

# SWTCA NEWSLETTER

**MARCH 1999** 

### SOUTHWEST TOOL COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

# THE 5TH ANNUAL SUPER SATURDAY by Bill McDougall

Once again Gregor Mszar's Super Saturday Tool Meet on January 30th in Arlington, TX was a super event!

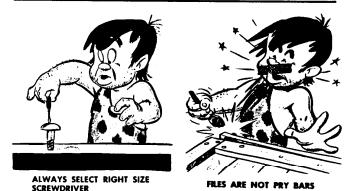
One hundred eleven collectors and 17 spouses from several states attended this 5th annual event. Thirty nine tables provided plenty of choice tools for collectors and users and no one went home empty handed. Several dealers set up tables including our former president Don Rosebrook from Louisiana and Ron Cushman from New York. Larry Creedon loaded down four tables with about a month's production of the Stanley Works.

I'm always impressed by the time many people spend to drive long distances to this event. (I took my usual American Airlines 1 hour 20 minute flight from Albuquerque, since I'm not up to a full days drive each way.)

Once again the meeting finished within the budget even with the modest admission fee of \$7.00 for members, and as Gregors's notice said; Spouses are free (the big expense comes later). Many of us enjoyed a very pleasant evening at Gregor and Theresa's home. The refreshments were great and the conversations (mostly lies) were stimulating.

Of course David McDonald was there and casually mentioned that he is still collecting Winchester items. Please help him out. I am shipping him a Winchester grand piano COD

We are all looking forward to upcoming events of the Southwest Tool Collectors' club and to our Labor Day meeting in Albuquerque.



From ABCs of Hund Tools, Their Correct Usage and Care, General Motors Corporation, 1945.

### CATALOGUE PRICES

The general catalogues published by the hardware companies contain a wealth of information for tool collectors as well as being in demand by collectors of toys, housewears, sporting goods and others. The older catalogues have went up in price dramatically in the past few years and the later ones (1950s) are now beginning to sell at a respectable premium. Prices have not yet stabilized for these items and therefore are noted to vary widely between auctions. There are still bargains to be had if you are not in a hurry.

Some recent prices are:

1913 Simmons \$250

1924 Winchester-Simmons \$320

1941 Townley \$25

1943 Shapleigh \$150

1935 Simmons \$150

1953 Wyeth \$45

1903 Simmons \$490

1939 Simmons \$135

1935 Shapleigh \$100

### **EDITOR'S REPORT**

**ALVIN SELLENS** 

It has been my pleasure to assemble the last ten issues of the SWTCA Newsletter. During these 2 1/2 years I have tried to provide notices of all past and future meetings along with a variety of tool and artifact information. I hope that there has been something of interest to each member.

In my opinion, the main purpose of the *Newsletter* is to inform the membership of club activities and board member decisions. Inasmuch as timely and pertinent information has been increasingly difficult to obtain, I have concluded that it is time to turn the pencil over to someone else. I sincerely hope that a new Editor can be found who is able to do a more effective job. Success or failure will depend upon cooperation of the other officers and a modicum of support from the membership.

Whatever success I have had as Editor is shared with my loyal supporter, Gerry Sellens, who pasted up and proofed each issue.

My tenure on the Executive Committee has been a learning experience. I thank the membership for that opportunity.

My resignation has been submitted to the president.

### SOUTHWEST **TOOL COLLECTORS** ASSOCIATION

The SWTCA Newsletter is the official publication of the Southwest Tool Collectors Association. It is published quarterly in March, June, September and December and provided to each member of the association.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION IS:

#### Section 1:

To promote the collection and exchange of tools, implements and devices used by our forefathers.

### Section 2:

To study and share knowledge concerning these objects and the crafts in which they were used.

#### Section 3:

To provide a spirit of fun and fellowship among members having these interests.

### **SWTCA OFFICERS**

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Uncle Ferd went to the flea market and bought an axe that is more than 2000 years old.

It is clearly marked "Pat. Aug. 14, 200 B.C.".

### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Craig Guy

Dear Fellow Tool Collectors

Hope all is well with each of you and you have made your plans for the many tool related activities that are scheduled for this year.

If you were to talk to ten tool collectors and ask each one why they collect tools you could get ten different answers. However, one answer might be the "wheeling and dealing".

Let me tell you a "wheeling and dealing" story that came across my path in the past couple of months.

While standing in a fellow collector's barn in southern Ohio the subject of things collected that were related to the tool family came up, and my friend said he had a straight razor collection he would like to sell, 72 in total. I told him I didn't want to start another collection but I did know a couple of people in Oklahoma that might be interested. So I brought the razors home and showed them to my Okie friends. I couldn't find anyone who wanted the complete collection, however by getting five collectors together we were able to make a deal that got my friend in Ohio his money and each person got the razor they wanted at a price they were willing to pay - so you say whats the big deal. One of the five was my barber and he has a collection displayed in his shop, and after the smoke cleared and the other four paid my friend in Ohio, my barber got 32 razors and I have 50 free haircuts coming.

So you can add to your list of tool collecting benefits the possibility of free haircuts.

This will be your last notice to renew your membership, we are going to press with the membership directory and we want everyone to be included.

If you have not sent your 99 dues in please do so today, they are still a low \$12 and should be sent to our Treasurer

Carl Blair

712 So. Linden Ln Ct. Mustang, OK 73064

As always we welcome membership anytime during the year, however any dues received after this cutoff date will not allow us to get your name, address, and other important information into the directory.

Please make your plans now for our Spring Semi-Annual Meeting, more information is included in this Newsletter.

Sincerely Craig Guy



The sewing palm or sailors palm, as it is sometimes called, is an indispensible tool of the sailmaking, leather working or similar craft. It is used to push a needle thru a stiff workpiece without wear and tear on the hand.

### PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

EAIA REGIONAL MEETING IN BATON ROUGE , LA, SAT AND SUN, OCTOBER 2 & 3, 1999

A meeting has been planned for Oct. 2 & 3, at the Louisiana Rural Life Museum in Baton Rouge, La. The museum will be celebrating Harvest Days on this weekend and will include many activities not available during other times. The museum is operated by LSU and sits in the middle of a 450 acre Agricultural Experiment Station, within the city of Baton Rouge. Several teams of mules are available and old muledrawn farm equipment will be utilized on a major scale this weekend. In addition, the museum, which includes several old plantation buildings including blacksmith shop, sugar making, mule operated grist mill, slave cabins, period housing from this area, and several others, will be open and docents and craftsmen will be plying their crafts. There will be special programs for children and families are invited. The museum proper includes several exhibits representative of rural life and activities in this area. The Rural Life Museum is adjacent to the 25 acre Windrush Gardens which will be open to pedestrian traffic.

In addition, we anticipate a presentation by an archaeologist about his work on a local plantation and its sugar mills. Tours of an operating sugar mill are planned. (This will be cane grinding season). Educational tours of a nearby swamp will be available for a group if there is sufficient interest (the water will be high for the best kind of tour). Individual visits to nearby Bluebonnet Swamp are always available. Everything is within fifteen minutes of the museum including the Rosebrook home.

Tool collectors and others interested in needle arts may set up to sell in Don and Pam Rosebrook's yard during certain hours of the weekend depending on the interest. Don Rosebrook will make his extensive tool collection available for viewing.

An expression of interest is needed at this time to continue the planning. Costs for activities will be kept to a minimum for young families on a budget and children will be welcome. No formal group dining is anticipated at this time although a catered outdoor meal could be an option so participants could taste Cajun food.

Please contact us if you are interested in attending this meeting, we are inviting tool collectors from SWTCA and MWTCA to join EAIA members on this weekend. Don Rosebrook, 38352 Henry Road, Prairieville, LA 70769.

### **OBITUARY**

### NORMAN H. KAMB

We note the passing November 8, 1998 of Norman Kamb of Dallas, Texas. Norman was an active member of the Southwest Tool Collectors Association and served at one point as an Area Director. He will be missed by his many tool collecting friends.

### **SWTCA MEETINGS**

Apr 1-3, 1999	Semi-annual Meet, Springdale, AR Emery Goad 316-367-1356	
July 24, 1999	Hotter'n Hell area meet, Arlington, TX Gregor Mszar	
Sept 3-4, 1999	Semi-annual Meet. Albuquerque, NM Bill McDougall	
Spring, 2000	Semi-annual Meet. Shreveport, LA Don Rosebrook	
Fall, 2000	Semi-annual Meet. Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX	
Spring, 2001	Semi-annual Meet. Tulsa, OK	
Fall, 2001	Semi-annual Meet. Wichita, KS Emery Goad	
OTHER TOOL EVENTS OF INTEREST		

Wiai 14, 1999	Paul Reichert 417-831-1425
Oct 2 -3, 1999	EAIA regional meeting. Baton Rouge, LA (Preliminary). Don Rosebrook

MWTCA Amo mosting Comingfield MO

Mar 1/ 1000

### **WORDS WANTED**

Articles and photos are wanted for publication in the *Newsletter*. Short articles are preferred. Technical items, meeting notices and reports, general questions for the membership, comments, etc. are solicited. Newsletters will be mailed on the first day of Mar, June, Sept and Dec if at all possible. Items for publication must be in the Editor's hands by the 15th of the previous month. Corrections to the format will be made where required. Please send inputs to the editor.

# IN REMEMBRANCE OF MARY LEA BALLINTINE by Joan Shipman

Mary Lea Ballintine, wife of John Ballintine, passed away on January 28, 1999. John and Mary Lea are well known to tool collectors across the nation. John is a member of Southwest, Mid-West and Rocky Mountain Tool Collectors Associations. They traveled to shows all over the nation until Mary Lea's failing health forced them to stay closer to home.

In addition to her interest in John's tool collection, Mary Lea collected pencil sharpeners. She had shown her collection at a Mid-West meeting.

Mary Lea was born and raised in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. She is survived by her husband John of the home in Mustang, Oklahoma; her sons, John Terrell of Norman, Oklahoma and Richard Terrell of Moore, Oklahoma.

## REFINE YOUR COLLECTION

By ALVIN SELLENS

This is a reprint of an article that I wrote for publication in the June 1980 issue of *The Chronicle of the Early American Industries Association*. It is just as appropriate for use today as it was in 1980. I have followed these general guidelines for many years and can attest to their merit. ED.

Consider spending a pleasant weekend improving your collection without it costing you one cent. The suggestion of refining your collection may possibly stimulate your interest whereas the thought of reducing it will almost certainly be objectionable. However, refining can and should be simply a systematic reducing process. Most collections could be vastly improved through a process of refining which consists of reducing to some pre-determined level. This pre-set level will probably be dictated by available space but could be an arbitrary number such as a percentage of the present collection. Although this article has been prepared to apply to private tool displays, the general approach is applicable to collections not on display as well as being applicable to many low-budget museum displays.

The reduction concept is easily applied to some other collection but could be painful when first considered for one's own display. Thoughtful answers to the following questions may help convince you that such improvements can easily be made:

- 1. Are there duplicates in the collection?
- 2. Does the collection include damaged or poor quality items that detract from the overall appearance?
- 3. Does the display of several similar items show anything that can't be shown equally well with one or two items?
- 4. Could the remaining items be displayed more attractively or in a more interesting manner if the collection was reduced by one quarter?

The first step in the process of refining your collection is to sit back and deliberately consider the task. What would you prefer your collection to look like next month, next year and in the forseeable future? It is probable that the collection has grown up over a period of time inhibited only by time, money and the availability of collectable artifacts. However, even if it has been accumulated with definite goals in mind, re-planning can only result in improvements. Your particular areas of interest are of primary importance in determining the future course of your collection. Perhaps you have lost interest in a certain craft, and the tools of that trade could be reduced or eliminated completely to allow for expanding an area of greater interest. Is this the time to narrow the scope of your collection and concentrate on upgrading a specific type of tool?

Space is quite often the limiting factor in the growth of a collection. It is obvious that a collection that is to be housed in a bottom desk drawer should not contain very many blacksmith anvils. However, many collectors refuse to face up to a permanent space limitation and therefore seriously

overload the available space. Methods of display are outside the scope of this paper but it is a well established fact that one good item well displayed is superior to a hoard of miscellaneous items piled on a shelf. The more unique the item, the more space it deserves in a display. It is recommended that you take a critical look at your collection in relationship to the available space and tailor the size of the collection accordingly.

Space may also dictate another facet of collecting; that is, displaying tools in shop settings. Few private collectors have the space required for complete shop layouts; however, do not overlook the possibility of preparing a complete display in your special field of interest. Creating a craft shop of some given period would require many common tools and artifacts whereas creating a different type of display might prompt you to collect only the unique tools of the trade. It would be folly to cull out the common tools of a craft only to need them next year in a special-purpose display.

With clear-cut desires and a general approach in mind, the actual process of weeding out your collection can proceed rapidly and can be a satisfying endeavor. Tackle the obvious first and set aside all duplicates. Only you can decide what a duplicate is and your definition will vary depending upon your interests. It is easy to fall into the trap of saying that this or that item is not a duplicate because it is one eighth of an inch smaller or because it is painted blue or because of some other insignificant detail. You may have to be somewhat brutal in your definition if a large reduction in the collection is desired.

Junk should be eliminated as the next step in the refining process. Eliminate all damaged, incomplete and poor quality items. Such items should be left on display only if they are rare or have some unique characteristic. One or two unidentified objects are acceptable as conversation pieces but a shelf full of whats-its does little except detract from the collection.

So-called sets of individual type tools often contain pieces that should be deleted. For example, a set of chisels is not actually a set unless they are all of the same pattern and from the same maker. If your set of chisels is comprised of pieces made by several different makers, why not delete most of them and use the space more productively? Other sets of tools which should be closely examined include moulding planes, carving tools and boring bits. Sets of tools in a broader sense, such as tools used by an 1870 cabinet maker, may contain some items that were added at a much later period. Such items should be removed but only after careful consideration. An obviously newer item in an antique tool box will command attention and thus degrade the entire set.

Your collection will undoubtedly look better after implementing the deletion processes mentioned above. If

more refining is required to reach the desired goal, it is time to again consider the scope of the collection. Tools of a specific craft or trade might be deleted without noticeable effect. For instance, the removal of a few common tinner's tools from a blacksmith tool collection would not detract from the display and could even make it appear more authentic.

The items so carefully deleted from the collection must be permanently banished lest they gradually reappear on the shelf. They should be tagged as surplus and packed away out of sight pending disposal. The extra pieces can ultimately be sold, stored or used for trading stock. Even the pieces of lesser quality are always in demand by beginning collectors and decorators and can easily be sold. It is a good idea to keep a few common repair parts in storage for future use on some unique piece that needs repair. By far the most common practice is to use the excess items as trading stock. Many collectors will testify that trading tools is one of the most gratifying aspects of collecting. Obtaining a key item for your collection by trading off some surplus can indeed be a satisfying experience.

A method of keeping the collection within allowable limits is necessary if further purging is to be avoided. An excellent method is to place a self imposed limit on the number of tools in your collection. In other words, for every item you obtain, an existing item must be deleted. This type of discipline will assure that the collection will steadily improve but will not become overcrowded. Another method of discipline is to delete tools of equal value to those procured. With this method, the collection will tend to become smaller because of the tendency of an advanced collector to buy the better quality and higher priced items. Whatever your approach to controlling the size of your collection, you will find that it sharpens your awareness of the quality of the different items and thereby enhances your enjoyment of the hobby.

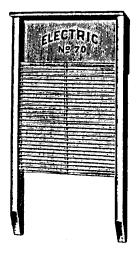
Every collector is blessed by several items given by well wishing friends and relatives. These items are not subject to the refining process and therefore must be exempt from the entire procedure. A monkey wrench with a broken handle may be priceless from a sentimental standpoint but would not contribute to a display of coachmaker's tools. One approach is to carefully number and catalog each such item but display only a small number of these items at any one time. The balance should be stored where they can be quickly retrieved in case of need, such as auntie's impending visit.

A few tips from a veteran are provided to help avoid some false starts on the refining task.

- Outline your long term goals before you start on the refining task,
- 2. Sort out and segregate all gift items that are exempt from the weeding out process.
- Make your self-imposed rules fairly liberal and then follow them. Do not make exceptions.
- 4. Remember that the intent is to improve the collection and not to inhibit growth.

In summary, it is almost a certainty that your collection can be improved by a refining technique consisting primarily of deletions. Accomplishing this task in a systematic manner according to your own rules is a satisfying and pleasurable experience. It is also important to consider that this is one improvement that can be implemented at zero cost and may even provide enough surplus items to finance a further improvement.

# ELECTRIC MERCHANDISE circa 1900



WASH BOARD





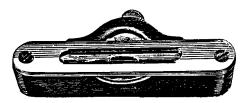


**PADLOCK** 



**SCREW PLATE** 

### THE STANLEY POCKET LEVEL



(1) 1859 THRU 1871



(2) 1872 THRU 1908



(3) 1909 THRU 1938



(4) 1939 AND LATER

STANLEY No. 41 POCKET LEVEL
SIMILAR TO No. 40, 40 1/2, 41 1/2, 42 AND 44

The pocket levels that are intended to attach to a straight edge leave something to be desired from a collector's standpoint. Most of them do not carry a Stanley number or other identification and the catalogue data are woefully incomplete. Several assumptions are required if one wants to collect by type and/or establish dating.

Pocket levels were first listed in the 1859 Stanley catalogue without any description other than material (iron or brass) and with no mention of intended usage. It wasn't until 1900 that the catalogues mentioned that the levels could be easily attached to any straight edge. The 1911 catalogue stated that they could be easily attached to any straight edge or carpenters square and started listed them as Straight Edge or Pocket Levels.

It is difficult to rationalize why they were called pocket levels in the first place. Very few people carried a carpenters square or straight edge in their pocket. At least the level itself is small enough to be carried in the pocket. Length is about 3 1/8 inches. Late catalogues listed them variously as 3, 3 1/16 and 3 1/4 inches; however, measured lengths are closer to 3 1/8 inches. The bottom is ground flat in each case allowing the level to be used for small tasks such as positioning a clock case.

Judging from the number still extant, this type of level was apparently popular over a long period.

### No. 40 POCKET LEVEL 1859 thru 1935

Same as the No. 41 Pocket Level for the same time periods except for the top plates. No. 40 top plate as shown in illustration (1) is made of stamped steel. The top plates shown in illustrations (2) and (3) are made of cast iron and are japanned. See No. 41 Pocket Level illustrations (1), (2) and (3).

### No. 40 1/2 POCKET LEVEL 1874 thru 1876

Same as the No. 41 for the same time period except that it has *Extra Finish*. We don't know what Extra Finish meant in 1874. If you have two of these, you can call the best one a No. 40 1/2. See No. 41 illustration (2).

### No. 41 POCKET LEVEL 1859 thru 1948

Material: Cast iron base with a stamped brass top plate Finish: Japanned base

The top plate was initially bare, see illustration (1), and was changed to a vine or leaf design in 1872. See illustration (2). The catalogues showed the leaf design thru 1908. However, the subsequent design was patented in 1898 and was probably used earlier than the catalogues indicate. Early versions of the type shown in illustration (3) have *Pat. June 28, 98* embossed on the top plate opposite the company name. The patent date was later replaced with *Made in U.S.A.* It is assumed that the date was removed after the patent expired in 1914. The No. 41 was discontinued sometime during WW II and was not made thru 1947. It was listed in the 1948 consumer catalogue and may have been made again that year.

### No. 41 1/2 POCKET LEVEL 1874 thru 1876

Same as the No. 41 for the same time period except that the No. 41 1/2 has a cast brass top plate. See No. 41 illustration (2).

### No. 42 POCKET LEVEL 1859 thru 1917

Same as the No. 41 for the same time periods except that the base and the top plate of the No. 42 are made of cast brass. See No. 41 illustrations (1), (2) and (3).

### No. 44 POCKET LEVEL 1867 only

Same as the No. 41 of the same time period except that this item is nickel plated. The catalogue says "X plated" which is assumed to be nickel. It was many years later that Stanley began to use nickel plating extensively on tools. See No. 41 illustration (1).

### No. ? POCKET LEVEL

Same as the No. 40 illustration (3) except that it does not have the bracket and screw for attachment to a straight edge. It is recognized that the bracket could easily be ground off flush with the case but this example shows no evidence of grind marks or of having been repainted.

No. 46 POCKET LEVEL 1870 thru 1917

Length: 3 1/8 inches Material: Cast iron base Finish: Japanned base The early model of the No. 46, illustration (1), has a flared base and a stamped steel top plate. Late versions, illustrations (2) and (3), have thick brass top plates.

One in the writer's collection is the same as illustration (3) except that it has Pat. 6-20-96 incised in the top plate and it does not have the Stanley number.



(1) 1870 THRU 1871



(2) 1872 THRU 1908



(3) 1909 AND LATER

No 46 Pocket Level

### **CORN HUSKING DEVICES**

Corn husking by hand is essentially another one of the lost skills. The task was essentially a simple one but one that required considerable skill and stamina to attain a reasonable degree of speed. It consisted of splitting the husk, grasping the corn ear, twisting the ear loose from the husk and tossing it into a waiting wagon.

The huge mechanical pickers have long-since eliminating the need for hand picking. However, many examples of husking devices still show up in flea markets and antique shops. The younger generation is already starting to ask "What was that thing used for?"



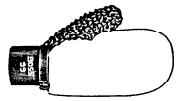
HUSKING PEG

Numerous varieties of husking pegs or pins, similar to the one shown in the illustration, were listed in the catalogues. Several home made versions have also been noted. The pins were usually made of hardwood; one example in the writers' collection is made of bone.



**Husking Hook** 

Hooks came in a variety of sizes of shapes similar to the one illustrated. The one shown is the deluxe model with nineteen holes allowing the hook to be positioned to suit the user. A less common type had the hook positioned on the inside of the wrist immediately above the hand.

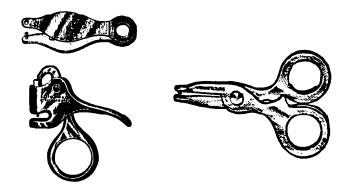


THUMB COT

The thumb cot or thumb stall was sometimes worn to protect the thumb while providing a non-slip surface for griping the corn ear. The device shown is made of flexible steel links. Another type of cot consists of an adjustable stall faced with steel spikes. Both are large enough to be worn over a glove.



The leather wrist band helped protect the wrist during the constant twist and toss of the husking operation.



### **POULTRY PUNCH**

A poultry or chicken punch is used to mark baby chicks by punching a hole in the web between the toes. The one shown in the upper LH illustration is approximately two inches long. The one-finger type is slightly larger and is generally made of brass. The *Ideal* variety, RH illustration, is about 3 1/2 inches long and resembles a small pair of scissors.

Contrary to the flea marketer's tags, these devices are <u>NOT</u> conductor's punches, paper punches or markers for church

### Coming September 3 and 4, 1999

### Albuquerque, New Mexico

The biggest tool meet west of the Midwest

Hosted by:

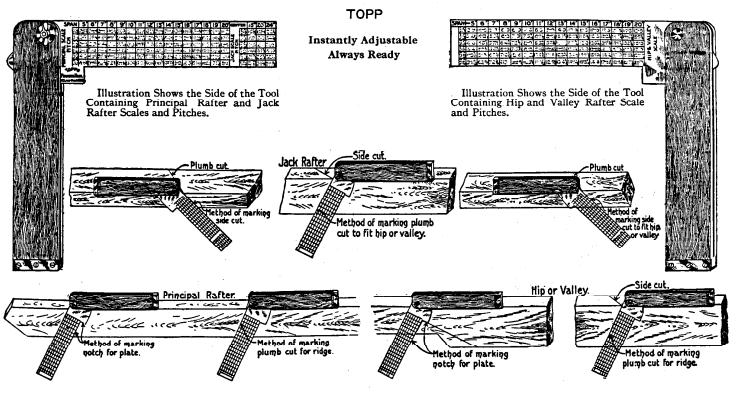
**Rocky Mountain** 

Southwest

P.A.S.T. Tool Collectors and Areas I, L and O of MWTCA

For information call Bill McDougall (505) 344-9272

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