The TOOL SHED

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THE PLANE THAT TRIED

By Herb Kean and Gary Lehmann

If rarity is one of the main factors that makes a plane valuable, then the shoe peg plane is quite valuable, for it is surely one of the rarest.

Around the start of the 1800s, the shoemakers figured out that it was faster to join shoe uppers to soles with wooden pegs than it was to sew them together one painful stitch at a time. Pegging was stronger and lasted longer especially in wet weather. The idea wasn't entirely new. Hand-whittled pegs had been used since Roman times to stack heels. With the introduction of one slightly smaller peg for the sole and one slightly larger peg for the heel, the whole process could be done in a third of the usual time! See Fig. 1.

Fig. 1
Large pegs in the heel, some in the waist; small pegs in the sole.

With any new idea, a myriad of alternatives emerge. In the early years, pegs were made individually by whittling or splitting them off a block by eye. That was OK for the hefties that went into the heel, but the smaller ones had to be straighter and strong enough to withstand heavy hammer blows. If a peg is too big, it refuses to go into the hole; too small and it does not hold properly.

The biggest problem was quantity. It took almost 300 pegs to make one pair of shoes!! Think of the time wasted carving these pegs individually. Each peg needed to be either 1/8 inch square or 1/11 inch square by 5/8 inch long, and each one needed to be pointed. That's labor intensive work with a jack knife. American ingenuity soon solved the problem. Blocks of maple were cut to length and then passed under water-powered millers that routed "V" grooves into the end grain of the wood. Each block was then turned 90 degrees and another set of similar grooves produced pyramidal points. See Fig. 2 , taken from Jack Whelan's book The Wooden Plane. The blocks were then split, first into strips and then into individual pegs from each strip.

By 1840, someone had set up a very efficient factory in Burlington, Vermont to do this job, and a whole industry was born. The factory has been documented by Edward Knight in his American Mechanical Dictionary (1876). We are now talking about thousands and thousands of pegs every day, shipped in barrels all over the country.

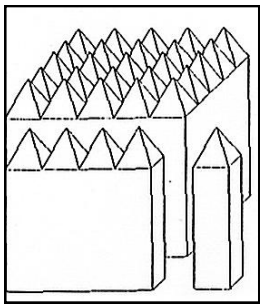

Fig. 2
Peg block, strip and individual peg.

Of course sometimes the master shoemaker, intent on his craft, forgot to order a new batch of pegs. Sometimes the primitive shipping system that was available at the time didn't come through as promised. After all, in 1840 most of the "shipping" was done by wagon or river barge.

When delays happened, alternatives were needed. All kinds of schemes emerged to make pegs in a pinch.

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June 6 - CRAFTS Meeting
HOST Masonic Lodge, Highbridge, NJ
Walter Jacob - Stanley Combination Planes - 1870-1888

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

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

CRAFTS June Calendar of Events

June 6th - CRAFTS Meeting
Speaker: Walter Jacob - Stanley Combination Planes 1870 - 1888

CRAFTS Website - http://craftsofnj.org

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Another year, another successful auction. We always breathe a sigh of relief when it is over, but it will be only a short time before we start preparing for next years sale. Thanks to all who made it a success.

This year one of the items I purchased was a Sargent 707 Auto-Set smooth plane. This is a No. 2 size plane that is rarer than a Stanley No 2. It's even more rare than a Stanley No. 1. It seems quite obvious that the rule of supply and demand is in effect here, as there is a greater supply of Stanley No. 1 planes than the Sargent 707 Auto-set planes; however there also seems to be a greater number of Stanley tool collectors.
Stanley produced a greater variety and amount of tools than Sargent, so maybe the availability of a larger amount made it easier for collectors to focus on that manufacturer. I think this might be true because there are tools of a greater rarity that do not bring a price commensurate with their scarcity. There seems to be a growing number of Sargent collectors or maybe Stanley collectors that are diversifying. Who knows, maybe someday 707s will be on a par value with Stanley 1s.

At the auction I heard a number of compliments regarding our website and the photos made available for viewing there. There was a great amount of time spent making these available, and next year we hope to have even more photos and descriptions on the site.
A great big thanks for all his efforts and time goes to James Travis, our webmaster.

Have a great summer, and hope to see as many as can make it to our picnic in September.

Greg

LETTERS

RE: Hammer Designs Article – April 2004 Tool Shed Comments:

The winery or brewery workers Bung Starter, not "Startle" as captioned under the photo of a Bung Starter Head, was certainly used by a cooper in assembling the finished barrel. The Bung Starter is used more routinely in the cellar work of the winery employee. Bung Starters have a long flexible wood handle, slim in profile and are light in weight. They also exist with a twisted wire handle, also long and flexible. As the handle is raised the handle flexes backward and when brought down the head hits the staves adjacent to the bung smartly and bounces off. The head of the Bung Starter is not cylindrical but is rectangular overall with a narrow flat face.

To seal a filled barrel a Cellar Bung is used – robust, it extends upward out of the hole a few, or more, inches. A regular wood mallet is used (or should be used) to tap down the bung securely into the bung hole.

Now, to open the barrel – to Start the bung, the Bung Starter is raised over the users head and brought down smartly a few times, usually 2 or 3 hits, around the Cellar Bung and onto the staves; each time raised high and brought down smartly. This will Start the bung – loosen and raise it a bit - so that it can be lifted out. If a more or less conventional mallet were used the hit would be a dead weight" hit, i.e. the head remaining on the stave, and over time causing damage to the staves or at least causing an unevenness to the staves. The Bung Starter is really for one purpose as its name implies.

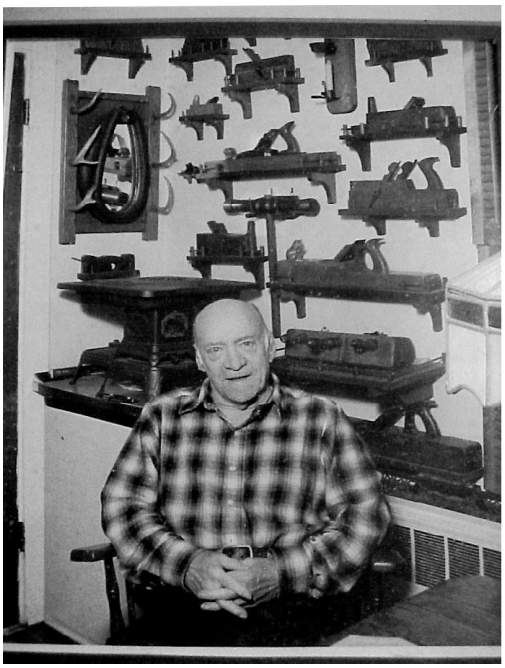
The bung used when a filled barrel is to be shipped is flat, that is, when it is malleted down it is flush with the outer barrel surface. Usually, a clean circular patch of tight cloth is placed on the bung hole and the shipping bung is malleted down on to it to affect a good seal. But that is not all, a stamped sheet steel "seal" with downward sloping teeth, circular in shape and extending Over the bung hole edges onto the immediate staves is hammered down into the wood. This last comment on sealing barrels for shipping is the way we did it. Today it may be different.

2) How the Hoop Hammer and Set-to hammers are used. Fig.42 on page 7 shows the hammer that fits on to the edge of the barrel hoop. The other hammer, similar to a small sledge, is used to hit smartly the face of the hoop driver.
[With] The barrel empty, standing upright, the heads up and down, the worker holds the hoop driver in one hand, the notched edge on the hoop edge and hits the conventional hammer face [of the hoop driver] with the small sledge, driving down the hoop. The employee or cellarman walks around the barrel repeating this routine every several inches until the hoop is good and tight. It is a smooth, quickly done routine. I still have my set though I've not used it for many years.

Sincerely,
Aniello N. Aquino

This is actually a compilation of two letters from Mr. Aquino that I've combined for brevity, I hope I've captured everything he intended - ED.

OBITUARY



Charlie Chudley, the elder of the Chudley brothers, died in April at the age of 88. Charlie and his brother Mel, CRAFTS members since 1988, were active tool collectors locally for many years. They introduced many to our hobby and to CRAFTS with their enthusiasm and their "walls of tools," mostly wooden planes of every description individually displayed (by the score!) on wall brackets that Charlie made for each new acquisition.

Charlie was a blacksmith, the son and grandson of blacksmiths, but after he retired he laid down his hammer and began picking up planes, and never returned to the forge. Like many in his trade, he had both lung damage (emphysema) from the smoke, dust, and fumes, and the strength to live with it for many years. His brother Mel (Melvin), their tools, and many younger friends and tool collectors survive him.

(Continued from page 1)
The only one that really seemed feasible was THE SHOE PEG PLANE.

The idea was to alter an existing jack or fore plane to do by hand what the milling machine did by water power. This strange rare plane had its sole recut so as to put a series of grooves in the end grain of maple blocks. When each block was turned 90 degrees and cut again with the plane, it created the signature pyramid tops. Theoretically, it seemed that it would duplicate that which was done by the milling machine, and therefore should work fine. But did it?

In our antique tool literature, shoe peg planes have been documented, and they have been alluded to as really whacking out these pegs. However, closer scrutiny shows that all the planes mentioned are the same one!! That plane is owned by Paul Kebabian and was purchased over 20 years ago. See Fig. 3 from The Wooden Plane.

Now it is usually accepted that if few planes of any kind survive, then few were made. We wondered how few of these peg planes were made if only one was openly known? Was there something wrong with this plane's design that discouraged production quantities? We were

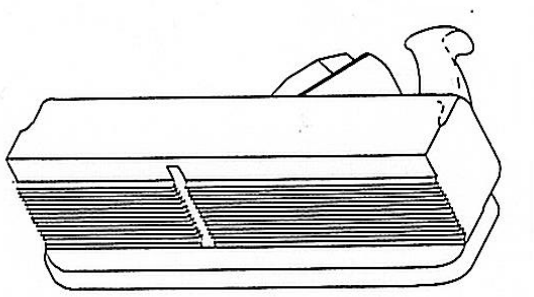


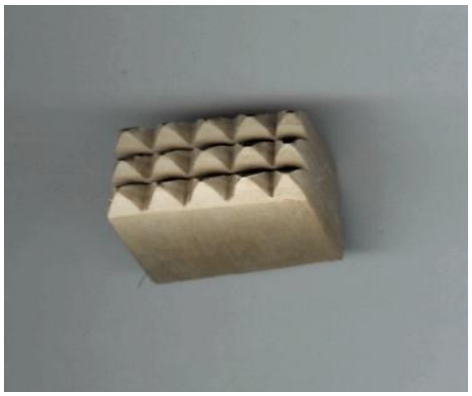
Fig. 3
The now famous Kebabian Shoe Peg Plane

determined to find out.

Step one was to make such a plane. Paul Kebabian gave us all the dimensions. It seemed like a skewed blade would cut the end grain best, so we started with a simple skewed rabbet, and altered the blade and sole to incorporate 1/8 inch serrations. See Fig.4. It made the pyramidal-pointed blocks, with a little help from a file. See Fig. 5.

Fig. 4
Skewed prototype

But our prototype was hard to handle and didn't look anything like Kebabian's model. We felt we should make our reproduction peg plane as close as possible to the historical model that we had. To do that we needed a tighter pitch for the grooves (about 3/32" apart), a little too tough to do by hand.



So off to the machine shop. Both the plane bed and the grooves in the blade were cut on a Bridgeport miller. To get the right rakes and clearances, everything was finished off with a hand file. There were more grooves in the bed than in the blade. This was so that the unmatched grooves in the bed would act as "followers" when the fence was removed (if blocks wider than the cutting width of the blade were used). We felt really proud --- that is until we tried it.

Fig. 5
The block ready for splitting.

It was a nightmare at first! Then with trimming, and tuning, and learning, our peg plane started to produce real pegs. Paul sent us some of the pegs that were made by his plane, and also some that were machine made. The machined pegs had sharper points, so we used them as our models. A week later all the tinkering paid off, and reasonably accurate pegs began to emerge with much less scrap. Our new pegs even worked in shoes the way they should. Maple, and even poplar, worked perfectly well, though boxwood proved too brittle. See Figs. 6, 7 and 8 for the plane, its blade, and its pegs.

Are there more of these planes around today? We started a campaign of e-mailing museums, calling friends, and writing those who control large collections. We finally found a peg plane in West Virginia, thanks to Carl Bostrom. This one is set up to produce the more open, easier pitch (8 points per inch). It was cut down from a fore plane. For some reason, it had the cap iron removed, and the wedge consequently sat very low. But, it was precision

Fig. 6
Our reproduced Shoe Peg Plane

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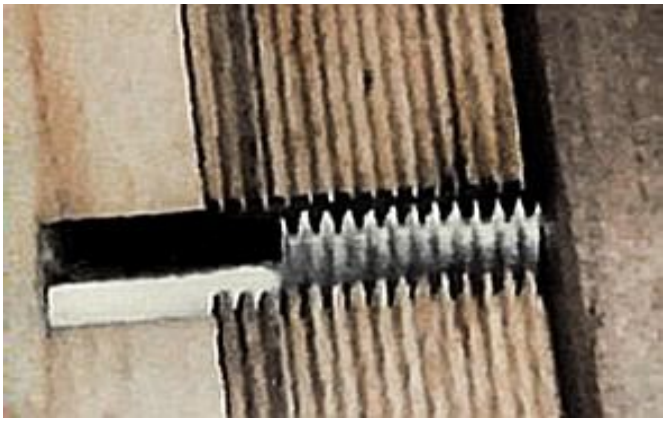
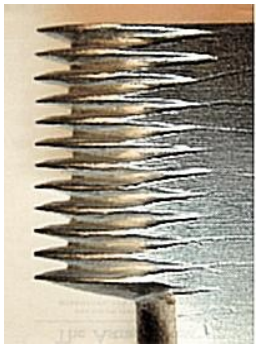


Fig 6.5
A close-up of the mouth

made and looked like it could do the job. Strangely, it appears to have been almost never used, or only used a very few times.



The real rub was that the iron was an Ohio Tool Company late-mark iron which dates the conversion to the late 1800s at the earliest. What was someone doing in the late 1800s making a shoe peg plane when pegs would have been readily available from Burlington, and delivery by train was easy by then? It remains a mystery (notwithstanding our earlier speculations.)

Fig. 7
Bottom side of the blade. Pitch equals 11 points per inch.

Fig. 8
Top of the blade with cap iron.
Block ready for splitting.
Individual pegs.

As we finished this article, Jack Birky from Oregon presented us with another shoe peg plane; but this one is a little more unusual. It was 8 pitch, but cut from a worn out panel plane, and for good reason. A panel plane has a skewed blade, much better for end grain. We can say, based upon our prototype, that skewed peg planes work easier than unskewed ones. However, not many woodworkers would be willing to give up their panel plane, worn out or not. So this one is certainly a rarity.

And still another was located for us by Bob Nelson. It also was an 8 pitch, and appeared to be from a smoother. We now had four of them, each modified from a different type plane.

There probably are at least a few more peg planes scattered around that will yet surface from our inquiries, but it is clear that the peg plane remains one of the rarest of wood planes. WHY?

Here's our guess: Not just any shoemaker had the wherewithal, time, and money to have a specialty plane of this sort made. The iron work in these plane blades could not be done by an average blacksmith. This sort of precision took a skilled technician, who was used to working on very small cuts with a high degree of accuracy. The 11 and 12 pitch models also took a milling machine. And the end product would only be used in an emergency when the machined pegs were unavailable for some reason. What is more, these planes were not easy to use. It took a deft hand to learn how to push an unskewed blade through end grain. The best we achieved after a week of intermittent effort was a rate of 300 pegs per hour. Even then, it was still a struggle.

So that is the tale of THE PLANE THAT TRIED, but probably ended up getting dusty in the corner. The shoemakers who had these shoe peg planes probably only learned one good lesson: Get your order for these pegs into the factory early!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Lehmann is a professor at Rochester Institute of Technology. He is a hobbyist shoemaker, utilizing the technique of pegging. He seasonally demonstrates shoemaking at the Genesee Country Museum in Mumford, NY. He and Herb got together via Gary's request in The Gristmill for shoe peg plane information.

SEARCHING FOR EARLY PATENTS ON THE PATENT OFFICE WEB SITE

By
Philip E. Stanley

PATENT NUMBERS

From 1790, when the first U. S. Patent was issued, until 1836, when the Patent Office reform law of that year took effect, U.S. patents were not numbered, and are only identifiable by the date of issue and the name of the inventor. For this reason it is common to refer to these approximately 10,000 patents as AName&Date@ patents.

In 1805 the Secretary of State reported to the Congress on all patents granted up to the end of 1804, giving the subject of the patent, the name of the patentee, and date of issue. A similar report, prepared in 1811, provided the Congress with a list of all patents granted from 1805 to 1810, this time including the residence of the patentee with the other information. Thereafter, a report to the Congress was made in January each year reporting all patents granted during the previous year. Beginning on July 4th, 1836, under the provisions of the Patent Office reform law, all patents issued were assigned numbers serially, beginning with the number 1.

At a later date, probably some time around 1880-1910, a Patent Office employee assigned numbers to all of the Name&Date patents. Numbers were assigned in the order that the patents were listed in the successive Secretary of State reports. To distinguish these numbers from the numbers assigned to patents issued after 1836, these Name&Date patent numbers were given an AX@ suffix (e.g.: 368X, 5792X, etc.) In recognition of this, these pre-1836 patents are sometimes also referred to a AX-number@ patents

Not all Name&Date patents were issued numbers. It was not uncommon for some few patents issued near the end of a year, which had not made it fully into the Patent Office records, to be omitted from the Secretary of State list issued early in the following January. Since the numbers assigned in 1880-1910 were based upon these lists, these few omitted patents were missed and did not receive numbers.

THE PATENT OFFICE FIRE AND THE ARESTORED PATENTS

On December 15th, 1836, only 52 months after the new Patent Office law took effect, the Patent Office building in Washington DC was totally destroyed by fire. The destruction was complete, with all patent models and all records of patents applied for or granted, including the Patent Office copies of all patents issued, were totally consumed.

The following spring, in a effort to repair the damage, the Congress authorized the Patent Office to obtain the patentee's copy of each patent, make a certified copy thereof for the Patent Office files, and return the original to the patentee. Each patentee was contacted by mail at their post office of record as listed in the Secretary of State reports, and requested to send in their copy of the patent to be copied and returned. Approximately 20% of the Name&Date patents were received, copied, and returned. The specifications and claims were copied into large volumes by clerks; the drawings were copied onto loose sheets by draftsmen. These volumes and files of drawings are now in the U.S. National Archives.

SEARCHING FOR PATENTS

It has recently become possible to search for patents and obtain copies thereof using a computer connected to the internet, instead of the more cumbersome process of sending in a fee and waiting for return mail. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has a patent access website (www.uspto.gov/patft/) permitting access to the text and drawings of all patents issued after 1836 and most, if not all, of the Arestored@ patents from 1790 to 1836. Two of the functions listed on that website, Patent Number Search and Advanced Search, are used to identify and access these patents.

For patents issued in 1976 and later the full text of the patent, its drawings, and all of its related information is available in a file which can be searched for keywords, name of inventor, date of application or issue, etc. For patents issued before that time (probably the only ones of interest to antique tool collectors) this searchable file is not available. For these patents the database contains only scanned images of the patent drawings and text which can be viewed and printed, but cannot be searched by all of the keys applicable to the post-1975 patents. These earlier patents can only be searched for by patent number and by patent classification.

SEARCH BY PATENT NUMBER

If the patent number is known, click on Patent Number Search on the entry page, type the desired patent number into the Query box on the Patent Number Search page when it appears, and click on SEARCH. A Selected Patent page will appear showing the patent number and classification. As explained above, for patents issued prior to 1976 a note on this page will indicate that full text is not available for this patent, but that scanned images of the patent pages are available. To view these scanned images click on IMAGES.

The same method can be used to search for X-number patents, by placing an X before the number (e.g.: X9814, X2561, etc.) in the Query box on the Patent Number Search page. If that Name&Date patent is in the scanned image database, proceed as above. If it is not one of the restored patents and thus not in the database, a message will tell you that it cannot be found.

As mentioned earlier, not all Arestored patents are available in this on line database. A significant percentage of the restored patents in the National Archives will not be found there. The reason for this is problems encountered during the process of scanning in the text and drawings. During the process of scanning it was found that in some cases the text copy or the drawing was so faded, or the paper had become so dark, that it was impossible to obtain an adequate scanned image. In such cases the scanned image of that patent was omitted from the database and will not be found. (If a complete list is

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)
desired of all restored patents which are in the database, perform a patent number search for patent number AX@, with no numeric digits appended; the search engine will respond with a complete list of all the X-number patents it contains).

SEARCH BY PATENT CLASSIFICATION

If it is desired to search for patents by classification, that is, get a list of all patents which are in a given patent classification (and subclass), then click on Advanced Search. Advanced search allows the user to use any of a number of criteria for searching for patents, but only two are of interest when searching for pre-1976 patents, Patent Number (PN) and Classification (CCL).

To search for a given classification/subclass among the numbered post-1836 patents, select the years 1790-1975 from the pull-down menu of the Select Years box, and then type the string CCL/cc/sss into the Query box, where cc is the basic classification number and sss is the subclass number, and then click on SEARCH . To search for a given classification/subclass among the pre-1836 restored patents, select the years 1790-1975 from the pull-down menu of the Select Years box, and then type the string PN/X and CCL/cc/sss into the Query box, where cc is the basic classification number and sss is the subclass number, and then click on SEARCH (the PN/X parameter tells the search engine to search among the X-number patents instead of the later ones). If the classification is known, but the subclass is not, substitute a dollar sign for the subclass field (e.g.: CCL/cc/$).

The results of the requested search will be reported on a Search Results page, with the patent numbers and classification/subclass of all patents found which match the search criteria. For many patents several classifications/subclasses will be reported; these are patents whose features qualify them to be in any of several classifications, and they have in consequence been assigned several different codes. To view any of the patents reported on the Search Results page, click on its patent number. A Selected Patent page will appear showing the patent number and classification. As explained above, for patents issued prior to 1976 a note on this page will indicate that full text is not available for this patent, but that scanned images of the patent pages are available. To view these scanned images click on IMAGES.

VIEWING/PRINTING OUT PATENTS

In order to view and print out the patent images, it is necessary to have one of a number of plug-ins (a software term; ask your 14 year old nephew what it means) installed on your computer. If you have a suitable plug-in installed, you will be able to view the patent immediately, using the backwards and forwards arrows to move from one page to the next, and the printer icon to print pages as desired. If you do not have a suitable plug-in installed, your computer will so notify you and provide you with a list of plug-ins which you can download and install. These plug-ins are commercial products, and the providers will typically charge a fee of about $20.00 to permit you to download and install one.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Before you can access a specific patent via the U.S. Patent Office web site it is necessary to know the patent number. If you have a tool marked only with a patent date (a very common practice) that information is of little use; the web site only allows you to search by patent number and classification. Before going on line it is necessary to first use that date to determine the patent number.

The two most useful methods for finding a patent number, given that you already know the date of issue are either to look up the patent in the three volume patent index published in 1874 or to identify the patent by finding it in the U.S. Patent Office reports/U.S. Patent Office Gazette.

Using the 1874 patent index works reasonably well for patents issued in 1873 and before. This index, which is the last of a series of four cumulative indexes issued by the U.S. Patent Office (see PATENT INDEXES, below), indexes all patents by subject (plane, rule, hammer, etc.). It is only necessary to go to the appropriate subject heading and look for the patent which was issued on the date that you have. This approach will not work for patents issues after 1873; no further cumulative patent index issued after 1874.

The second method of determining a patent number for which you have only a date is to do a little research at some nearby (hopefully) library. Most medium to large cities have a main library with an extensive collection of documents and government publications on microfilm, and it is this collection you need to consult. Contact that library and ask if they have the set of microfilms of the U.S. Patent Office Reports and the U.S. Patent Office Gazette. The Reports were issued annually beginning in 1837, and the Gazette was issued weekly, beginning in 1873. Each issue published abstracts of all patents issued during the period reported on. The Gazette continues to be published right up until the present day.

Assuming the library has the desired set of microfilms, go to their microfilm room and check out the reel covering the date marked on the tool. Put it in the viewer, and then fast forward to the Report/Gazette for that date, and then slowly scan forward until you see the tool of interest, and copy down the patent number. This scanning is a tedious business, and can take 10 or 15 minutes to find the patent, but it is the only way that I know of to get the patent number for post-1873 patents.

Once you have that number you can access the complete patent on the U.S. Patent Office web site as described above, and you=re in business!

APPENDIX: PATENT INDEXES

During the first 100 years of the United States no fewer than four indexes of all patents issued by the United States Government were compiled and published by the U.S. Secretary of State (in 1831), and by the U.S. Patent Office (in 1840, 1849, and 1874). Of these four the first and last are the most useful.

1831: Letter from the Secretary of State Transmitting a List of All Patents Granted by the United States, the Acts of Congress Relating Thereto, and the Decisions of the Courts of the United States Under the Same. 21st Congress, 2nd Session, Doc. No. 50. Washington: Duff Green, January 13, 1831.

This was a subject index, cross-indexed by patentee, of all U.S. Patents from 1790 up to the end of 1829.

1840 & 1849: These two indexes, the first covering 1790-1838 and the second 1790-1848, were subject indexes only, with no cross index.

1874: Leggett, Mortimer D., editor. Subject-Matter Index of Patents for Inventions Issued by the United States Patent Office from 1790 to 1873, inclusive. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1874.

This last index, which was also subject-only, was three volumes in length, covering as it did the entire period from 1790 up to the end of 1873. [This index has been reprinted by the Arno Press, once in 1976 and again in 2001, and may still be in print; sets of this reprint can occasionally be found at used book shows or in used book dealer lists.]

The most significant of these indexes is probably the first. It is particularly valuable because it is cross-indexed by patentee, as well as subject. Equally importantly, it was compiled from original materials, materials subsequently lost in the Patent Office fire of 1836, and thus is the closest to the original materials. All indexes prepared after that fire were prepared without access to the pre-1836 patents, which had all been destroyed, and are thus one step further removed

(Continued on page 12)

AUCTION MANAGERS REPORT
By Greg Welsh

Another successful auction is now under our belts. We had a good variety of items and the total sales were just under $50,000. Not our biggest sale by a long shot, but it went off without a hitch. Frank Dennis did his usual good job calling the sale and his helper Jim gave him the necessary relief on occasion.

Ed Modugno kept the runners timely supplied with lots, assisted by George Duin, James Travis, Frank Sheriff, Bill DeCoster, Milt Potosky, and others I am sure I have omitted, though not purposefully. A special thanks to Frank & Fran Smith who have been stalwarts since I can remember helping with the checkout table. Jack Whelan, Dave Nowicki, Leon Kashishian, Joe Hauck, Chuck Granick, and all others who helped in any way.

Next years Auction is set for April 16, 2005 at the Elks of Flemington again next year, so start thinking about your consignment lots. Consignment forms will be available at the annual picnic, or later by returned sase. See the website for additional details.

Steve Zluky!!! We missed you…

CRAFTS Auction – April 17, 2004
By Dave Nowicki

My involvement with the auction began on Friday afternoon, the day before the auction when Leon Kashishian, Ed Modugno and I met at Greg Welsh's home to pick up the tools and get them to the Elk's Club in Flemington. While we were loading up, other CRAFTS members were already setting up the tables and arranging the hall. With the help of the many volunteers unloading went smoothly. The auction Managers, Greg Welsh and Steve Zluky, had already cataloged and numbered each lot which made for an easy set-up. The tools are laid out in order of their position in the auction and are checked to insure that the lots with multiple items were complete and easily identified for the runners.

Greg Welsh making sure the lots and their contents match up

I left the Elk's Club at 8:00 PM hoping to get in a good nights sleep and be up early enough to get to the tailgate sale by 6:00AM. Unlike last year's rain, the weather forecast was for a beautiful Spring day. Since I live about an hour and a half away from Flemington I wanted to be up by 4:00 AM and out the door by 4:30. I realized that things weren't going to go as planned when I woke up at 5:00AM – somehow I didn't set the alarm correctly. Since I was going to be late anyway, I took my time, stopped for coffee and a donut and picked up two additional extra-large coffees to share when I finally got there. I only had room for two cups in the front so I put the remaining and one in the rear holder and made my way to the Elk's Club. As I drove into the parking lot the tailgate sale was in full swing so I parked and quickly made my way to the most crowded table, where I was sure all the bargains were. Sure enough, just as I got there the crowd started to disperse carrying what seemed like handfuls of tools. As Chuck Granick gloatingly showed me his purchases it reminded me of that old adage, "ya snooze, ya lose". All was not lost though, as I perused the other dealers, and found a really nice brass and ebony bevel for my collection which made up for any initial disappointment. Satisfied, I went back to my car for the coffee and got the one from the front but found the cup I had put in the rear - on the floor – empty. Somewhere along the way it fell out of the cup holder. Not an auspicious beginning, but better than two years ago when I went head to head with a deer on Rt.202, but that's another story.

A view of the parking lot trading area

The rest of the day was perfect. As I settled into position to handout bidding numbers I noticed that there was a pretty good crowd previewing the auction. Auctioneer Frank Dennis began promptly at 9:30 and continued through the afternoon without a hitch. 603 lots were hammered down to 128 bidders by 3:15. We didn't have many "sparklers" as in past years but there was a nice variety with something to interest most everyone. What follows are the highlights:

Saurbier draw gauge

Quite a number of New Jersey tools were offered starting with a 12" bow saw by Johnson and a leather workers draw gauge by Osborne. Another rosewood and brass draw gauge by Saurbier was a bargain at $30. Two New Jersey hewing axes were offered, one signed J. Hicks (Elizabethtown) and C.H Conger (Newark) and the other signed R.R. Frazee (Plainfield) and J. Hicks went home for $100 each and both are considered rare. A Mockridge and Francis double

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Frazee & Hicks ax

router was hammered down for $375. New Jersey plane makers were well represented with offerings from: Benson and Mockridge, R. Eastburn, J. Andruss, N. Norton, Mockridge and Francis, S.C.Cook and W. Schmitt. Other New Jersey tools offered were levels by P. Quigley and William Johnson, a marking gauge by D. M. Lyon, a taylor's rule by Ward and a witchet by Mockridge and Francis. An unusual toted rabbet plane with an adjustable fence by M.B.Tidey was hammered down at $600

Witchet byMockridge &

Stanley was well represented this year. Two number 9 Cabinet Makers Block Planes were offered, one going for $875 and the other with the "hot dog" handle ended up at $1400. Two number 1's brought $900 for one that was complete and one without a front knob came in at $700. A number 85 Cabinet Makers scraper plane with a tilt knob and tote captured $700. Three Stanley 55's were sold, one complete and in new condition with the original pasteboard box brought $400, another with four boxes of cutters went for $275 and the last one in a wood box fetched $475. A number 10 1/4 carriage makers rabbet plane brought $350 and a number 94 cabinet makers rabbet plane was had for $250. A box of parts for a number 2 and 2C was hammered down for $300.

M.B.Tidey plane

Stanley No. 85

Metallic planes by Sargent and Tower and Lyon were also notable. A Tower and Lyon 22" Chaplin's Patent joiner brought $175 while a 12" Chaplin's Patent smoother with a steel handle and knob came in at $325 and a Tower & Lyon, corrugated sole, block plane went home for $225. A Sargent number 407 smoother (No. 2 size) sold for $130. Five of the uncommon Sargent Autoset planes were sold with the number 707 bringing $550.

Block plane byTower & Lyon

In addition to the aforementioned New Jersey levels, there were a few others that were noteworthy. An L.L. Davis Mantle Clock level, in wonderful condition, with what is thought to be its original wood box brought a respectable $550 from a CRAFTS member. An L.L. Davis 12" filigreed level brought $175 and another Davis Mantle Clock left at $375 Two Helb levels, from Railroad, PA went for $225 and $300 respectively. A 6 1/2" Stratton Bros level in rosewood and brass came in at $425 and a nice Stanley number 96, 28" brassbound level in rosewood went to a lucky bidder for $100.

L.L Davis Mantle Clock inclinometer

Good wood planes in scarce forms or by desirable makers were in demand, as always. A Sandusky reeding plane brought $120. John Veit's shootboard plane with a new shootboard came in at $110. A D.Colton smooth plane was $190. A T.J.McMaster molding plane with an eagle strike brought $225 and a plow plane in boxwood, with no wedge or iron, by Way and Sherman was had for $110. A Sandusky plow plane came in at $140 and another marked Arthington, Manchester with ivory scales brought $175. A boxwood plow by D.R.Barton was hammered down for $325 while an adjustable sash plane by R.W. McCubbin, Balt brought $400.

McMaster w/eagle strike

D.R. Barton boxwood plow

Many other interesting items were offered such as the red - bomb shaped - metal tool box (no tools) that brought $130 from a determined bidder. This was similar to the one that was featured this year on the Antiques Road Show. I believe they said that it originally housed a rather complete mechanics ratcheting tool kit and was manufactured by Blackhawk tools. A lot of three gunstock scrapers with whalebone wear plates came in at $250. A Starrett mechanical meat chopper, in great condition, went for $225. The biggest claw hammer I ever saw had a 31" handle and realized $275. Someone, who must have paid attention to Phil Stanley's presentation in February, came away with a Clegg's Patent lining rule for $150. A plumb bob in a fitted wood box brought $275. A Millers Falls beam boring machine was a surprise when it fetched $450. A Peter Wright, 155 pound anvil, in nice condition, brought $250, while a John Booth and Son, Philada alarm rattle sounded off at $160.

Blackhawk tool box

Starrett meat chopper

Clegg's Patent lining rule

John Booth and Son, Philada Alarm Rattle

Overall, I thought the auction had a nice selection for both the advanced and novice collector and was a success for both buyer and seller. I was high bidder on a really nice pair of 6" brass trammel points and missed a few others but, it was a great way to spend the day and with any luck I'll be back next year. Of course, I

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April 4th Meeting -
Philip Alcock – Wood Sculpture

By Dave Nowicki

The presentation for the April meeting was entitled "Wood Sculpture" and not knowing anything about the presenter, visions of formless abstract figures in Mahogany and Walnut came into my mind's eye; the "accent pieces" that I remembered seeing during the 1970's in furniture stores featuring "Contemporary" or Scandinavian Style furniture". Well, after seeing Philip's work, I couldn't have been more wrong.

Philip Alcock, a native of New York (born in Brooklyn and raised in Queens) ,is by his own definition, a self taught sculptor and wood carver. His wood carving began as a hobby about 13 years ago. His lifelong interest in Native American lore led to his carving ceremonial face masks used by the Eastern tribes of the Iriquois Nation. Philip said that there were about a dozen different masks used by the Eastern Tribes but many more for the Western Tribes who also used the same forms in their Totem Poles. He has done a number of works depicting Native Americans, including a medicine man and a cigar store Indian. Alcock's current pieces are in a more imaginative vein. He enjoys carving the human figure but always with his own spin as illustrated in his "Mermaid Morphing", his depiction of a mermaid in the final stage of her change into a human form. This particular carving was used to create a limited edition statuette in bronze. He has done other works with the human figure like the one he calls a "wish fulfillment" piece. This figure, "Ready and Able", depicts a Viking warrior and was created to honor his best friend, who always said that he "should have been born a Viking". Other carvings Philip has completed are of: animals (dogs, a sea otter, humpback whale and a wolf), Santa Claus, several architectural relief panels used in cabinetry, and a ships figurehead in the form of Marilyn Monroe

False Face Mask

Cigar Store Indian

Mermaid Morphing - in wood and bronze

Ready and Able

The woods Philip uses in his carvings are: butternut, cherry, basswood, pear, and mahogany and various "found" fruit and nut woods. His finishes include: Lacquer, Danish oil, various tinting mediums for the oil and believe it or not, shoe polish in various colors. As for tools, his chisels and gouges are mostly made by Ashley Iles and a Swiss company, Pfeil. He buys his knives from Kestrel Tools, a company in Washington State that specializes in the tool designs of Native American master carvers.

If you'd like more information on Philip and to see more of his wonderful carving ability I urge you to visit his website at:

Smoke! A Dalmation

Philip Alcock and one of his architectural panels

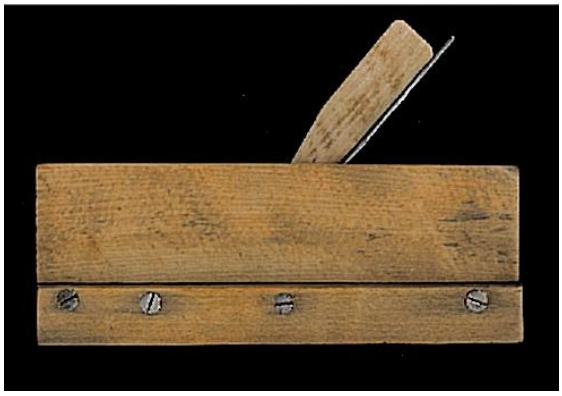
http://mysite.verizon.net/vze2rw83/index.html .

Kean Kuttin's

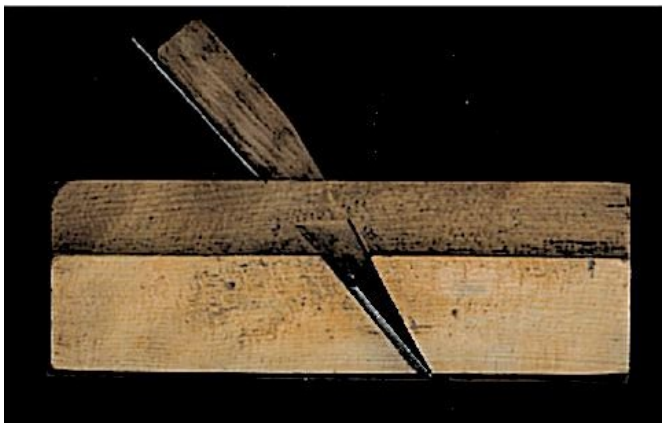
Function vs. Appearance

Articles have been written taking one side or the other in the antique world about which bears more weight for collecting: Function or Appearance. The pertinent articles for me are those that pertain to tools (naturally). I think what I am about to tell does not prove either side. It does, however, present some rather rigorous facts that allows the reader to see the argument in a new light.

I came across a plane in my son's Don't-Sell-But-Fix-It-Up box. It was a total disaster, with one notable exception: it had a weird profile that I had never seen before. O.K. I could make it presentable, at least.



So I set about to correct some of its "flaws". Here they were: the applied fence stuck out randomly beyond the body -both toe and heel, there were saw marks still on the piece, the grain wasn't smoothed down, there were no chamfers or stops on the top or front and back, and the crowning blow of all was



there was no finial on the wedge. It looked like some high school kid just belted it out to get rid of the project. Look at the photos. Ugh!

But on a closer observation, I noticed that functionally this plane was a winner. The wedge (as ugly as it was) fit perfectly, the rather unusual sole was flawlessly cut, the blade fit the profile, and the mouth was tight. No high school kid did this. So I started to reevaluate. The first place to go was the "bible"-- Whelan's book. He shows a profile (a little less complicated) that was a planemaker's boxing plane. In truth, a mother plane!

It takes quite a few planes of this type to cut the complicated dovetail boxing in fillester planes and the such. Five or more, I think Whelan says. But this is the key one. Then the inked in initials on the nose made sense. No need to stamp up a mother plane (many are completely unsigned). It was an act of ownership, certainly not pride, that had the maker put his initials on the nose, JC. Could that be John Colton? --- I wish.

Now comes the part that is embarrassing: In my wild rush to spend as little time as possible on what I thought was a junker, I cut the fence back to match the nose. Luckily, something twinged through me when I did it, and I didn't do the same for the sloppy stickout of the fence in the rear. I also stopped trying to make the thing "pretty", and thankfully used no strippers, stain or wax. (The Purists must be ready to throw up about now.) I just used some fine steel wool to get the schmutz off.

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But let's look at what a professional planemaker felt he needed just to do the job, a "plain pipe rack" product, (for those of you who remember that advertisement). The only thing he did beyond the bare bones necessities was rounding off the top of the heel slightly to give a less painful grip. And the thing that surprised me most was the lack of finial on the wedge. Working in a shop, and having a vise handy all the time, he could remove the wedge easily any time he wanted. Who needs a finial under those conditions?

So chamfers, stops, smoothness, integral fence, wedge finial, and finish was not what was needed to do one of the toughest jobs in planemaking, the full double dovetail boxing. Being a functional collector by nature, I kind of revel in this. I must say though, I sure go for those lookers, but only if they work. This JC guy adopted the industrial concept of good enough is best". In a way, I'm glad there were not many who sacrificed looks for functionality. You say I'm swinging over to the other camp? Maybe so.

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from the documents they are attempting to catalogue and describe.

The index of 1874 is the next most valuable, completely superseding as it does those of 1840 and 1849, and except for the above-mentioned lack of access to the early patents, and for its sometimes irregular subject name assignments, would be the only index needed.

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TOOL EVENTS

June 6 - CRAFTS Meeting 1PM
HOST Masonic Lodge Highbridge, NJ

July 9&10 - Martin Donnelly
Antique Tool Fair and Listed Auction
Hillsboro, NH
First 600 Lots on Friday
Tool market begins at Dawn on Saturday
www.mjdtools.com

July 28 - David Stanley Auctions
1000 lots Antique and Modern woodworking tools
Leicestershire, England
www.davidstanley.com
TEL:011441530 222320

August 21 - Open House Auction and Joint Tool Meeting
Martin J. Donnelley Antique Tools - Avoca, NY
www.mjdtools.com

September 12 - CRAFTS Picnic, Brady Camp, Lamington, NJ. Tailgating starts at 8AM, catered lunch at noon. Judged tool displays with prizes. Call Ken Vliet at 610-837-5933

WANT ADS

Wanted to Buy: Emmert Machinists Vise,
also called a Tool Makers Vise, Model 4a or Model 6a in good condition. Contact Carl Matthews at 713-871-8484 or email: cmatthews@psp.com.

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

Seeking McKinnon axe of Rockaway, NJ made between 1845 and 1905. Please call Stephen at (732) 682-8236.

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still had the back seat carpeting to clean - I'm really thankful there was no cream or sugar in that cup.