-WTCA NEWS



Activity on the trading floor at Area C's meet. John McKiernan photo.

Area C Spring Meet

By John McKiernan

Ninety-plus tool enthusiasts gathered at Peet Community Center in Chesaning, MI, on April 29 for the Area C spring tool meet.

In addition to tool trading, a number of displays and two demonstrations provided the trading floor activity. Marvin and Joan Bunn's woodcarving and butter making demonstrations were outstanding. Among the displays, Gary Hegler's wooden leg carving tools drew a good deal of attention. The weather cooperated, making it a very enjoyable day. A catered lunch completed the day.

Area D Stages a Real Barn Burner

By Susan Witzel

The visiting and festivities for Area D began on Saturday evening at the home of Forrest and Mary Ann

Johnson of rural Fort Dodge, IA. They shared their collection of Stanley tools, Cambridge glassware and goodies with those in attendance.

The Area D tool meet was held May 7 in Humboldt, IA, at the fairgrounds. M-WTCA members were treated to demonstrations by Bob Ahlrichs, who made rich men's matches with his spill plane; Jim Carpenter, who used many of the old planes and explained how the older carpenters crafted furniture and barns with the tools of long ago; and Dick Kates, who demonstrated both a pedal jigsaw and pedal router.

The theme for the meet was barns. Many members brought barn tools and barn memorabilia. Royce Winge had a display of barn-related items. Cecil Holmes shared a display of measuring instruments. Betty Bentley delighted folks with her display of hangers from the past to the present. Peg McBride shared her fascinating collection of darners. Whatsits were identified with the able help of Junior McBride, Fred Len and Jim Escher. Barn stories were shared. After a delicious lunch served by a local boys 4-H club, Bertha Shaw of Eagle Grove presented a slide show on "The Styles of Barns." Twenty-six trading tables were set up, with 70 members in attendance.



Dick Kates demonstrated a pedal jigsaw at Area D's meet. Susan Witzel photo.

OBITUARIES

Norman Elwood deGraf

Word has been received of the death of Norman Elwood DeGraf, 76, Galena, KS. He died March 26 after a sudden illness. He was a member of the M-WTCA, United Brotherhood of Carpenters for 53 years and the Masonic Lodge. He was treasurer of the Galena Public Library Board and former city treasurer. He also served in World War II in the U.S. Signal Corps. He married Billie Bradshaw, who survives, in 1946, and they had three children.

Bill Little

By Bill Holden

In May, 1968, 33 tool collectors got together in Dundee, IL, to discuss starting a tool collecting club. Thence, the M-WTCA. Among those on board was Bill Little from Mokena, IL. This group is now referred to as charter members.

Bill was an executive at Joliet Federal Savings and Loan Association and an avid tool collector. He didn't stand out at that meeting, or at future meetings. Rather, he sat back, smoking his pipe, and attentively listened to the discussions. When he spoke, it was usually to add an important suggestion or consideration. Much in the same manner as Harlow Sternberg or Ray Wilson. In our early years, it was members like these who helped get the Mid-West Tool Collectors Association organized.

In 1975, Little and his wife Ginny moved to Maine where he embarked on a new career, teaching in the business department of the University of Maine. He had attended the University of Illinois at Navy Pier and graduated from Northern Illinois University with degrees in finance and business. He taught for 20 years, retiring in 1997.

Ginny said that one of his special interests was collecting crooked knives

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APPLAUSE

Omaha Offered Some Extra Excitement

By Mary Lou Stover

Omaha meeting hosts promised an exciting national meet, and they gave even more than expected. A funnel cloud was sighted above the city about dinner time Friday evening.

First came large hail and wind. Then, the city's tornado warning sirens sounded. Next, buzzers plus flashing lights went on in the hotel. Hotel staff quickly and efficiently herded hotel guests downstairs to a basement level reception area. It didn't make me feel any better that it appeared they had done this many times before. Tool collectors took the event in stride, joking as they waited out the storm about what they'd tell their friends when they got back home. Luckily, the tornado didn't touch down, and folks went back to their tool collecting after the all-clear sounded. Hail damaged some cars.

For good reason, just about everybody knows Ray Nissen. He attended his 50th national M-WTCA meeting when he took part in activities at Omaha. Ray is a former president of the organization and regularly helps out at the registration table. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting in Cincinnati and many more.

Bill Little

Continued from page 8

(which is not surprising since every one I've seen originated in Maine). He and Ginny were involved in a group antique shop, the Copper Gull, in Searsport, ME.

Bill had experienced some heart problems over the years and finally succumbed to heart failure on May 10 at age 64 in his home in Northland, ME. Though not actively involved in recent years, his contributions to the early growth of M-WTCA are known and appreciated by those who worked on those endeavors.

Besides his wife of 45 years, Janellen, he is survived by a son, Brian William Little; daughter, Karla L. Allan; their spouses; two grandchildren, and other relatives.



M-WTCA members taking cover in the hotel basement after a tornado warning. From left: Bob Valich, Margaret Farley, Ron Farley, Bob Gilmore, Joey Gilmore. Kathy Valich photo.

The new membership directory has its first Yellow Pages. Thanks to Don Bosse, who solicited the advertising, the booklet contains 15 pages of ads. You'll find names of dealers and collectors selling tools, books, antiques, auction services and more. Please support these advertisers and those in The GRISTMILL by checking them out the next time you want to buy or sell.

Do you remember what is like the first time you attended a national M-WTCA meeting? Don Ervin, who came from Honey Creek, IA, for the Omaha meeting, is typical of new members. Like a bear in a ripe berry patch, Ervin was exuberant. The feeling spread as we listened too him telling what fun he was having and that the tools were wonderful, the prices fair and the people friendly. Welcome to the club, Don, and all you other new members. We hope to see you again.

Eric and Evelyn Lucas, of Danville, IL, also observed their wedding anniversary June 24 in Omaha. It was number 54. You know Lloyd. He's the guy followed around by his faithful companion, Ginger, the couple's boxer dog. The Lucases are parents of five daughters, two sons and grandparents of 17.

It's becoming a habit for Don and Sue Tubman to frequently mark their wedding anniversary at M-WTCA's spring

meet. This year it was Omaha and 44 years of marriage. Sue also often celebrates her birthday during the fall meeting. The tool shows, anniversaries, birthdays and vacations add up to perfect times for the Wisconsinites.

Speaking of marriages, Evelyn Kruse, a new member from Ida Grove, IA, related this story at the Auxiliary's book discussion: In the 16th century, women only bathed once a year, usually in May. That's the reason for the June wedding tradition, the bride smelled better. But just in case, they carried flowers to cover up any new odors since that bath. Not only is Evelyn good at relating interesting tidbits about the past, she won the Auxiliary's Best of Show award for her display and information on spoons.

Drawn together through the Internet, Pat Mau of Arizona and Lurette Sundberg of Polk, NE, met in person for the first time at Omaha. Both belong to book discussion groups on the Internet and learned that had lots in common, including growing up in Wisconsin and being librarians. When Pat suggested they get together at the tool meeting, Lurette quickly agreed. Jim Mau was ecstatic about this, and was anxious to meet Jim Sundberg, who is a hardware dealer. They could have talked hammers and other tools for hours, but Sundberg couldn't attend. Maybe another time, Jim.

COVER STORY

Duluth's Marshall-Wells Hardware Company "At the Zenith Where Rails and Water Meet"

By Bill Ericson

On July 4th, 1868, a speech was made in Duluth, MN, by Dr. Thomas Preston Foster. In that historical speech, he called Duluth "The Zenith City of the Unsalted Seas" because of Duluth's unique location for easy transportation to the upper half of this vast continent.

His words and idea were used 25 years later by the Marshall-Wells Hardware Co. to describe the meaning of the brand name and logo the company used only on its top-of-the-line merchandise.

The Duluth headquarters was unique in that ships loaded with hardware from the factories out east might moor right alongside the structure to unload. After employees inventoried the shipment, they would load rail cars within the building and send them off to the farthest reaches of the Great Northwest. The company was



Duluth headquarters (front view). Notice the locomotive coming out of the building. It's true! When I was a lad, I walked right through that area.

Author's collection.

indeed located "at the ZENITH where rails and water meet." To this day, all native Duluthians know their city as the "Zenith City."

A Partial History of the Marshall-Wells Hardware Co.

1893 Albert Morely Marshall established the Marshall-Wells Hardware Co., a wholesale hardware house. He established it in "Duluth, a town with a port most inland of the unsalted seas." During the company's second year, his partner, Mr. Wells, died on a hunting trip.

1900 M-W-H Co. established a complete jobbing house in Winnipeg, Canada.

1901 M-W-H Co. established a complete jobbing house in Portland, OR.

1909 M-W-H Co. established a complete jobbing house in Spokane, WA.

1910 M-W-H Co. established a complete jobbing house in Edmonton, Alberta.

1911 to 1922 M-W-H Co. established complete jobbing houses in Aberdeen, Seattle, Billings, Great Falls, Minneapolis and Vancouver, BC. The company also had warehouses at Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Calgary, Alberta.

Exporters Marshall-Wells also sold

merchandise in many foreign countries, having resident representatives in the Hawaiian Islands, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, the Straits settlements and China.

1918 A.M. Marshall turns over active management to his son Seth Marshall.

1926 M-W-H Co. merges with the Canadian hardware firm, Wood Valance Limited.

1-8-31 M-W-H Co. purchases the Holley Mason Hardware Co. of Spokane for \$3 million.

1952 The M-W-H Co. supplies a chain of more than 600 independently-owned hardware stores which carry the Marshall-Wells name.

1948-1955 John H. Moore becomes president of the company.

1955 Marshall-Wells sells interest in Duluth to Ambrook Industries Inc. of New York.

1-1-58 Marshall-Wells and Kelley-How-Thompson, another Duluth-based hardware giant, merge to form the Marshall Wells-Kelley How Thompson Hardware Co. George W. Wells Jr., former



Second page in the company's 1913 catalog. This page was second only to the title page listing the officers and the general scope of the firm's product lines.

Photo NEMHC, Duluth, MN

president of Kelley-How-Thompson, becomes president of the newly-formed company.

12-26-58 Marshall Wells-Kelley How Thompson Co. and its trade name are sold to Coast-to-Coast stores.

During their history, Marshall-Wells was not only a hardware wholesale house, the business also owned a paper mill, chemical laboratories, a stove and foundry company and a harness company. The company also made washing machines, refrigerators, store shelving, furniture, paint, building materials and who knows what else?

2000 Today, just one-half of the original structure exists in Duluth. It houses offices, residential homes, three popular restaurants and a 107-suite hotel completed in 1999.

Marshall-Wells top brand name was ZENITH. This brand was used only on the firm's highest quality goods. Other brand names used for lesser quality goods were: MARSWELS, HARTFORD, SUPERIOR, and NORTHERN KING. In addition to these brand names, the company used MESABA on axes and other logging tools. If you look at their catalogs, you will find they also used special brand names to sell certain items. For example, in their carriage whip section alone, they used such names as SKOOKUM, CEYLON RAWHIDE, STEEL HIDE WHIP, BURMA RAWHIDE and BULLY BOY. There were whips for territory sales such as THE DULUTH, PORTLAND, THE NORTHWEST, THE PACIFIC LEADER,

OKANOGAN and SPOKANE. Of special interest to Stanley collectors, yes, they even had a whip named THE STANLEY WHIP.

The photos shown on these pages were scanned from a 1913 general hardware catalog. The catalog used was the office copy from the Duluth headquarters, and is now safely in the care of the St. Louis County Historical Society. Like most other hardware houses, Marshall-Wells didn't actually manufacture any tools. The firm had large tool makers manufacture them to M-W-H Co. standards, then apply the appropriate brand.

It is interesting that, in the 1913 catalog, M-W-H Co. numbered its best line of smooth planes as Zenith Z602, Z603, etc. These planes were manufactured by Sargent & Co. and were in reality Sargent No. 7, 8 etc. At that time Stanley was using 602, 603 etc. to designate its Bedrock planes. Was M-W-H Co. trying to take advantage of the Bedrock name recognition as to quality? Of course, M-W-H was not going to lose a sale. Just a couple of pages farther in its catalog, it also sold a full line of Stanley Bedrocks with the catalog number designations No. 602, No. 603 etc. Marshall-Wells sold every conceivable kind of tool under its brand name alongside of some of the most recognized manufacturers' brand names.

I don't know if it was unique for hardware wholesale distributors at the time,



Labels used by M-W-H Co. Multicolored in golds, reds, blacks, blues and greens.

Photo NEMHC, Duluth, MN.

but M-W-H Co. had state-of-the-art in-house testing facilities. The 1913 catalog shows photos of the physical testing room, microscopical laboratory and chemical lab. Photos of some of the actual equipment used to perform the tests to assure the company only distributed quality goods to its customers were also shown.

The Zenith

In its early years, Marshall-Wells put out a monthly magazine called The Zenith. In 1910, a yearly subscription cost one dollar. The Zenith had articles on how to sell hardware, how to build store window displays and how to present hardware to customers. The magazine also

Continued on page 12



Labels used by the Saddlery Dept., colors black, gold, red and white.

Photo NEMHC, Duluth, MN.



Duluth headquarters (rear view). Notice that ships could moor right alongside the building to unload cargo. The building in the foreground was long ago demolished.

Author's collection.

Duluth's Marshall-Wells Hardware

"At the Zenith Where Rails and Water Meet"

Continued from page 11

carried want ads. For the most part, the ads were for help wanted in the firm's many stores and facilities and for soliciting capital investors to expand the company. The magazine also had a joke page, and of course, advertising with very fine graphics. The thing I found most interesting about the magazine was its stories. The stories were complete with photos and were all about what was going on at the time. Some told of great building projects, some about the vast timber and mining resources, some about just how wild the Northwest was and how to tame it. Very rarely, but once in a while I come across these magazines. The ones I have seen so far have all been bound for 12 months together in a leather-like cover. To date, I have not convinced any of their owners to part with one.

Information for this article was obtained from the Duluth Public Library, the St. Louis County Historical Society, from visits to the M-W-H Co. building itself and by talking with people whose family members had who worked for the Marshall-Wells Hardware Co.

Marshall-Wells Co. logos and letterhead illustrations are from the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center in Duluth. For more information and access to original Marshall-Wells Co. records, check the archives for Marshall-Wells Co. records, NEMHC, Duluth, MN. Its library has a complete file of the Zenith.

Tom Lamond is collecting and researching information to write a book on the subject of Old Wholesale Hardware Concern House Brand Names, Logos and Labels. Please help Tom. Send him information on the hardware houses in your area or that you have any information about.



Cover from the June 1910 issue of The ZENITH.



Back cover from the August 1910 issue of The ZENITH. Notice how the company displayed its large hardware houses that stretched from the gateway to the farthest reaches of the Great Northwest

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TOOLS

Tooling Around in England and France

By: John G. Wells ©2000

After spending a week in London with side trips to the charming medieval towns of York, Chester and Shrewsbury, Janet and I took the Eurostar through the Chunnel to Paris. There we boarded a high-speed train to Brive south of Limoges in the Dordogne region.

A Private Tool Museum in France

We had been invited to view one of the world's truly great collections of antique tools housed in a private tool museum located on a secluded and beautiful mountaintop. The collection is in the custody of two wonderfully personable kitties: Poppy and Daisy. (A third cat, Sam, was too busy tending their private forest to be bothered with tourists.) Guests are greeted by a gracious host, Tuki, a talented Tibetan Lhasa apso who bangs on a leather bucket to signal mealtime. Their caretaker is an exceedingly charming English gentleman who fell in love with the beauty and seclusion of this part of France and moved here to pursue woodcarving, bird watching and tool collecting.

The tool museum is housed in a sepa-



Fig.1: Janet Wells and Tuki in the Tool Museum. John Wells Photo



Fig.2: Upper shelf: Falconer planes. Lower shelf, 16th and 17th century central European planes. John Wells Photo

rate building adjacent to one of the most beautiful and comfortable residences I have had the privilege to visit. The house is filled with incredible artifacts that add greatly to its charm. I saw several very open and delicate three-dimensional woodcarvings of floral arrangements as well as carvings of birds and other small animals, recalling the work of Grinling Gibbons. When I asked who created these gems, the resident woodcarver admitted they were his work.

The living room contains an impressive library of rare editions of historically significant works. Imagine seeing a full set of the original 35-volume folio edition of Denis Diderot's *L'Encyclopedie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonne des Sciences, des Arts, et des Metiers* with 2,700 plates occupying over two and a half meters of shelf space, an original five-volume set of Holtzapffell's "Turning and Mechanical Manipulation on the Lathe" as well as other significant tool publications.

The following morning Tuki banged on her leather bucket in the kitchen to call us to breakfast. Poppy and Daisy were sitting on their kitchen windowsill admiring the garden and sharing affectionate pats. After breakfast, we went for a walk through the private forest, stopping here and there to admire breathtaking views of chateaus on distant hillsides. Later, Tuki and the resident woodcarver took us for a drive to see the surrounding countryside, passing through several charming medieval villages to arrive at the exceptional village of Sarlat. Tuki selected a small restaurant with a superb kitchen where we enjoyed a memorable lunch and delightful conversation.

After lunch, and a leisurely drive back to the mountain-top retreat, we returned to the tool museum for an in-depth viewing of a truly great collection. It was immediately evident that the collection had both enormous breadth and great depth. The walls are lined with shelves loaded with rare tools arranged by category.

Scores of English metallic-framed braces including many different examples of Ultimatum braces by William Marples, Robert Marples, Henry Pasley and others, rare brass-mounted braces by Pilkington, Pedigor & Storr as well as several examples of the very rare Sims-type framed brace.

One whole section is devoted to infill planes by T. Norris & Son, which may have something to do with the resident woodcarver's deep desire to own a Norris plane when he was an apprentice joiner. Variants of the standard smoother, each with a unique feature, were lined up side by side on several shelves. The star of this section was the longest and most beautiful Norris jointer I have seen. Close by were the really rare miter planes and thumb planes including the No.31 thumb plane with a gunmetal lever cap and the No.32 with a rosewood wedge as well as the No.A31 adjustable thumb plane. Little Norris violinmaker's planes were in the next section along with many small instrument maker's planes and chariot planes. (Fig.1)

Late 18th and early 19th century French and German coach makers circu-

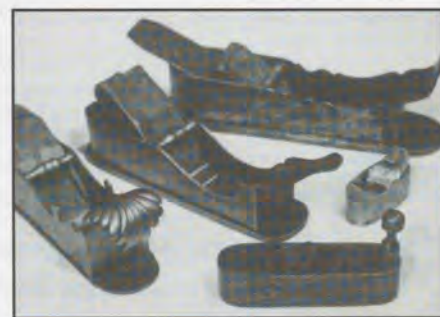


Fig.3: Clockwise: 17th century miter plane with acanthus leaf palm rest, Two central European 17th century miter planes, 17th century German instrument makers plane, 16th century Nuremberg smoothing plane. John Wells Photo



Fig.4: French anvil. Maison de L'Outil, Troyes. John Wells photo

lar plow planes filled one whole shelf. I was blown away when I saw just above them a shelf devoted to Falconer and Falconer type circular plow planes. It's evident that the same hand designed several of them. (Fig.2)

Next we move back in time to the 16th and 17th centuries. Beautiful central European metallic miter planes, instrument maker's planes and thumb planes are one of the collection's major thrusts. I was glad to see in person the 17th century miter plane with a large acanthus leaf front palm rest that I had admired so much on the front cover of David Stanley's 1995 Catalogue. (Fig.3) I also saw the lovely little 16th century metallic block plane



Fig.5: Decorated Leg Vice, Maison de L'Outil, Troyes. John Wells photo.



Fig.6: Tinsmiths, stump mounted, bick anvil, Photo courtesy of Maison de L'Outil, Troyes.

(Vergatthobel) that was on the cover of a later David Stanley Catalogue.¹

Probably the finest piece in the collection is a beautifully decorated 16th century Nuremberg metal smoothing plane². Two similar planes from the collection of the Elector Augustus I of Saxony toured the USA in 1978 in an exhibit titled the Splendors of Dresden. The sides and top are beautifully etched, typical of Nuremberg work. A hunting scene runs entirely around the sides of the plane showing a hunter, his dogs and a hare. The plane iron is held in place with a decorated thumbscrew threaded through a metal crosspiece. (also Fig.3)

English miter planes by Spiers, Buck, Towell and others rounded out the display of metallic planes.

A number of 17th and 18th century European armorer's saws gave additional breadth to a collection heavy in planes.

Moving around the room one sees a collection of early 18th century English wood molding planes by documented makers such as Wooding, Granford and Purdew.

Carved and decorated central Euro-

pean planes from the 17th and 18th centuries are very well represented. Each plane is the unique creation of a craftsman who wished to express his feelings about his craft, life or religion. An infill plane in this group had a wonderful grotesque face of a man carved in the rear surface of the front infill looking back at the user.

Eighteenth century dated Dutch standard planes are represented in all sizes from wonderful long jointers (*reisschaaf*) to short block planes (*bossingschaaven*).

No collection would be complete without a few examples of the best that the United States has to offer. A minty No. 164 Stanley Rule and Level Co. plane lay next to one of the nicest hump back No.41 Miller's patent plow planes by the same maker that I have seen. There was a miter plane by J. Popping, a New York City maker, and a Leonard Bailey split frame jointer.

It was such a wonderfully rich offering that we found it impossible to absorb in a single visit.

After a wonderful dinner, we took a moonlight stroll in the private woods. Tuki waited patiently for us in the middle of the path near her home. I think she was reluctant to leave the beauty and comfort she knew and there is wisdom in that.

Maison de L'Outil in Troyes

The next day we took the train back



Fig.7: Carved wood jointer, Maison de L'Outil, Troyes. John Wells Photo

Continued on page 16

Tooling Around in England and France

Continued from page 15

to Paris. After settling into our hotel near the Eiffel Tower, we walked alongside the Seine through the Tuileries to the Louvre to see the pyramid by I. M. Pei. Next morning, we took a train to Troyes, a charming medieval town southeast of Paris. Troyes is a beautiful little town well worth a visit of several days. Our objective was to visit a fabulous collection of tools and books, Maison de L'Outil, housed in the 16th century Hotel de Mauroy

The collection of more than 7,000 early French tools and a library of 25,000 books relevant to the manual trades was assembled by a Jesuit priest, Paul Feller, between the end of World War II and 1969. Since then the collection in the wing of the Hotel de Mauroy known as Maison de L'Outil has been managed and developed by the Compagnons du Devoir, who also operate a wonderful old world apprenticeship program for the manual trades. Feller had a strong conviction that a person who learned the discipline of a trade under the tutelage of a master would become a well-rounded person prepared to reach the highest cultural attainment.

Tools are beautifully and professionally displayed in a series of large glass cases on the upper two floors of the museum. The collection is organized by type of tool, by trade and by function.

There is a great display of antique French anvils in the corner of the lobby. I always thought anvils were the lowest priority of things I would like to collect until I saw this display. Once you have seen one of these magnificent 18th century French anvils you can't help falling in love with them. (Fig.4)

I will never forget the wonderful French anvil we saw in the foyer of Philip Walker's coach house in Needham Market when we visited him in 1980. That same anvil was on the cover of the catalogue for Christie's sale Sept. 17, 1981, which included some of the finest tools ever offered in a single sale. It was described as a rare forged iron anvil of Renaissance architectural style. Both Janet and I loved the anvil but I didn't think I could get it in the overhead luggage rack.

The first floor above the ground floor contained displays of vises, small anvils,

filemaker's tools, hand-cut files, and leather worker's tools. We were particularly drawn to the vises. A magnificent leg vise that was beautifully decorated with scallops, chamfering and engraved designs was the star of the display. (Fig.5)

There was so much to see that we took a needed break for lunch and reflection. After lunch, we returned to the museum where we continued our tour. The second floor above the ground floor contains terrific displays of measuring tools, mason's tools, slater's tools, lead worker's tools, copper worker's tools and joiner's tools. A magnificent tinsmith's stump mounted bick anvil (*bigorne de ferblantier*) decorated with an engraved face of medieval appearance is one of the museum's finest treasures. (Fig.6)

There were several beautiful large French hand-forged compasses with traditional serpent's mouth decoration between the legs and points and with gothic or floral embellishment at the hinge joint in the display case of calipers, travelers and layout tools.

Then we passed into the room that contains a stunning collection of carved and decorated wood planes. Carved wood jointers fill one entire wall (Fig.7) and small carved and dated wood planes are displayed in several showcases with other related tools. We saw a magnificent molding plane carved with a serpent's head on the toe and a Fourchee cross with the date 1707 on the side. (Fig.8). My favorite of the wood planes was a beautifully carved smooth plane with a man's face on the front of the horn. (Fig.9)

We walked into the adjacent lobby of the Compagnons du Devoir to see the master works display. Creating a masterwork is the final requirement and test of skill for those engaged in the Compagnons apprenticeship program. This challenging apprenticeship program was the subject of a fascinating article, "*The Garçons to know when you want it done right*" by Joseph Harriss, published in the June 1996 issue of Smithsonian Magazine.

A visit to the Maison de L'Outil is a must for everyone who loves antique tools and crafts. Visit their website for more information: <http://www.maison-de-l-outil.com>



Fig.8: Carved molding plane dated 1707. Photo courtesy of Maison de L'Outil, Troyes.
David Stanley's 35th Auction

Early the next morning, we boarded the Eurostar for London and then took a train to Leicestershire. We shared a taxi to the Charnwood Arms, where David Stanley holds his twice-yearly International Auctions, with Bill and Joyce Pendelton from Brewster, MA. When we arrived, Bill McDougall and Gregor Mszar, were already enjoying tool gossip and a few beers in the bar. M-WTCA members Don and Anne Wing; Bill and Kay Brooks, Martin Donnelly, Ronald Cushman and John Kesterson would soon join us for one of the premier tool events of the year.

There was a little light drizzle the next morning and most of the dealers who arrived to set up in the car park decided to have breakfast in the dining room before trading began – a very civilized and welcome approach.

A smaller than usual chariot plane (only 2-1/4 inches long) in the front seat of an English dealer's car, caught my eye. It had an extra nice shape and was in very crisp condition. As one would expect, it was very pricey. The dealer mentioned something about needing to buy a new pony for his daughter. We felt the little plane really belonged in Janet's collection so we prevailed on a friend to take us to a bank to exchange a few more dollars for a lot fewer pounds.

By noon the auction room was open and we could begin previewing the auction lots. David Stanley does a great job on the auction catalogue, making it easy to preview the items offered. His knowledge of tools and his research is outstanding, leading to accurate and complete de-



Fig.9: Carved smooth plane with horn.
Photo courtesy of Maison de L'Outil, Troyes.

scriptions, realistic grading and reasonable price estimates.

An extremely rare and important coachbuilders circular plow plane with a flexible fence by I Sym, 1753 – 1802, was catalogued as “the star of the auction”. Indeed it was. This plane, which is one of only two known examples, is illustrated in two photographs on page 62 of W. L. Goodman’s “British Planemakers From 1700.” It has a spring steel fence, which can be set to the required radius, attached to the sliding wood fence. Leonard Bailey used a similar concept for the bed of the No.13 circular plane in 1871, almost 100 years later. The Sym’s previously sold in David Stanley’s Auction No. 3, March 1985, at the Yew Lodge Hotel, Kegworth for £2700. This time it brought £7000 (\$12,474 including premium³).

The big surprise of the auction was the price paid for a rare complete example of Brannan’s combined dipping and calculating rule. It sold for £4100 (\$7,306.) compared to an estimate of £150 - £300. Slide rule prices were generally strong, which should not have been a surprise since slide rule collectors were well represented at the auction. The evening before the sale the table we thought we reserved for dinner was apparently already taken by a group of slide rule collectors. They invited us to join them provided we were willing to talk about slide rules. I guess we should have joined them; perhaps we might have learned something.

A metal plate miter plane of early appearance found in Malta, with a front palm rest and turned up front bed extension showing Near East design influence brought £3900 (\$6,950).

A lovely late 18th century French coopers circle cutter with carved scroll ends on the fruitwood stock, attractive steel plates and rams horn wing nuts was hammered down at £2700 (\$4,811).

A very rare French jointer, patented by Chardoillet⁴, was a bargain at £1250 (\$2,228). This very interesting plane has a tilting frog and separate adjustment for the cutter and cap iron. Only three other examples are known and this is the only one that has a worm gear and rack mechanism to adjust the tilting frog.

A beautiful French 18th century double headed axe with a strapped handle, an attractive pierced heart in the socket and nice scrolled relishes at each of four shoulders was apparently a top priority on several bidders lists. After spirited bidding in the room it was finally sold to a postal bidder for £950 (\$1,693.) compared to an estimate of £400 to £600.

David Brookshaw, miniaturist

Sunday morning we were invited to visit David Brookshaw’s home and shop in Loughborough. David showed us how he made lost wax castings, etched metal and carved wood. He is equally comfortable working in wood, ivory or metal.

David is a very gifted creator of miniature reproductions of antique tools and carvings inspired by works of art related to the manual crafts. His work can be seen in “The Art of Fine Tools” by Sandor Nagyszalanczy and can be found in some of the finest collections.

We took an afternoon train for an enjoyable ride back to London. Monday we went to the Chelsea Antiques Fair where we saw many beautiful treasures. A stunning 8-inch-high silver fruit bowl designed by Johan Rohde for George Jensen, circa 1930, was priced at £8500. It is 150 years later and considerably less scarce than the Sym’s circular plow plane that sold in the David Stanley Auction. I wonder if antique tools will ever achieve their proper place in the world of serious antiques.

Old Tools and Old Friends

Old tools on the cover of the April 1965 issue of *The Carpenter* magazine caught my attention and I was even more intrigued when I learned that the cover story “Hand Tools of Yesteryear” was about the tool collection of late longtime M-WTCA member Paul R. MacAlister of Lake Bluff, IL.

As you have probably guessed, one of the tools featured in that article about MacAlister’s tools is also featured in this article: it is the superb 17th century miter plane with a front palm rest in the shape of a large acanthus leaf that was sold in the 1995 David Stanley auction and now resides in the south of France.

Philip Walker also included MacAlister’s plane in an article about 17th century central European miter planes in the first volume of *Tools & Trades* published by TATS in 1983. The provenance of the plane becoming even more interesting when Philip Walker described it as “...recovered by its present owner from the earth floor of a carpenter’s shop in southern Italy.”

Memories of old tools and old friends keep returning to remind us that we are fortunate to have known them.



John Wells photo.

¹ Fig.107 “Die Geschichte des Hobels” by Josef M. Greber; and Fig.65, “The History of Woodworking Tools” by Goodman.

² Fig. 2, “Die Geschichte des Hobels” by Josef M. Greber; and Fig. 92, “Woodworking Tools” by Proudfoot and Walker.

³ All auction prices quoted in dollars are computed with the pound at \$1.62 and include buyer’s premium.

⁴ Fig.17a, p.22, “P-TAMPIA v. I” by Roger K. Smith.

TOOLS

Really Old Tools: A Saw and A Seal

By Eric M. Peterson

When you go back to the very beginning of history, and then you go back even farther, you enter the time of protohistory. Protohistory is the study of humanity just before recorded history. It is not actually a prehistoric time since we have some evidences of what was occurring but without an actual recorded narration.

When you study the evolution of man's tools, you must pass through this period and it can be fascinating. Looking at the Near East during this time, the cylinder seal becomes a very revealing information messenger. For it is probably on this tool that the earliest graphic record of a saw is found. The recognition of most early tools is apparent just by inspection, and certainly this is quite true for the saw. In early cultures tools were often selected to become objects of religious significance, and such is what we find here.

But first we need to note just what a cylinder seal is. It was a device used to declare ownership or authenticate another item in the same way a signet ring would come to be used as a seal. The cylinder seal is a quite small cylinder into the surface of which, in intaglio, pictographs were carved in such a manner that when the seal was rolled over soft clay, it left a continuously repeating impression of itself. If you were royalty or a wealthy merchant and wished to authenticate a clay tablet, you simply rolled the seal over a blank space on the clay or placed the clay tablet into a hollow ball of clay and impressed that surface with the seal. The

person receiving the clay tablet recognized the seal and so it was authenticated. Similarly, the cylinder seal could be rolled over the clay that sealed a container or a storeroom door since the impressed was not limited in length. To gain access, the seal must be broken and an entry thereby was signaled.

Cylinder seals began being used in the Near East (Mesopotamia) in protohistoric time and were in continuous use for the next 3,000 years, ending about 300 BC. The pictographs they impressed on clay are some of our earliest clues about the culture of that time. Over those three milleniums the subjects covered were wide-ranging and included food, dress, religion, weapons, animals, contests, architecture, plants and some tools. The pictographs quickly evolved into the cuneiform language, which antedates the Egyptian hieroglyphs. The start of the use of cylinder seals occurred in the fourth

millenium BC¹. Surviving today, there are many more examples of impressions than of the actual seals themselves. The seals were often worn about the neck on a cord that passed through the center of the cylinder. They were so valuable that a cylinder seal would often be recut by a new owner some hundreds of years after its creation.

I acquired the seal shown as a gift from a family member who obtained it in south-central Turkey 50 years ago. This seal dates from about the 17th Century BC and was made in lower Mesopotamia (near Ur). It measures 0.93 inches in length and 0.52 inches in maximum diameter. It is bored through on its long axis and when strung on a cord can be worn as a necklace. With a pin inserted through this hole the assembly can be used like a rolling pin to make its impressions.

The seals were made of stone with hematite becoming the most commonly used. The carvings can only be described as exquisite. The smallest details were carved, but without using any magnification, which was unknown². The craftsmen's skill was of the highest order. Exactly how these tiny details were carved is unknown³. It is believed that a drill was used with its horizontal shaft (spindle) having a tiny working end that was loaded with a fine abrasive. This drill cut the points and circles commonly found in these carvings. Rotational power was supplied by a bow, a modified bow drill type of tool.

I became interested in cylinder seals while studying early boring tools and



searching for the first brace. In so doing I found these two seals published in the British Museum's large collection.



In these earliest times, it seems that the sun god Shamash was a popular deity. Each morning he brought forth the sun from the underworld by using his saw to cut open the eastern mountain to release the sun.

Impressions from at least two seals clearly depict Shamash with his saw, and are shown here on seals where he is depicted as standing in one and seated in the other.

Later this same type of saw is found in the artifacts and hieroglyphs of dynastic Egypt. The earliest saws were not made of metal. How this was accomplished can be found by consulting the works of Petrie⁴ and Lucas⁵.

And so it would appear that the first graphic of a saw is found on the tool first used to print graphics. And, the saw was found to be the tool of the god.

¹ Collon. 1987

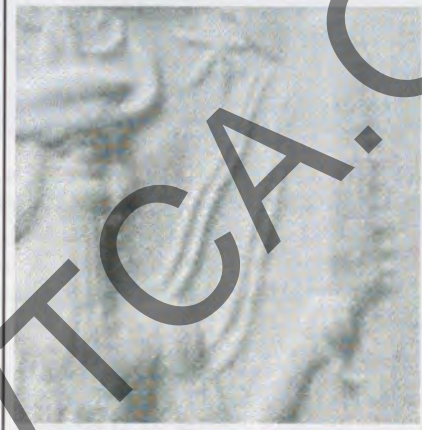
² Gorelick and Gwinnett. 1981.

³ Gorelick and Gwinnett, 1983.

⁴ Petrie. 1917

⁵ Lucas. 1948

The author, Eric M. Peterson, has been an avid collector of braces for 30 years.
donicker@gulftel.com



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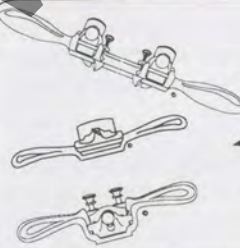
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Information Sought On Nail Pullers

Ray Fredrich, who is researching nail pullers, is particularly looking for a beryllium nail puller manufactured by Beryl Co. and information on the company. Contact him at Fredrich1@juno.com or phone (847) 398-2642 in Illinois or (608) 985-7425 in Wisconsin.



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TOOLS

Notes on New England Tool Makers – Luther G. Turner

Luther G. Turner (1775-1832)**Edge Tool Maker
Harvard, Mass.
c1800-1824****By Roger K. Smith**

Luther Turner was born on March 30, 1775, the son of Prince and Rebecca (Keep) Turner. In 1773, Prince Turner had purchased a forge and water works from William Hudson. Prince had been a soldier in the American Revolution and was a blacksmith by trade. He made axes, scythes and other edge tools. When Prince died on March 29, 1800, Luther took over the business.

The axe shown in Fig. 1 is stamped L. TURNER. HARVARD, in the center on both sides. It is interesting to note that on the rear side near the top of the poll it is stamped O. SAWYER. CAST•STEEL (see sidebar for information on Sawyer).

The top edge near the poll is the usual location for a maker's stamp on axes. However, that is not always the case. Axes with maker's imprints stamped are known shown on the face. However, since this has the two imprints, the author believes that O. Sawyer was the maker, and L. Turner at some subsequent time refitted a new steel edge, and thus stamped it with his name and location because this was a mark of warranty (the equivalent of a new axe).

Harvard and Bolton are adjacent towns. The location of their shops on old maps indicates that Luther Turner and Oliver Sawyer lived about six miles from each other. Because they were both tool-

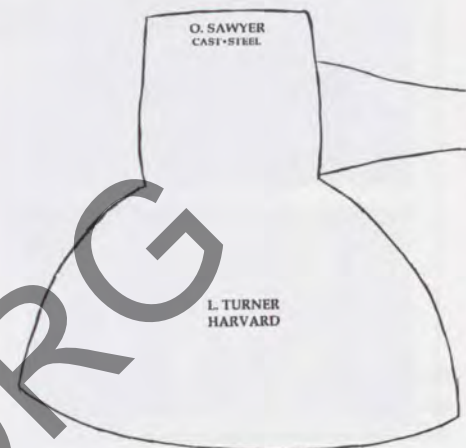
**L. TURNER
HARVARD****Imprint on tools made by
Luther Turner, c. 1800-1824.****O.SAWYER
CAST•STEEL****Imprint on tools made by Oliver
Sawyer, c. 1808-1836.**

Figure 1. Axe stamped L. TURNER. HARVARD on both sides and O.SAWYER. CAST•STEEL at top edge of poll. 9-1/4 inches long and 9-1/4 inches high. Offset hickory handle 22-3/4 inches long.

Author's collection.

makers, without further evidence, we could assume they were friends, no different from the interests of tool collectors who live close by one another. There is strong evidence to prove this relationship.

We rarely come across comments in town histories of the 19th century describing the physical features of an individual. However, in the Harvard, Mass. History by Henry S. Nourse, published in 1894, p. 456, is the following paragraph which relates to Prince Turner (father of Luther) and his descendants:

"...It was jestingly said of his numerous descendants that they came honestly by their noses, which were commonly of generous length, for that organ in their progenitor, Prince Turner, was the most 'rhinocrostic' ever seen upon a face in Harvard. Of an earlier patriarch of the tribe it is told that his nose was so protuberant that he had to drink from a bottle even from childhood."

Further evidence is shown by the shape of a latch still existing on a door in the Oliver Sawyer house in Bolton, Mass. The top and bottom of the latch are in the shape of a man with a large nose (unfortunately, it is not available for

photography at this time). It is the author's opinion that Sawyer made this latch in caricature of his friend Luther Turner of Harvard, who apparently had inherited his father's features. The other

An article on Oliver Sawyer of Bolton, Mass. was published in the December, 1997, issue of The GRISTMILL. We print a brief synopsis of that article for the benefit of new members and to refresh the memory of others.

Oliver Sawyer, 1784-1836: Toolmaker - Bolton, Mass. Worked c.1808-1836.

Oliver Sawyer was born Feb. 3, 1784, in Bolton, Mass. Several tools of his make are known. Most are stamped O.SAWYER. CAST•STEEL. A few have the location stamp, BOLTON, MASS., added. He died on March 25, 1836 at age 52. His gravestone, adorned with carved tools, can be observed at the small cemetery just east of the intersection of routes 495 and 117 in Bolton, Mass.

Luther G. Turner

possibility is that Turner, himself, made the latch and gave it to Oliver Sawyer as a gift when Oliver purchased his home from his brother in 1808 or when Oliver was married in 1809.

In 1824, Luther Turner was returning from Boston with a heavy load of iron and steel for his shop when his wagon overturned. The load crushed his leg so badly that it had to be amputated. He had to turn the business over to his son, Elisha. Apparently, Elisha manufactured edge tools at the same site until 1829, when he sold the water rights and shop.

Luther was married to Abigail Geary on Oct. 4, 1798. They had at least two sons, Nathan S. and Elisha Turner.

Luther Turner died prior to Jan. 17, 1832, at the age of 56.

The administrators of Luther's estate were his son, Nathan S. Turner,

a blacksmith from nearby Stowe, Mass., William Lewis, (shoemaker) and Benjamin Dwinells, (blacksmith) both of Harvard. They inventoried the estate Jan. 17, 1832. Included were the following:

3 plowshare moulds @\$2.28
Smith punches .75
4 axe eyes 1.33
1 drill stock .50
box of files & old iron 1.50
total 6.50

George Turner, a brother of Luther, born Nov. 24, 1790, was listed in 1820 as an edge tool maker in Harvard. It is not known if he worked alone or with Luther. No tools with his imprint are known.

We would like to hear of other tools stamped L. TURNER or G. TURNER.

References:

History of Harvard, Mass. Henry S. Nourse, 1894.

Luther Turner. Probate records. Worcester County Courthouse, Worcester, Mass.

New Look for 2000 Membership Directory

The 2000 Membership Directory has a new look.

Members' names are in bold face type and project to the left of the address to make it easier to find names. The number following each member's name is a unique number used to identify each member in the organization's database, on all M-WTCA mailing labels and on membership renewals.

M-WTCA will mail the 2001 Membership Directory in April or May of next year. To make this possible, members must send their renewal checks early enough to reach the treasurer before Feb. 28, 2001. That is the new closing date for being included in the 2001 Directory.

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TOOLS

Winn's Doomed Rafter Rule

By Bob Nelson

An article in the December, 1998, GRISTMILL described a Van Namee 1900 patent framing square. The design of that tool doomed it to failure and few examples remain today.

Twenty years later, Warner A. Winn, Clarksville, TN, also perceived a need for improvements in the marking of roof rafter ends for cutting and was issued June 15, 1920 and Aug. 30, 1921, patents for a new implement to do that plus marking stairway and hopper elements for cutting. Its design doomed it to the same failure, and examples of it are equally scarce today. Although called a "rule" by Winn, it functions more like a bevel.

Fig. 1 from an instruction booklet shows the tool assembled and positioned for use as partly described by the accompanying text on that page. Fig. 2 shows the tool disassembled to fit into a 17-by-13-by-1 1/2 inch (when closed) wood carrying case. This Fig. 2 example is marked with both patent dates, but it is so unlike the 1920 design as to make that reference fairly meaningless.

There are some differences between the tool pictured in Fig. 2 and the 1921 patent drawing, but those are fairly minor. The booklet tool seems somewhat more like the patent drawing and probably preceded the Fig. 2 design. The booklet has a 1922 copyright, so the Fig. 2 tool was probably not made until late 1922 or early 1923.

In the 1921 patent, which was applied for on Aug. 7, 1920, less than two months after the 1920 patent's issuance, Winn assigns the patent rights to the Winn Company of Clarksville, TN, a corporation of Tennessee. The instruction booklet and tool are both marked WINN COMPANY, Inc. /Clarksville Tennessee.

The booklet has 28 pages; five of those are tables of various angle and length relationships and the rest text and pictorial explanations of the tool's various uses. Besides the booklet, the Fig. 2 tool came with an advertising sheet from the "United States Company/Atlanta Builders Exchange/Atlanta, Georgia/Sole Distributors." This sheet acknowledges

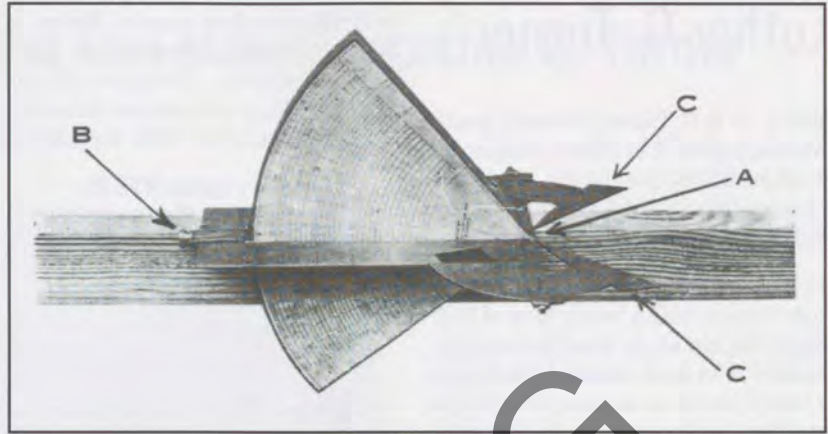


Figure 1 The Rafter Rule consists of a rafter alignment frame to which is attached a quadrant pivoted at the center "A" and clamped at any point of the curved edge desired, by the adjusting thumb nut "B." This quadrant is graduated on the curved edge with three scales, first, Common & Jack Rafter scale; second, Hip & Valley Rafter scale, both of these scales read in inches rise per foot of the common rafter. The third scale is calibrated in degrees to give any degree Plate and Ridge cut. There are also attached to the alignment frame, two sector blades "C." These blades are right and left hand and each calibrated with five scales on both sides; one side for side bevels on 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 sided polygon, jack and cripple rafters; the other side for bevels on 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 sided polygon, hip and valley rafters. All these scales read in inches rise per foot run of the common rafter. There are also extra scales reading in degrees. The two faces of the quadrant give directly the length of all rafters for any width building with whatever pitch the rafter rule is set to.

the existence of numerous other types of roof framing tools and says "...while they are of great help to the intermediate carpenter, they play a poor part in the hands of an expert." It then goes on to suggest that this is the tool such experts need. This was probably both an attempt to lure some buyers who might want to be viewed as better than "intermediate carpenters" and to downplay the fairly obvious complexity and awkwardness of the tool. This latter point is somewhat further substantiated by a statement elsewhere that "The

rafter rule is extremely light, weighing 4 pounds 1 1/2 ounces." Four pounds is certainly far heavier than most other such tools then available.

The booklet's explanations of using the tool for hopper construction are somewhat limited, but provide the only descriptions I can ever recall seeing of that type of work. The hoppers involved are funnel-like wood polygons through which grain, coal, etc., are fed down into a mill, transport vehicle, etc. The support fram-

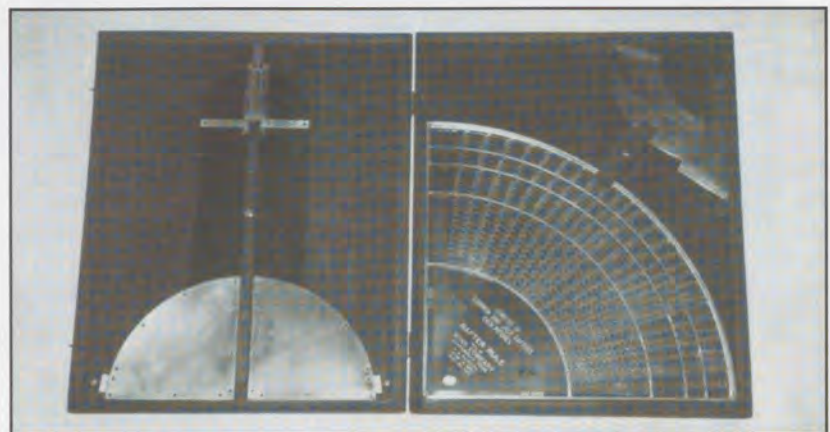


Figure 2 The Winn Rafter Rule. Bob Nelson photo.

ing is similar to some types of especially complex roof framing (e.g. a polygonal tower roof in reverse) and such construction also involves the fitting of boards whose ends must be cut at two angles varying with the number of polygon sides and the funnel pitches being used and whose lengths increase as the funnel expands upward. The extra complexities of the tool might be more warranted for this work than for standard roof framing or stair framing, but to far fewer carpenters.

Tennessee Corporation records contain only two entries on a single file card about the Winn Co. One entry says that a charter for the Winn Co. in Clarksville was filed March 29, 1921. An Aug. 1, 1923, entry says the company was "broke." If, as seems probable, the Winn Co. was primarily created to produce Winn's tool, these entries support the supposition that the tool was a resounding failure.

Surprisingly, no Clarksville directories of the period ever list a Winn Co. Warner A. Winn himself is listed in only a 1929 directory. A business listing then shows him as a "House Mover and Raiser." A personal listing also shows him and a wife, Sarah, living at the same address given for the business.

The Fig. 2 tool is very well made and quite attractive – mostly brass except for the plate portion of the quadrant. Fig. 1 seems to show that quadrant plate having a black scale on a light background. However, as can be seen in Fig. 2 and as also pictured on the advertising sheet, the aluminum plate is painted so as to provide a black background against which the unpainted scale markings stand out with a silver coloration.

It must have been a fairly pricey item, adding to buyer resistance to its

complexities and awkwardness of use. Assuming that Winn himself made the tools, this sample demonstrates a definite talent in this area. If he applied such talent to the production of other more marketable items, his name would surely be embedded more deeply and respectfully on the consciousness of today's tool collectors.

I wish to thank the Clarksville Public Library and the Division of Business Services of the Tennessee Secretary of State for providing research data for this article.

AUTHORS and RESEARCHERS

ATTENTION!

Get ready for CINCINNATI.

Display your book(s) and/or promote your research.

If you have written a book(s) related to tools and/or their makers or are engaged in research with the intent of writing an article or book on a similar subject, you are invited to participate in the **M-WTCA AUTHORS & RESEARCH CORNER** at the M-WTCA meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 13 and 14, 2000. This invitation is extended to M-WTCA members only.

The Authors & Research Corner was initiated at the Stevens Point meeting in the Fall of 1999 and it was extremely well received. It is in the form of a professional exhibit set up on a series of long tables with a backboard and graphics.

Author participation requires that you provide a copy of your book(s) for hands-on examination. The book(s) will be returned to you or your representative on Saturday morning or mailed back in *your prepaid* packaging after the meeting. Sale of books will not be conducted at the Authors Corner. Sales may be conducted from your sales table or via other means. Prior notification and request for inclusion will insure you a spot for showing your book to the attendees. It will also insure that you have a proper identification label. This will be an organized showcase exhibit with equal treatment for each participant. Appropriate, uniform labeling will be provided and used throughout. Of course individualized advertising and showcasing is permitted elsewhere.

Researchers wishing to announce their projects are encouraged to participate. You are urged to provide flyers (up to 8 1/2" x 11"). Thirty or more are copies recommended. You may also wish to provide a poster measuring up to 12" x 18". Sorry, oversized materials will not be accommodated. Unable to attend? send your materials with a friend or mail them to me, time permitting.

If interested, **PLEASE** contact Tom Lamond with the *Title and Author* or *Subject and Researcher* as you want it to read on the label. This information must be received by October 2, 2000 in order to have the labels prepared and printed. *Time permitting*, you may send a copy of your book or your research materials to Tom Lamond. **PLEASE** include provision for the return of your materials in prepaid mailers OR notice of who will be picking up the materials at the end of the meeting. If you wish me to hold the materials until the next Authors & Research Corner, *you must* inform me.

**RESPONSES
and/or
QUESTIONS???**

Contact: Tom Lamond
516-596-1281

OR TomLamond@aol.com OR

30 Kelsey Place
Lynbrook, NY 11563-1516

M-WTCA AUXILIARY

Displays From the Heartland

By Ann Boltz

Nine entertaining and educational displays followed "The Heartland Collections of Yesteryear" Auxiliary theme in Omaha.

Judy Gambrel won Best of Theme and Best of Show with "Fairyland From the Heartland." Her fanciful display featured great advertising pieces by famous illustrator Maud Humphrey Bogart.

Best out of Theme went to Georgiana Fales with her "Aides-Memoire." This remarkable collection recalled a bygone era and was a reminder of how important the written word was prior to our modern technology.

Most Inspirational was garnered by Kathleen Holmes for "Collected Thoughts." This display included witty and humorous truisms with which we can all identify, such as: I try to take just one day at a time, but lately several days have attacked me at once.

Peggy McBride's "Singer Featherweights and Friends" won Most Historic. This comprehensive collection of sewing machines with all their parts sparked conversations among both men and women who viewed her display.

Susan Witzel with "The Wallace Nutting Picture Company" was awarded Most



Omaha display winners, from left: Joey Gilmore, Judy Gambrel, Grace Goss, Susan Witzel and Peggy McBride.
Ann Boltz photo.

Nostalgic. The display told the story of the ingenuity of a man who was a minister, a furniture maker, a historian of early American furniture and a recorder of the beauties of nature.

Best Variety was won by Lorryne Hodge's "Beat It." Lorryne's beaters were an impressive collection of important ladies' kitchen tools from an earlier time.

Grace Gross was awarded Best Collection for "It's the Pits." Several ladies commented that her interesting collection of cherry pitters made them hungry for cherry pie.

Winning Most Fun was Joey Gilmore's "I Love Laundry." Although most people consider wash day a drudge, Joey's imaginative display of vintage laundry items made wash day seem almost like fun.

First Time award went to Evelyn Krause. Her display, "Thread Spools and Other Spools," showed an interesting and colorful variety of spools.

Thanks to awards chairman Joey Gilmore and her staff of judges: Shirley Linstromberg, Pat Mau and Pam Rosebrook.

These displays are always such a pleasure to see. So, as you get ready for the next meeting, plan a display of your own. Don't forget a table cover. Include your name along with a title.

Comic Mystery for Book Club

By Pat Mau

It's summertime, and it is also time to settle back in the hammock with a good book. When it is also a mystery book, that's a double bonus. For the Cincinnati meeting, Auxiliary members will be reading "Fowl Play: A Molly West Mystery" by Patricia Tichenor Westfall.

When Molly's neighbor is found shot to death, Molly decides to help the sheriff investigate. Her clues lead her to the county fair, the local Meals-On-Wheels program and an illegal cockfight. Beneath the hilarious antics of the characters, you will find a serious discussion of the lives of people in the Appalachian region of Ohio, which is not often noticed by outsiders.

Women's Auxiliary Officers

President	Judy Gambrel
Vice President	Ann Boltz
Secretary	Joan Fehn
Treasurer	Barb Slasinski
Asst. Gristmill Editor	Ann Boltz

All material for The Women's Auxiliary Pages should be sent to THE GRISTMILL editor:

Mary Lou Stover
S76 W19954 Prospect Drive
Muskego, WI 53150



At Show and Tell, first-timers were introduced. Front row, left to right: Evelyn Kruse, Sophie Stratman and Sandy Shaw. Back row, left to right: Sylvia Strasil, Jane Eikman, Ginger Schreiber, Jan Dills, Merlene Paul and Diane Brenzil.

Show and Tell From Omaha

By Ann Boltz

Show and Tell continues to be a popular program. Bringing a special item to talk about, sharing some personal information and finding common interests have provided a format for the women of M-WTCA to make connections. This is one way to get to know more about one another and make each meeting a success.

Caroline Carter brought a special framed needlework cross-stitch. This had been done in honor of her and her husband's 50th wedding anniversary. Shirley Linstromberg presented her beautiful Creation quilt. We were pleased she shared her work in progress with us. Judy Gambrel recommended one of her favorite books, *Fabric Landscapes*. Sue Tubman explained that a company which developed Elizabethan motifs to be stitched, has provided her with a new stitchery project. The audience was delighted when Mary Royston held up her Sun Bonnet quilt.

Both Maureen Menze and Sylvia Stisil shared special pieces of jewelry. Ann Boltz told about new additions to her bookmark collection, while Linda Wade explained how her book mark collection has expanded into vintage page turners and Victorian beaded book covers. Peggy McBride, in keeping with her needlework interests, showed us a unique wooden miniature spinning wheel. Sharing some of her vintage laundry tools with us, Joey Gilmore talked about her colorful figural

clothespins.

The audience discovered that Phyllis Moffet had a talented uncle who painted the covers for *Post* magazine. Susan Witzel talked about putting one's family story into a book, as she passed around "It All Starts and Ends With Family," a book highlighting her own family. Pat Mau told us about the increasing success of the book discussion group, and she invited the women to join the group the following day to discuss "Mollie: The Journal of Mollie Dorsey Sanford." Nancy Barker, her husband's best promoter, spoke about his catalog reprints. Thanks to all for sharing your interests and treasures.



"Aides-Memoire," by Georgiana Fales won Best Out of Theme at Omaha.

Those Lovely Memory Aids

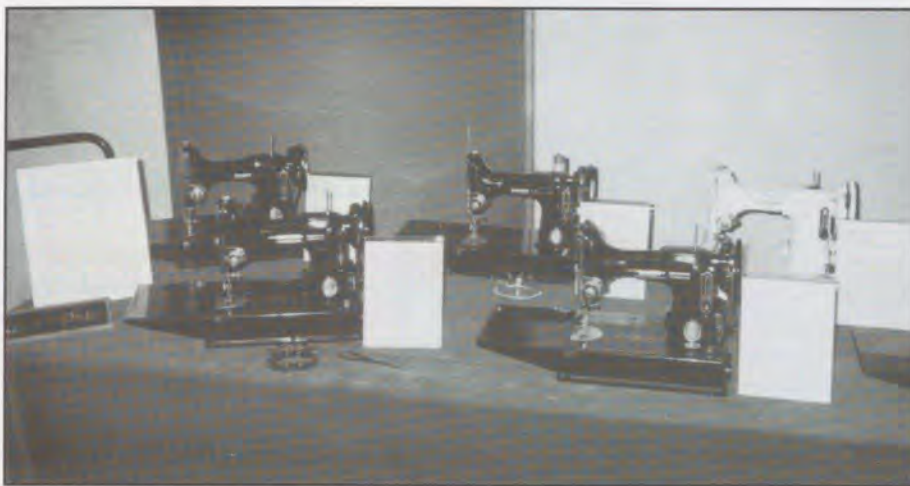
By Georgiana Fales

My display in Omaha is special to me because the ivory notebooks, known as aides-memoire, are so unusual and unique. Not many people have heard of them, not even antique dealers in the United States.

Cliff, my husband, had one of these small notebooks, and I was interested in finding out more about it. Although I wrote to several museums and looked in the library for information, I soon discovered very little has been written about the subject. Many of the items, which I began collecting about ten years ago, were found in flea or antique markets in England. The thimble society in London has also been helpful.

Since pockets were impossible in fashionable gowns in the late 19th century, the problem was solved by wearing a chatelaine around the waist. Chatelaines, used by women before purses were commonly carried, often included an aides-memoire because paper notebooks were unavailable. The ivory pages might have had lavishly ornamented covers made from gold, ivory, sterling, nickel, silver or enamel. A rectangle is the most common shape, and the notebook opens by pivoting on a pin. They always had a loop at the top to fasten on the chatelaine belt. Cornet de bal were also ivory note-

Continued on page 26



Most Historic: "Singer Featherweights and Friends," by Peggy McBride.

Singer Featherweights and Friends

By Peggy McBride

Through my display in Omaha, which won Most Historic, I detailed the history of Singer Featherweight Sewing Machines. Although Singer had marketed so-called portable sewing machines prior to the 1930s, the machines were little more than a regular head put in a portable case. The term portable was not very descriptive if you have ever hauled one of these machines around.

In the 1930s, partially because of people becoming more mobile, the need arose for a truly portable sewing machine. Having acquired the rights to a machine called the "Sewhandy" in the early 1930s, Singer kept its desirable features and added significant improvements. Thus, the new Featherweight, officially named Model 221, made its debut at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago.

The midst of the Depression was an odd and risky time to introduce any new product, when people were standing in food lines, hundreds of men competed for every job, and the wheels of industry were barely creaking along. It should have flopped, but it didn't. Singer's Featherweight caught on, built its reputation, and the little marvel endured.

Throughout the years, there were a number of changes. The black color japan finish machines, manufactured from 1933 to 1961, are the most commonly seen. With the advent of World War II, some metals, chrome and nickel included, were in short supply. As a result, even

the face plates, hand wheel, pressure foot, attachments and screw drivers of the 1941 model have a black finish.

My first Featherweight was a post-war machine. This machine has no case, so it lives in an old bowling ball bag. In the 1960s, Singer manufactured other colors, such as white and tan. As the featherweights gained in popularity with quilters and crafters, knockoffs were made. None are made by Singer and they cannot use the Featherweight name.

Memory Aids

Continued from page 25

books. These were used to record one's partner at the ball. Varied shapes included round, fan, oval and bell.

Because of their ivory pages, these notebooks must be handled with care. I fear they will be more difficult to find as time goes by since they are so delicate and fragile. As many have been taken out of circulation by breakage as by collectors.

Educating other people - both collectors and non-collectors - about these fascinating items has become a "missionary project" for me. The aides-memoire are so hard to find in the United States that my advice to new collectors is go to Europe!

Will the Real Wallace Nutting Please Sign In?

By Susan Witzel

As I was helping a friend, Ruth, move from her home to an apartment, we discovered some prints in her basement. Although I was fascinated with them, Ruth told me they were just ordinary pictures and to take them if I liked them. My display in Omaha was a result of this gift.

Thus began an educational experience for me. These were Wallace Nutting prints, and he was definitely a man ahead of his time. Born in 1861, he spent his first career years as a minister, until he resigned from the ministry in 1904. His hobby of photography turned into his new business, the Wallace Nutting Picture Co. Between 1900 and his death in 1941, he sold millions of his hand-colored outdoor pastoral and Colonial interior pictures. In the first quarter of the 20th century, there was hardly a middle class American home without one. Nutting employed more than 100 colorists, who did the actual coloration, signed and titled the photos, and matted and framed them. Therefore, Wallace Nutting signatures do vary from picture to picture.

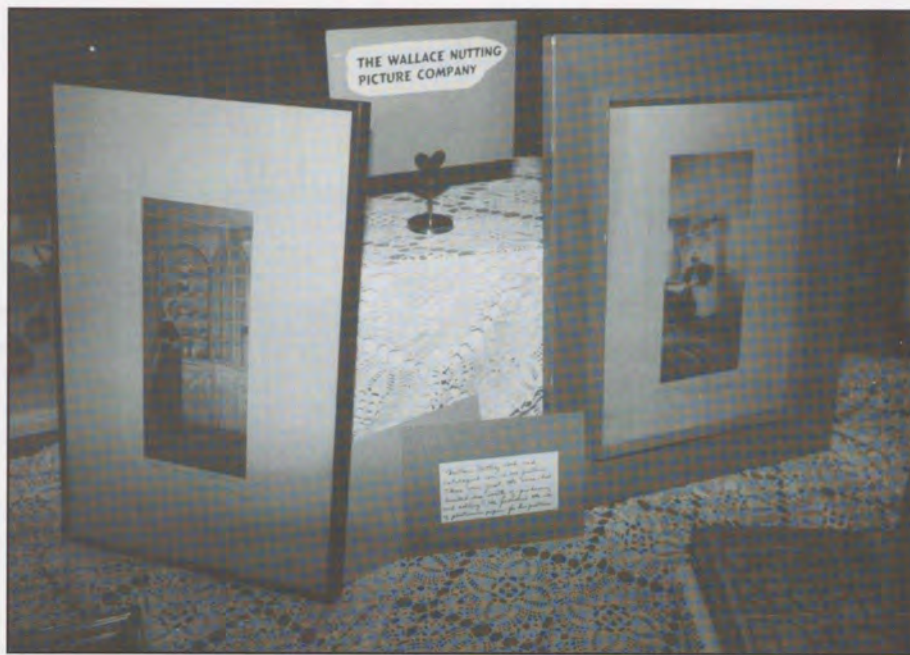
As he was attempting to portray life in early America, he bought and furnished five old houses and restored them to what he felt was original condition. Called the Wallace Nutting Colonial Chain of Houses, he not only used them as background for his photos, he also opened them to the public and charged admission.

Around 1917, the Wallace Nutting Furniture Co. began producing handmade reproductions of early American furniture. From most accounts, this business never turned a profit but was kept afloat by booming picture sales.

He wrote and published many magazine articles and published 18 to 20 books. In addition, he wrote his own biography, which gives an interesting glimpse into the events of his life. However, he ordered his diary to be destroyed upon his death, so he still remains a very private person.

Ever the minister, Nutting developed the Ten Commandments of Furniture Construction in 1925 and gave them to his workers. These include:

• All work to be of the best quality



Most Nostalgic: "The Wallace Nutting Picture Co." by Susan Witzel.

- If the old method is best, use it
- The hand and the mouth do not work effectively at the same time
- Let nothing leave your hands until you are proud of your work

These would be good rules to follow in both our work and our lives.

My advice to new collectors is to take good care of the things you love. Write down a personal story and pass your possessions to future generations.

Fairyland from the Heartland

By Judy Gambrel

My display, which won Best of Show and Best of Theme at the spring meeting, featured Fairy Soap advertising items. Manufactured in Chicago, IL, Fairy Soap was very popular around the turn of the 20th century.

The purchase of a round metal tip tray in the early '70s launched my collection. The Fairy Soap Co. offered many premium items available by sending wrappers from bars of Fairy Soap. My favorite

was "Fairy Tales." Although I knew the existence of these "Fairy Tales," it took me 18 years to find one – and it was Series 3. I looked for another 10 years for Series 1 and 2, which I happily purchased within six months after discovering the Internet auction site, eBay.

Series 3 tells the adventures children will find as they venture through "Fairy-

land." The book opens with the following poem:

**Behold the gates of fairyland,
The brightest ever seen,
But never a child can pass through them,
That is not pure and clean,
In vain before these guarded gates,
Untidy children mope,
While every boy and girl goes through
That's washed with Fairy Soap.**

The Fairy Soap Co. ads primarily used illustrations featuring little children. A favorite illustrator of the company was Maud Humphrey Bogart, mother of actor Humphrey Bogart. One of the most popular illustrators of her time, she produced an estimated 30,000 drawings, many in watercolor. Son Humphrey was a model for many of her works. At the turn of the century, an average illustrator earned \$4,000 per year while Maud earned at least \$50,000 per year. Maud's charming children sold a variety of products, including Anheuser Busch, Hood's Sarsaparilla, Mellin Baby Food (Humphrey was the baby), Metropolitan Life Insurance, Ivory Soap, and, of course, Fairy Soap.



Best of Show; Best in Theme: "Fairyland from the Heartland," by Judy Gambrel.

MY FAVORITE TOOL

By William J. Kolm

With the national meeting in Omaha this spring, I couldn't help but think back to the national show in Davenport, IA, that was oh so close to me but one I could not attend. Most of the Omaha area collectors were fortunate enough to make the trip and loved every minute of the meet. In fact, after their return, they were talking so highly of their prized acquisitions from the Davenport meet and the great time they had there, that I really felt bad about missing it. Fortunately, some of my self pity was tempered a bit when I showed off my favorite tool that I purchased on the Saturday the Davenport meet was going on.

My son Brian, who is also an M-WTCA member, and I found a large estate auction just across the Missouri River in Council Bluffs, IA. This gentleman was a collector of many things, with tools being his specialty. The one item that caught my eye was a fine example of the Metallic Plane Co. filletster with the skewed cutter, marked Excelsior Cutter.

As the auction progressed it was clear this plane was going to be one of the last items sold. Knowing this, we actually went home for a couple hours to relax but returned hurriedly hoping we had not missed the sale of the Excelsior. To our relief the plane had not been sold, and we still had to wait several more hours.

About seven hours after the auction

started, the Excelsior plane finally came up for bid. I was surprised and pleased that very few tool collectors were present, and my final bid was about 1/10th of the plane's value. The plane has about 95 percent japanning with a proper fence and depth gauge. The only problem is the handle, which is slightly loose, and has the bottom portion filed off. Possibly removed due to the owner's hand being too large to grip it comfortably. Even with the handle problem this plane was well worth the wait.

I still believe to this date that if it weren't for the Davenport meet, my chances of securing this purchase would have diminished substantially.



This Metallic Plane Co. model made up for missing an M-WTCA meet for Bill Kolm.

6 College Scholarships to Be Awarded

If a member of your family - children or grandchildren - is currently attending college or plans to attend college during the 2001-2002 academic year, an M-WTCA scholarship might be his or hers.

M-WTCA awards up to six \$1,000 scholarships per year. Applications are now being accepted for the 2001-2002 school year. Completed scholarship applications must be received by the scholarship committee prior to April 1, 2001.

The M-WTCA Board of Directors recently voted to include grandchildren of M-WTCA members as well as children or members to be eligible for scholarships. We hope many of you will take advantage of this opportunity to become an M-WTCA scholarship recipient. The basic guidelines for the scholarship program can be found in the back of the current M-WTCA directory under "Policies, Procedures and Practices." For a scholarship application and information, write, call or e-mail:

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BOOK REVIEW

Beautiful Volume Documents Life, Work of Iron Forger Riesel

Ornate ironwork, from railings to chandeliers to church spires, are distinctively photographed by Diane Hopkins-Hughs for a book detailing the work of Erich Riesel.

The text by Candace Leslie describes the artisan's life and his creative process leading to such memorable pieces.

Riesel learned the ironworking trade when he became an apprentice at age 13 in Germany. Though his dream was to become a shipbuilder, that was not to be. His father at the end of World War I would not sign Riesel's admission papers to the Naval Academy because he did not want his son to be a military man. The father had been wounded three times in the war. So young Riesel journeyed to America. He worked at a lot of jobs before settling in Texas to ply the trade he knew best.

He forged farm tools, fence gates, chairs, whatever the customer wanted, often with an artist's touch. His most eloquent designs are in Texas Hill Country at a rich oilmaker's ranch and retreat. It was called Mo Ranch but it, along with a neighboring oilman's retreat, is now a Presbyterian conference center at Hunt, TX.

The uniqueness of his ironwork goes back to his early teaching where copying was forbidden. "The old maestro told us never to use someone else's design or never make the same design twice," he told the authors. He applied that rule the rest of his life.

He made all of his own tools. "After you design it, then you make the tool fit that thing," he said.

Though the photographs are in black and white in this 1992 book, that does not obscure the beauty of Riesel's work.

— Mary Lou Stover

From *Forge and Anvil*
Text by Candace Leslie
Photos by Diane Hopkins-Hughs
Softcover, 86 pages, \$24.95
Astragal Press, PO Box 239, Mendham, NJ 07945
(973) 543-3045
astragalpress@attglobal.net

Six Scholarship Winners Chosen in 2000

By Ron Cushman

Six children or grandchildren of M-WTCA members have received a \$1,000 scholarship from M-WTCA for the 2000-2001 academic year. They are:

Jennifer Hatcher Daughter of Steve Hatcher of Fairmount, WV, will be attending Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, majoring in art history.

Ryan Paul Linstromberg Son of William Linstromberg of Saint Joseph, MI, will attend Manchester College, Manchester, IN, majoring in accounting.

Kevin McCalla Son of Kerry McCalla, Franklin, TN, has chosen the University of Kentucky at Lexington, KY, majoring in landscape architecture.

Molly Kay Mitchell Daughter of

Tom Mitchell, South Haven, KS, has been accepted at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, majoring in chemistry.

Mattew Peulen Son of Dan Peulen, Bayport, MN, will attend Concordia College in Moorhead, MN, majoring in secondary English education.

Jennifer Zimmerman Daughter of Keith Zimmerman, Blue Springs, MO, picked the University of Missouri at Columbia, MO, majoring in accounting.



Jennifer Hatcher



Ryan Paul Linstromberg



Kevin McCalla



Molly Kay Mitchell



Mattew Peulen



Jennifer Zimmerman

WHATS-IT?

How's This For A What's-it?

By Jim Mau

I don't know who first coined the term "what's-it," but he or she might just have been looking at this contraption (fig. 1) when it happened. Several examples of this tool have shown up as flea market finds etc., but its use has mystified what's-iteers for several years.

All of the examples have had a good patina, indicating both age and use. The mechanical movement of the device when it was activated was intriguing. There were no patent dates for the researcher, but there was one big clue that was often misinterpreted. Attached to each tool was a brass plate marked, "ROCKER, Stapling Machine Company, Rockaway, N.J." I, like others, assumed the tool to be associated with stapling. Wrong!

Ray Fredrich had the common sense to check to see if Stapling Machine Co. was still in existence. It was, and as a result of his correspondence with them it was learned that this mechanical marvel was a closing device for wire-bound boxes. Wire-bound containers are still used for shipping produce such as sweet corn to local supermarkets. The boxes are often seen as the supermarket produce worker goes about the chore of re-stocking. The tool is still sold to produce processors.

Using Ray's information, I also wrote to SMC (Stapling Machine Co.) I learned that both right- and left-hand models are available. I also learned that the "Rocker" had a little sister, the "Sallee" (see fig. 2) that also could be used to close wire bound containers. According to SMC, both the Rocker and the Sallee are still available. The Rocker closer was patented under patent number 2,063,626 which was issued on Jan. 23, 1940. Neither the company nor I have been able to find a patent for the Sallee.

Figure 3 illustrates the proper starting point for using the Rocker closer. Once the nose piece is thus threaded through the side V loop, the handle is raised, causing the lid to be tightly closed. Next the entire mechanism is swung down causing the side loop to be bent down over the top loop. Now lift the handle to release



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

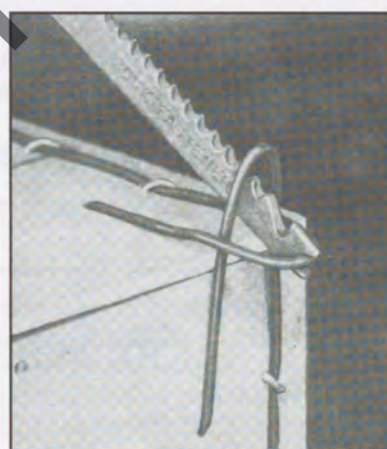


Figure 4

the Rocker from the box, and a good closure is achieved.

Figure 4 demonstrates the positioning of the Sallee for closing a box. After this step the tool is next rocked over the side of the box. The Sallee is removed and the closure is complete.

To those of us who share the frustrations and the joys of what's-its, the Rocker and the Sallee are great specimens. The thrill of discovery is as important as the pride of the owning the tool.

PUZZLED

By Hunter Pilkinton

Apparently, mathematics puzzles are a bit more popular than some other types, but I'll try to offer a variety to fit all types. Got a good response to the June GRISTMILL issue puzzles. I could almost hear the groans about connecting the houses with utility lines when the only answer was to go under a house. B.G. Thomas of Canada expressed it beautifully as he commented, "I suspect it was rather a fiddle." Now, I never heard this expression before, but I had no doubt as to what he meant.

Answers were received from Thomas, Cheltenham, Ontario; Les Brandt, Indianapolis, IN; B. Jack McDaniel, Volente, TX; Robert Matz, Cozad, NE; Ashley Kennedy, Evanston, IL; J.B. Cox, McLean, VA; and T.C. Latane, Pepin, WI. Thanks to all for your comments.

And now, here are the answers to the puzzles in the June GRISTMILL.

No. 1 A clothing dealer, stuck with a coat that didn't sell, priced it at \$30, then \$24, and then at \$19.20. He made one further reduction and it sold. All reductions were consistent. What was the final selling price?

Answer: Each reduction is 20%.
 $\$30 - 24 / \$30 = 1/5 = 20\%$ etc.
 The final answer is \$15.36

No. 2 The Crafty Chieftain

His tribesmen, he knew, would not work steady when building a monument to him. So, being thrifty (cheap), he agreed to pay 5 BRNGS/day to work and a fine of \$7 BRNGS/day for not working. After 24 days of work, they just broke even. How many days does each tribesman work?

Answer: work days $\times 5 =$ absent $\times 7$
 $5 (24 - \text{absent}) = 7 \times \text{absent}$
 absent = 10, work = 14

No. 3 Find a common word that fits with each of the groups of three words.

A. Deficiency, reservation, telepathy
 B. Actor, opera, strip
 C. Buffalo, color, cooler
 D. Age, class, ear
 Answers A. Mental; B. Comic; C. Water; D. Middle

And now for the puzzles for this issue of The GRISTMILL.

No. 1 Three playing cards are shown in the sketch, face down. There is at least one three just to the right of a two. There is at least one three just to the left of a three. There is at least one club just to the left of a diamond and there is at least one club just to the right of a club. Can you name the suit and number of each card in each position?

No. 2 A carpenter had to cut a plank 12 feet long and 1 foot wide in two pieces. He cut the plank half through from each side, but still had 2 feet to cut. Can you explain this?

No. 3 A wealthy man had a bar of silver 30-inches long. He agreed to pay an artisan each day exactly $1/30^{\text{th}}$ of the bar. How could he make as few cuts as possible and pay the artisan each day for his work? How many cuts did he make?

Here is a bonus. It was sent to me by Bert Packer of Dors, MI. This is a practical solution to a machine shop problem he encountered many years ago. The work piece was a shaft $5 \frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and 10 feet long. It had to be threaded 6 inches on each end in a lathe with a 14-inch swing and 72-inch length. The steady rest was only $5 \frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter. No other tools except a welder were used. How could he do it?

Have fun. Send answers to

Hunter Pilkinton
 2431 Highway 13, South
 Waverly, TN 37185
 Phone (931) 296-3218

The Millennium celebration is over.
 Now back to what's really important:

Y1K



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The Museum Store sells reproduction infill planes, fine tools, replacement parts for Stanley and other planes, and every Astragal Press book in print.

Visit our exhibits at <http://www.antiquetools.com>
 Browse our store: <http://www.toolsforworkingwood.com>

MARKETPLACE

FOR SALE

For Sale: Book titled "Ohio Toolmakers and Their Tools" by Jack Devitt. This book includes shop tools, household tools and farm implements with dates from 1800 to 1950. Included in the 390-page book are over 2,500 pictures. Cost \$30 postage paid. Jack Devitt, Box 116, Ottoville, OH 45876.

For Sale: Winchester 1926-27 Store Products Catalog reprint over 7,000 items, 300 pages \$18.95 ppd.; 1931 Winchester product catalog reprint \$15.95; Keen Kutter 1912 catalog \$7.95; Harley Davidson 1932 catalog \$8.50, R.L. Deckebach, 6612 Beach Drive, Panama City Beach, FL 32408.

For Sale: Barnes foot-powered machines. Complete set. #1, #2, #3, rare #4/5, #6 flat belt, #6 round belt, #7 scroll saws. Also included: Barnes tenoning machine, rare polisher/grinder, round belt lathe, round belt former, flat belt former, table saw with scroll saw, table model electric scroll saw, rip saw, mortising machine, Barnes mailbag and rare Barnes Co. hanging wall clock. Selling as a group. \$43,000. Contact Greg Bruck at P.O. Box 228 Twinsburg, Ohio 44087 or call (330) 405-5775.

WANTED

Winchester Collector: Wants any non-gun "Winchester" items, especially sports, pre-1940 advertising, or any items "new, in the box." Will trade or buy collections. Tim Melcher (918) 786-8500, e-mail: tmelcher@greencis.net or try my web site: www.thewinchesterstore.com

Wanted: Planet Jr. wrenches, need H-11, K-152, T-63 to complete my display. Buy-trade-swap. Robert Rauhauser, Rt. 2, Thomasville, PA 17364-9622.

Wanted: NO SET saws of any manufacturer and no set filing information. For example (but not limited to) Disston ACME No. 120 and No. 77 (hand and backsaw), Atkins No. 52 & No. 80, C.E. Jennings No. A70 1/2 and Richardson "Mechanics Pride." Premium paid for saws with original teeth. Contact Jay Ricketts, (404) 378-0266, 945 Houston Mill Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30329.

Wanted: Winchester items, tools, sporting or household goods. G++ to mint in the box. David McDonald, 14211 Kellywood Lane, Houston, TX 77079. (281) 558-5236. E-mail: undermc@gateway.net

Wanted: Lufkin log and lumber rules. Unaltered, good or better condition. Jerry Mohlman, P.O. Box 86, Gwinn, MI 49841. (906) 346-4307. E-mail: mohlmang@state.mi.us

Wanted: Old sheetmetal or tinsmithing tools; large or small, especially Pexto or P.S. & W., including forming machines, rolls, hand brakes, shears and hand tools. Ron Moser, P.O. Box 345, Birchwood, TN 37308, phone (423) 473-0658.

Wanted: Number 2 size metallic smooth planes. I need your help finding the following 2-size planes: Atlas Tool Co., Birmingham #99 all cast type, Blandin's patent, Boston Bailey, Bristol Tool Co., BrillInt, Chaplin No. 2 has metal handles, Chaplins Improved #202 w/checkered rubber tote, Defiance #1202, Everkeen, Foss Patent, Jordan Germany, Keen Kutter #KK2, McIntosh Heather, National, Oak LEAF, Ohio w/patent 8-20-07 cast in bed, Pine Knot, Record "SS," Sargent pre-lateral, Sargent #707-c & #5407, Siegley SsS, Standard Rule, Stanley type-1, Stanley #602-c w/flat sides, Townley Metal & Hardware. I have been collecting these Number 2 size Metallic Smooth Planes for almost 10 years now, and will share information about this subject freely with anyone that is interested. Bill Ericson, 4924 Howard Gnesen Rd., Duluth, MN 55803. (218) 724-7372. E-mail toolnut@cp.duluth.mn.us

Primitive Tools & Sporting Collectibles Auction

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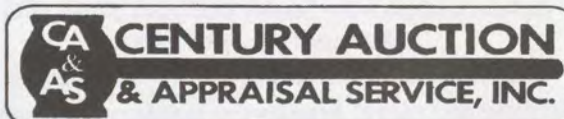
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MARKETPLACE



Introducing the New Plane Classics Numbered Edition Bronze Ladybugs! Reserve Your Early Numbered Edition Now!



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Fence and
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1505 1/2 Prototype — 4 1/4" Long, 3/4" Cutter

1507 1/2 — 6" Long, 3/4" Cutter

Introducing the rebirth of the finest, rarest and most beautiful of all patented rabbet planes ever designed and produced. Numbered Editions in beautiful bronze of the 1507 1/2 and an extremely rare 1505 1/2 prototype. They are a remake of the legendary Sargent 1500 Series. The 1505 1/2 is a rare prototype only available from Chapnick Plane Classics. It will make a unique and valuable addition to even the most advanced collections.

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Darrell Chapnick/Plane Classics • 2 Primrose ST. North Haven, CT 06473 • (203) 230-8479 • E-mail: benchap@rcn.com

DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOME

WANTED

Wanted: Stanley No. 4 improved tack hammer, Stanley No. 5 saddler's hammer, Stanley No. 602 upholsterer's hammer. Please advise price and condition. Fred Moon, 2145 N. Stockbridge Rd., Williamson, MI 48895 (517) 521-5622. E-mail: fmoon@arq.com.

Lost: Several Siegley Combination planes, probably in cardboard box. Possibly at Columbia, MO meet in 1998. Clint Litsey, 9729 Spencer, Sedgwick, KS, 67135. (316) 772-5756.

Advertising Information

ISSUE

March
June
September
December

COPY DEADLINE

January 10
April 10
July 10
October 10

DISPLAY ADS — RATES

SIZE	COST	WORD LIMIT
Full page	\$180	900
Half page	\$105	450
Quarter page*	\$60	225
Other sizes	\$9.50 per column inch	
(1 column is approx. 2-1/4" wide.) 25 word limit.		

CLASSIFIED ADS — RATES

\$.18 per word — ALL words.
\$3.50 minimum per ad.

*NOTE: For layout purposes, all quarter page ads must meet the following specifications: 2 columns (4-7/8") wide x 3-3/4" tall. This is called a "double column size ad."

Photos — additional \$8 each (Polaroids not acceptable). Typesetting and borders are not included in the page rates. Special artwork will be charged at cost. We must have a sketch or rough drawing indicating how you want your ad laid out. Camera-ready ads are accepted at no additional charge.

For your protection and complete satisfaction, ALL ads should be typewritten and double-spaced. If this is not possible, please PRINT legibly.

Payment must accompany ad. Make checks payable to M-WTCA. At this time, advertising will be accepted only from M-WTCA members in good standing. For information and membership application, contact Paul Gorham at the address below or one of the officers whose address is shown on the inside front cover of this publication.

Send all ads to:

Paul Gorham, 200 N. H St., Indianola, IA 50125-2218 (515) 961-4383

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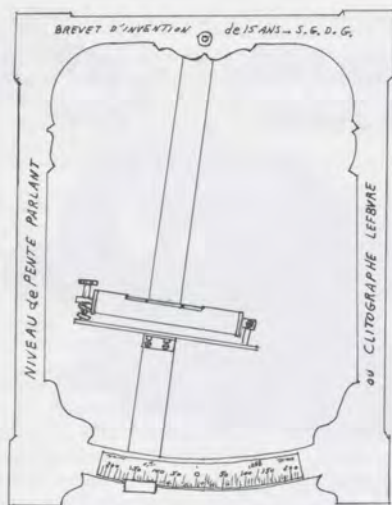
Send for brochures.

MAZZAGLIA TOOLS

PO Box 18 Groveland, MA 01834



BACKTALK



Information Sought on French Inclinometer

I bought this French inclinometer at an Arlington, IL, antique show and would like to know more about it.

The frame is iron or steel 10 3/16 by 13 1/16 by 3/16. It is square on all sides and apparently can be used on the boffom or sides. It has a brass swing arm with brass adjustable bubble and locks in back with a thumb screw. The bottom indicator reads millimeters per meter of pitch and has number 1058 stamped in.

The top reads Brevet D'Invention de 15 ans S.G.D.G. The left reads Niveau de Pente Parlant and the right, ou Clitographe Letbare.

Russell Vestuto
1142W. Barry St.
Chicago, IL 60657.

A STUDY ON...

By Don Bosse

Wow! Did you get a load of the information presented in the last GRISTMILL. I counted at least six separate articles detailing with the various aspects of tools. If you should see these authors at any of the various meets, take time to stop and thank them for their efforts. Tool studies don't have to be performed on dozens or hundreds of examples; just one tool is all it takes to create a study. More is gained from sharing information than by hoarding it, so dig out a pencil and paper and contribute. Just get the idea down on paper and the folks who publish The GRISTMILL will work their magic and presto! You're an author!

Today I would like to introduce you to Jay Ricketts. He is performing a study on... "No-Set saws." Ricketts is interested in identifying the model numbers from all manufacturers who made No-Set saws. He is looking for copies of catalogs and information about the filing techniques used to maintain these saws. He can be reached at...

Jay Ricketts
Suite 953, Wachovia Building
315 W. Ponce De Leon Avenue
Decatur, Georgia 30030
404-378-0266 or email
HANDSAWDOCTOR2@AOL.COM

If you would like to be added to this list of researchers please contact me.

Don Bosse
2597 Hilo Ave North
Oakdale, MN 55128
651-779-6334 or email me at...
mwtcabosse@worldnet.att.net

The Researchers:

John Adams (931) 732-4400
**June 2000
"Small Trimming Planes, All Makers"

E. J. "Al" Renier (612) 937-0393
**March 2000
"Tools of the Nordic Nations"

Ray Fredrich (847) 398-2642
**March 2000
"Patented Mechanical Nail Pullers"

Tim Everette (910) 739-7T63
**March 2000

"102 and 103 Block Planes"

Cliff Fales (313) 987-3849
**September 1999
"Spiral Ratchet Screwdrivers"

Chuck Prine, (412) 561-6408
**September 1999
"Carpentry Planemakers of Western Pennsylvania and Environs"

John Wells, (510) 848-3651
**September 1999
"Stanley 60 Series Block Planes" "Metallic Mitre Planes"

Charles Hegedus (770) 974-7508
**September 1999
"Stanley Pocket Levels" "Sargent's Shaw's Patent"

William Warner (717) 843-8105 John Tannehill, (717) 464-4378
**September 1999

"E. W. Carpenter Patented Planes"

Dave Heckel (217) 345-9112
**September 1999
"Siegley #2 Plow Planes"
"Stanley 45s, A Complete Study"

Bob St. Peters (618) 462-0229
**September 1999
"Israel White, 3 Arm Plow Planes"
"Bench Planes (wooden) With Crout Style Cutters Affixed to Their Soles"

Tom Lamond (516) 596-1281
**September 1999
"Scrapers, Woodworking and Related Trades" "Drawknives"

Milt Bacheller (508) 699-2570
**September 1999
"Patented & Manufactured Marking Gauges"

Don Rosebrook (504) 673-4049
**September 1999
"Levels"

Emery L. Goad (316) 838-3465
**September 1999
"Bicycle Tools, Pre 1920"

Scott Lynk (802) 877-3775
**December 1999
"Stanley Special Rules and Stanley Rules Not Listed In Any Catalog"

Tom Lamond (516) 596-1281
Kendall Bassett (253) 952-4959
**December 1999
"All Known Brand Names & Logos Used By Local Wholesale Hardware Concerns"

** Denotes GRISTMILL issue with full details of the study listed.

New Members of the Mid-West Tool Collectors Association

MEMBER	CITY	STATE/COUNTRY				
Alabama			Brown, Charles P.,	Harahan	Manchester, Kaye,	Portland
Bowen, Hoyt,	Scottsboro		Weber, Ralph E.,	New Orleans		
Cherry, Russ,	Midland City				South Carolina	
California			Maine		Fracasso, Richard,	Walterboro
DeRosa, Howard,	Fullerton		Ilvonen, Ken,	Belfast		
Jolin, Ed,	Cameron Park				South Dakota	
Merrick, Ron,	Citrus Heights		Michigan		Froberg, Gail,	Vermillion
Colorado			Broat, David,	Pinckney	Nelson, Jeff,	Sioux Falls
Aumiller, Charles,	Boulder		Finegood, Harold,	Detroit		
Lau, Howard,	Woodland Park		Nelson, James,	South Lyon	Tennessee	
Penman, Sterling A.,	Green Mtn Falls		Sadler, Lane,	Burton	Evans, Ned,	Bristol
Schilling, Don,	Longmont		Sindelar, John B.,	Edwardsburg	Only, Jack,	Collierville
Connecticut			Minnesota		Texas	
Bissell, Kurt,	East Hampton		Grayden, Joe,	Wayzata	Kennedy, Joe,	Dallas
Florida			Jagow, Harry,	Holloway	Lasswell, Patrick,	Spring
Boyens, Russell W.,	Lakeland		Kohaneck, Mitch,	Inver Grove Hts	Muster, Gordon,	Houston
Leddy Jr., Walter L.,	Orlando		Leistico, Dean,	Worthington	Reeves, Jesse D.,	Grapevine
Georgia			Livesay, Fred,	Saint Paul	Virginia	
Burnett, Reg,	Dalton		Pliml, Richard,	Burnsville	Bentley, George M.,	Free Union
Johnson, Johnny,	Lilburn		Missouri		Washington	
Illinois			Ferre, Robert,	Saint Louis	Merrill, William E.,	Seattle
Burtch, Ken,	Sycamore		Foutch, Larry,	Saint Joseph	Pearson, Steve,	Eastsound
Gordon, William,	Chicago		Keller, William H.,	Louisiana	West Virginia	
Graehling, Paul,	Polo		Straub, Steve,	Centrailia	Lohner, James,	Huttonsville
Kaplan, James,	Wheaton		Vandenhoof, Jack H.,	Springfield	Wisconsin	
Keats, Wayne,	Round Lake		Nebraska		Downs, Bernard,	Cuba City
Keith, Byron,	Havana		Bell, Gary,	Lincoln	Haughey, Don,	Union City
Morrow, Robert J.,	Oak Lawn		Lukasiewicz, Roger,	Wolbach	Hirsch, Paul,	Ridgeway
Salerno, Paul,	Rockford		Schmidt, Ray,	Omaha	Kammueler, William,	Fountain City
Spain, William,	Hillside		Schoomaker, Paul,	Omaha	Rock, Kenneth N.,	Milwaukee
Volocyk, Daniel,	Glenview		Warrick, Sheldon,	Omaha	Rowsum, James E.,	Madison
Indiana			New Jersey		Webster, George S.,	Fall Creek
McKittrick, Roselyn,	Milan		Courter, James,	Bloomington	Weiland, Henry R.,	Milwaukee
Overholt, Phil,	Etna Green		New York		Directory Ad Deadline	
Scherrer, Joseph M.,	Muncie		Garcia, Ernest,	Dobbs Ferry		
Vettel, John W.,	Peru		North Carolina		Submissions for advertising in the	
Woods, Randy,	Bloomington		Boettcher, Todd,	Arden	Yellow Pages of the 2001 M-WTCA Di-	
Iowa			Kelley, Robert,	Charlotte	rectory will be accepted starting in De-	
Christen, David,	Wadena		Lentz, Tom,	Mocksville	cember. Look for the sign-up form in	
Hanson, Wayne,	Cedar Rapids		Miller, James T.,	Carolina Beach	the December issue of The GRIST-	
King, Lawrence P.,	Emerson		Padgett, Willie,	Castle Hayne	MILL.	
Kruse, Leonard W.,	Ida Grove		Patrum, Jimmie,	Statesville		
Miller, G.L.,	Corning		Ohio		Advertising space will be offered	
Schreiber, Mark A.,	Council Bluffs		Harrigan, Robert,	Milford	in the following increments: Business	
Kansas			Harris, James K.,	Pickerington	card size (1/4 page), horizontal or ver-	
Bontrager, Ray,	Haven		Higgins, Tom,	Medina	tical, \$25; half page (4 inches wide by	
Broddle, A. Dwayne,	Wichita		Hoff, Michael F.,	North Royalton	3 7/8 inches high), \$45; full page (4	
Mueller, Jay,	Merrian		Justice, James A.,	Medina	inches wide by 7 3/4 inches high), \$85.	
Kentucky			Niklas, Richard,	Columbus		
Barber, Charles,	Pewee Valley		Palmer, R. Clayton,	Sylvania	Plan now by preparing a camera	
McCracken, Milton L.,	Erlanger		Rasmussen, Neil,	Loveland	ready copy of your business card or	
Louisiana			Schwarz, George B.,	Lyndhurst	ad so that it will be ready when the	
Audler, Lawrence,	Kenner		Thompson, Richard B.,	Kinsman	space reservation form is available in	
			Ontario		December.	
			Traicus, Dan,	Toronto		
			Oregon			

Directory Ad Deadline

Submissions for advertising in the Yellow Pages of the 2001 M-WTCA Directory will be accepted starting in December. Look for the sign-up form in the December issue of The GRISTMILL.

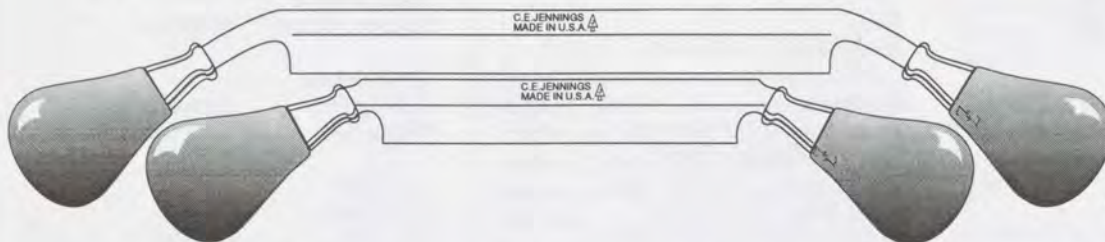
Advertising space will be offered in the following increments: Business card size (1/4 page), horizontal or vertical, \$25; half page (4 inches wide by 3 7/8 inches high), \$45; full page (4 inches wide by 7 3/4 inches high), \$85.

Plan now by preparing a camera ready copy of your business card or ad so that it will be ready when the space reservation form is available in December.

JENNINGS SMALL DRAWKNIVES...

AMATEUR or LIGHTWEIGHT MANUAL TRAINING STYLES

By Tom Lamond © 1999-2000



C.E. JENNINGS
MADE IN U.S.A.

JENNINGS
&
GRIFFIN

CRESCENT CO.
MERIDEN, CONN. U.S.A.

BRISTOL TOOL CO.

It is believed that C. E. Jennings & Co. is responsible for the manufacture of all the small drawknives of this style. Basically there were two sizes: one had a 6 inch cutting edge and the other had a 4 inch cutting edge. Some examples may vary by a sixteenth of an inch or so, but for all intents and purposes there were only two lengths. Examples of the short version are much more common than the longer one.

Blades are frequently marked with a name or logo although many examples are unmarked. A substantial number of brand markings have been observed, some in two versions. The C. E. JENNINGS marks are the most common, followed by the PEXTO marks. PEXTO is a trade name belonging to the Peck, Stow and Wilcox Company. Three different PEXTO markings are known to have been used on the 4" models. Two were used on the blade. A third had the oval style stamped into each ferrule. Only C. E. Jennings & Co. markings have been observed on the 6" model. The Crescent Co. mark was associated with a Jennings relative who ran a hardware concern.

Almost all the examples were made with black handles. Some of the black handles were dull but most appear to have started out with at least some degree of gloss. Early PEXTO examples were also black while the later PEXTO ones had handles finished in a high-luster red/maroon color indicative of the handles used on other PEXTO tools.

A few completely unmarked examples of this style knife have been observed with natural wood color handles while even fewer had handles stained light brown.

The blade forgings for all of the 4" examples are basically the same. Small variations may be attributable to manufacturing equipment changes over the period of time in which they were made.

C. E. Jennings originally marketed these drawknives only under their own name. They were sold individually, by the dozen (packaged 6 per box), and they were included in small sets of tools. One set included one of each size drawknife along with an awl, a tack lifter and a few short, lightweight chisels. All these tools had matching black enameled handles that were described in some catalogs as "ebonized." Advertisements (ca. 1935) have been seen for exactly the same chisels labeled "ROBERT DUKE" Brand Pony Butt Chisels. The term Pony used by Jennings and Pexto and in the Duke ad raises an interesting question concerning possible connections or another mark.

Apparently Jennings sold the shorter drawknife to a good number of hardware wholesalers and large jobbers with the name and/or logo of the hardware establishment on the blade. They were also supplied with MADE IN U.S.A. only or completely blank. Some catalogs advertised the shorter drawknife as being especially adaptable for use in manual training, while others indicated it was suitable for household use and cabinet work where a regular size drawknife was too large.

Although this style of drawknife was advertised in hardware catalogs in the 1920s and 1930s, the full time frame in which they were available is unknown.

NOTE: C. E. Jennings made a wide variety of other drawknives including other 4" styles.

Markings observed on the 4" version of the C. E. Jennings drawknife.

C.E. JENNINGS
JENNINGS & GRIFFIN
CRESCENT CO.
BRISTOL TOOL CO.
OHIO TOOL CO.
SARGENT
MADE IN U.S.A.

DIAMOND EDGE (Shipleigh Hardware Co.)
LAKESIDE (Montgomery Ward Co.)
OAK LEAF (E.C. Simmons Hardware Co.)
OVB (Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co.)
BBB (W. Bingham & Co.)
PEXTO (Peck, Stow & Wilcox Co.)
ZENITH (Marshall-Wells Co.)



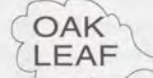
SARGENT
V-B-M-

SARGENT

DIAMOND EDGE



LAKESIDE
MADE IN U.S.A.



OVB
OUR VERY BEST



PEXTO
MADE IN U.S.A.



MADE IN U.S.A.



The Mid-West Tool Collectors Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study, preservation and understanding of the early tools, implements and devices used by our ancestors in their homes, shops, on the farms and on the seas, and to a better perception of the industries and crafts in which these tools were used as well as the craftsmen who used them.

Founded in 1968 by a small group of avid collectors, the organization has rapidly become international in scope with a membership of over four thousand who are scattered to all corners of the globe. Included are individuals from all walks of life as well as libraries, museums and other related institutions.

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☐ Yes ☐ No

Describe: _____

Are you capable and agreeable to doing voluntary work for the association?

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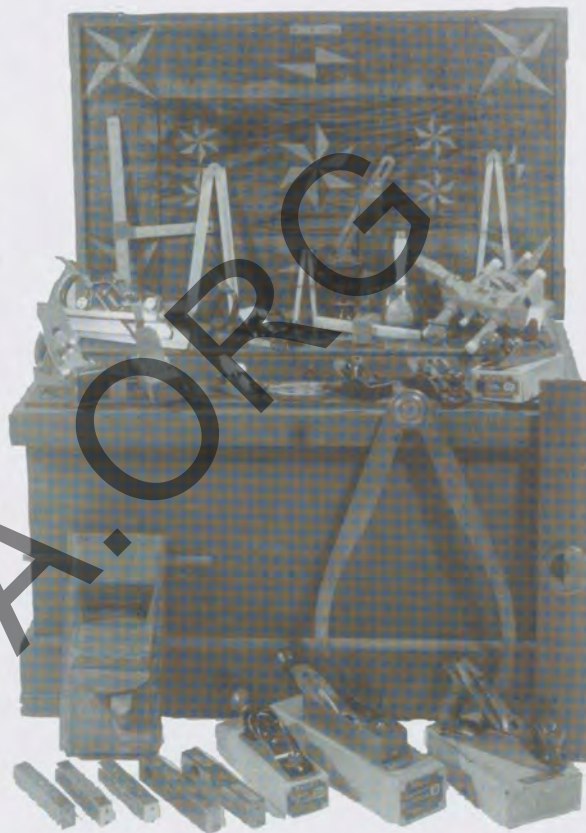
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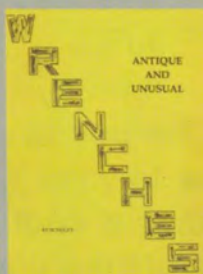
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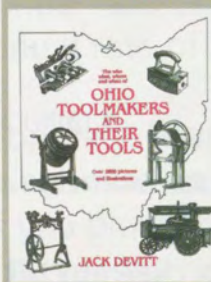
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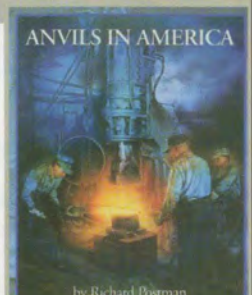
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