The Early American Industries Association

WWW.EARLYAMERICANINDUSTRIES.ORG

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The Early American Industries Association preserves and presents historic trades, crafts, and tools and interprets their impact on our lives.

Editor: Daniel Miller, dan@dragonflycanoe.com [Include “Shavings” in subject line.] Send correspondence to EAIA, P.O. Box 524, Hebron, MD 21830

Submissions: EAIA’s Shavings is a member-driven newsletter. Contributions are always welcome and needed. Please observe the deadlines.

Reporting an Address Change: Please notify Executive Director six weeks before the change. Contact information above.

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Front Cover: The Gordon & Brothers Mill on the Whitewater Canal in Metamora, Indiana is the subject of this ambrotype photo. Read more about the mill and this form of photography on page 14.

The Early American Industries Association preserves and presents historic trades, crafts, and tools and interprets their impact on our lives. Membership in the EAIA is open to any person or organization sharing its interests and purposes.

For information or to join, visit: www.EarlyAmericanIndustries.org

or contact Executive Director John Verrill, P.O. Box 524, Hebron, MD 21830 or e-mail him at: executivedirector@earlyamericanindustries.org.

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Both Shavings and the Chronicle are available on microfilm from UMI, 300 Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

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Pictured here are just a couple of the items that have been donated for the EAIA’s 2020 Online Silent Auction. See page 3 for more details about the auction.

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President’s Message

Staying Busy

Like the majority of you, I’m not going many places these days. My weekly trip to the post office box now feels like an exciting journey to an exotic, forbidden land. But I haven’t been bored at home, either. I’ve been staying busy by installing a rail fence down our driveway built from hand-split locust, and working on a stone retaining wall that I’ve been inching across the north side of our yard. When it rains, I sharpen tools, catalog my hand planes with Tom Elliot’s and Jane Rees’s indispensable books, and attempt projects in my “shop.” In the evenings, I take Advil for my aching muscles and read about history or early industry until bedtime. Some of my friends tell me they are stir crazy with nothing to do, but that has not been the case with me.

EAIA members have so many interests and projects, and so much curiosity about things, that I know you are out there keeping busy, as well. The quarantine projects that many of you submitted for this newsletter prove that to be true. And I want you to know EAIA Executive Director John Verrill, the board of directors, and myself have also been keeping busy with EAIA endeavors.

As most of you know, we had to postpone the 2020 Annual Meeting scheduled to be held in historic Staunton, Virginia, because of the COVID-19 crisis. While that’s disappointing, the good news is we suffered no financial penalties and have arranged to hold our 2021 meeting there. In other good news, we have been crafting new ways to spread the word about our great organization. Have you seen the new Chronicle Weekly! Facebook blog post that goes up every Thursday morning? It features a current or heritage article from our incredible journal, and the views for this have been increasing each week.

I have also launched a series of online interviews with EAIA members using Zoom. The first one, with Marshall Scheetz of James-town Cooperage, went very well. How could it not? We have so much talent among our membership. The interview video is posted on the EAIA website and Facebook page, so take a look. I’ll aim to conduct a couple of interviews each month, so keep an eye out on Facebook for new episodes. John will also send out email blasts to let you know when they are happening.

Lastly, 1st Vice President Sally Fishburn and Secretary Jane Butler have been busy planning an online silent auction to help raise money for the organization in lieu of the auction that would have occurred at the Annual Meeting. That should be a real blast! Get ready to donate items and bid frequently!

So rest assured, EAIA is moving forward and staying busy. Your organization is going to stand this test and will continue to grow and flourish.

Stay healthy, take care, and stay busy!

EAIA Online Silent Auction

Because the Annual Meeting was postponed, the silent auction will be held on-line this year. The auction will begin June 14 and end June 21.

This is our only fundraising opportunity to defray the costs of postponing the meeting, so we hope that you will be generous in both your donations and your bids!

Updates about the auction will be made in email and on the EAIA Facebook page.

Please consider making a donation to the auction! In the past we have auctioned projects made by members, tools, antique tools and books (just a couple are shown below). In addition, donations may be tax deductible. This year, because we will be shipping the objects, small or light weight contributions are requested. Please ship them to our auction coordinator by June 11th, at one of the following addresses:

Jane Butler, PO Box 487, Antrim, NH 03440-0487
or Ship via UPS or FedEx:
Jane Butler 146 Franchise Road, Bennington, NH 03442

Be sure to include your name and address so that we can properly thank you for your donation.

This is our only fundraising opportunity to defray the costs of postponing the meeting so we hope that you will be generous in your donations and your bids!
From the Executive Director

by John Verrill

This is the week we would have been enjoying each other’s company in Staunton, Virginia. Having to postpone the meeting was very disappointing to all who worked so hard to make this a very memorable meeting. Our partners at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel, Monticello, and the Frontier Culture Museum were all very gracious in helping us as we struggled to make the final decision to cancel the meeting. We were made more comfortable in that each of these entities were willing to postpone the meeting until May 2021. There were no penalties for postponing, however our budget will take a hit as we had already spent several thousand dollars that cannot be recouped, and in addition, the income from the silent auction which we depend on to help defray expenses is lost. We hope that you will consider making a contribution to help us through; small or large all make a difference. You can donate easily by going through our website donate page. The headliner for this issue is our first “online silent auction;” by donating objects to the auction or bidding generously you will help EAIA get through this difficult period.

Our annual business meeting will not be held, nor will we make award presentations this year; however we are planning a special issue of Shavings that will include annual financial and business activities reports. Our election of board members has also been delayed; we have two members standing for reelection to a second term and two vacancies with two candidates who have agreed to run for these empty seats. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else you feel would serve on the board, please let me know. Serving on the board is an important duty that helps to insure the future of the Early American Industries Association.

Just a reminder that each Thursday morning we publish an article from the archives on our website and Facebook page, which we call Chronicle Weekly, so stay tuned and follow the link on our website where you will find the complete list of Chronicle Weekly articles! Also we urge you to look for Dana Shoaf’s Talk with a Tradesperson live interviews on Facebook. These talks are presented on the first Thursday of each month; here is a link to last month’s interview with master cooper Marshall Scheetz. Look for our next interview on June 4th.

We hope that you stay well and are soon able to get back into a more normal mode of life.

“Whatsit”

A member recently donated this tool for inclusion in a future silent auction. The main body of the tool revolves and has pyramid shaped knobs covering the surface; it is 7 inches long and 3 inches in diameter. The cylinder is solid and appears to be made of brass or bronze; it weighs a bit more than 10 pounds. The cylinder has an iron and wood handle, the wood handle is 4 3/4 inches long. There are 26 rows and each row has 15 pyramidal knobs. We were given no context as to what industry this tool may have been used in so we are hoping that you can identify this mystery tool. Email John Verrill executivedirector@EAIAInfo.org with your answer and we will post the results in the next issue of Shavings. Thanks in advance!
A Couple of Tools for Your Collection

by Paul Van Pernis

Most of us are collectors of one sort or another. If you start a conversation with almost any member of the Early American Industries Association, you’ll sooner or later find out what they collect. The collecting virus is strong, highly contagious, and seems to be a lifetime affliction. In this unsettling time of a pandemic virus, our lives have been drastically altered and we’re all spending more time at home. You’ve caught up on your reading, you’ve binge watched your favorite movies and TV shows, you’ve cleaned the closets, and even organized your shop. You’ve done your best to avoid aggravating the other members of your family and now you’re out of ideas about how to keep yourself occupied. Maybe it’s finally time to fulfill that promise you made to yourself and your family to organize your collection or, to be truly honest, your collections.

Marc Sitkin recently posted a nice review entitled “Disposing of a Tool Collection”, which can be found at eaiainfo.org/2020/03/13/disposing-of-a-tool-collection/. Having an accurate and up to date inventory and information as to where all of the items in your collection are located is an important part of making that process easier for yourself or the one who has to deal with your collection when you’re no longer around to do it. Yes, you’ve got lots of those tools on display, but what about the ones under the bed, on the top shelf in the garage, or tucked away in any of those other wonderful hiding places you stash your treasures! It takes a while to realize that those few items that caught our eye all those years ago have mysteriously multiplied like fecund rabbits into an amazing aggregation of whatever it is we collect, including the one’s we snuck into the house without our spouse’s knowledge!

DISCLAIMER #1—Before I go any further, you need to know that I am in no way connected to any of the companies I will describe in this blog post. I have received no compensation nor will I receive any compensation for anything I write or say about these companies. I am letting you know about a couple of products that have worked for me. There are other great products out there, so I encourage you to do your own research before you decide if either of these products sound like something that might be useful to you.

I started with a simple list in a notebook and then graduated to a simple list on my computer. I tried a computer spreadsheet but found I just wasn’t a cells, columns, or rows kind of guy. Things kept moving, strange formulas appeared, and I found it to be more trouble than it was worth for my non-computer brain. So, I began a search for an easier way to keep track of my burgeoning collection. Back in 2015 I found Collectify (www.collectify.com). Collectify was founded by Franklin Silverstone. With a background in the art world and experience as a curator for several large private art collections, Silverstone was acutely aware of the need for a way to catalogue a collection, store images, customize fields, and keep track of the location of every piece, as well as generate insurance reports. He worked to bring this product to market, and in 2001 the first version of his software was put on the market.

My experience with this software is that it is very user friendly, fairly intuitive, and when I’ve had questions, a call to the company has quickly put me in touch with someone who was able to quickly answer my questions. The software I use is the Collectify Collector’s edition. The cost is $99.95 and you can download it as soon as you buy it (PC/Windows; a cloud version compatible with Mac is available by subscription). Here are some of the features available in this edition of the software:

- There are 33 predefined collection types, or you can customize a field to fit your own unique collection.
- There are a slew of various templates that you can use to set up your database. They will allow you to subdivide your collection into multiple categories. For my collection, I’ve broken down my plane collection into various plane types such as bench planes, block planes, specialty planes, etc. These templates are easy to modify to fit your particular needs.
- The program asks you the location of each item in your collection. It allows you to identify what building its in, what room, what cabinet, shelf or box it’s in, and will even remind you where on the shelf or in the cabinet, or in the drawer the item is located. To my mind this is one of the best
features of this software, since my memory isn’t as good as it used to be.

➤ You can customize the screen display so it shows what’s important to you.

➤ The templates make it easy to you include such information as purchase price, current value, method of purchase, i.e. auction, private sale, trade, gift, etc. You can keep notes about any of the items in your collection as well.

➤ You can add images including video and sound clips of each item, add scans of articles about your tools, receipts, or other information that you deem important.

➤ You can easily insert information about identical or similar items to the ones in your collection that reside in other collections. This can include information about what identical or similar objects have sold for in the past.

➤ There are multiple reports you can easily generate about your collection. This is particularly valuable when it comes to insuring your collection. It’s also a great way to let your family know where all the objects in your collection are located and their worth. By keeping these records, it’s much easier to know the cost basis and appreciated value of each object in your collection. This will be important information for you and your family if and when you dispose of your collection.

➤ These reports are also a great way to provide documentation for your insurance carrier. In fact, my insurance company was very pleased that I was using the Collectify program.

➤ If you have your collection in an Excel database, you can easily import that information from Excel into the Collectify software.

➤ The software is wonderfully searchable. This makes it easy when I want to review, for example, Bailey block planes, find the location of a particular spokeshave, or look at the data I have on a particular inventor or manufacturer.

➤ The software can handle multiple collections with ease and you can customize the database for each of your collections. So, if you have a tool collection, a stamp collection and your wife or children want to keep track of their collections, it’s not a problem. In fact, this software is a great way to establish a household inventory. In light of the increasing number of natural disasters, insurance companies and emergency organizations recommend that we should all inventory our possessions to expedite recovery in case of a devastating property loss. If you’re only interested in a home inventory, Collectify sells a home inventory program for $29.95.

➤ If you’re want the convenience of keeping your collection in the Cloud, Collectify can do that for you also for a monthly fee.

When a new tool makes its way into my collection, I photograph it, and enter the information into my Collectify program on my laptop. Every so often I’ll transfer the information from my Collectify database to a thumb drive. I keep one in my desk at home and have another one at a remote location. Having my tool collection database on my laptop is also helpful when I’m at a tool auction, tool sale, or tool meeting and I want to check on something. It has helped me not duplicate tools I already have in my collection.

Once I had entered my collection into the Collectibles program, it became apparent that my homeowner’s insurance wasn’t going to be of much help in insuring my collection unless I wanted to attach a rider to my policy for every item in my collection! So, I began a search for an insurance company that would insure my collection. There are companies that insure antique cars or fine art, but those companies specialized in only those collectibles. Finally, I found Collectibles Insurance Services (collectinsure.com). This specialty insurance company was founded in 1966 by Horace Harrison, a stamp collector. He realized that conventional insurance companies couldn’t meet the needs of collectors, so he started an insurance company that could. The company grew and became known as Collectibles Insurance Company. In 2010, the company was purchased by Global Indemnity. Global Indemnity and its member companies have a “A” (excellent rating) by A. M. Best. So, the company has been around for over 50 years and has performed pretty well.

Disclaimer #2 – I have received nothing in return for this insurance company has worked well for me, but you should do your own research to find the insurance plan that will meet your needs.

Here are a couple of other options: 1. Chubb (www.chubb.com/us-en/individu-
Collectibles Insurance Services provides very comprehensive coverage, including coverage for accidental breakage, burglary, fire, flood, loss in the mail, natural disasters, theft, and multiple other causes of loss. The company provides coverage for any location in the U.S. and includes coverage for:

Travel— Transit coverage protects collectible property that is temporarily away from the scheduled location, subject to a policy sub-limit.

Exhibitions—If you’re at a scheduled exhibition, show or display coverage is provided for your collection up to the policy limit—including travel and shipping to and from the event.

Storage Facilities—For an additional surcharge, they offer optional insurance coverage for collectibles kept in a public storage facility (up to $100,000).

Unlike homeowner’s insurance, they do not require a schedule or appraisal for most items; however, you are responsible for maintaining your own inventory for insurance purposes (in the event of loss). The only exceptions are individual items or sets valued over $25,000, which would have to be scheduled. Deductibles start at $0 for collectible policies. They provide coverage for the market value of your collection for losses in excess of $50. They also offer the option of inflation coverage if your collection is growing rapidly or the value of your collection is going up rapidly (I don’t have this). They even offer coverage for dealers to cover their inventory. You can get a quote on-line and there are agents located throughout the country. I was able to design the coverage that I wanted by working with an agent over the phone. The rates seem reasonable considering the coverage I have. They seem to be able to provide coverage for almost any collectible (but they do not cover cars, jewelry, watches containing precious gems, gold bullion, plants or live animals).

So there you have it, a couple of tools to add to your collection. This time of social distancing and sheltering in place may be the perfect time for you to develop a plan to organize, catalog, and insure your collection(s). It will be a great help to you and will help your family find, deal with and disperse your collection when the time comes.

Hands-On Equals Minds-On

Noel Poirier, EAIA Board of Directors, Executive Director Age of Steam Roundhouse Museum, Sugarcreek, OH

I worked as a member of the Colonial Williamsburg Historic Carpentry program for over a decade, serving my six-year apprenticeship with some of the finest craftspeople and educators in the world. Our approach to educating our audiences, developed over years of trial and error with the guidance of knowledgeable mentors like Roy Underhill and Garland Wood, was to both engage our visitors’ minds and hands at the same time. This was never more important than when interacting with young people who, we hoped, would use that experience to develop further interest in the history and craft that we shared with them.

Reaching out and exciting future generations about the mission of EAIA requires us to use all the tools in our toolbox (see how I did that!) including engaging young people in the work itself. I learned a long time ago that “hands-on = minds-on” and that providing a young person with the opportunity to engage physically with a tool, a piece of wood, the earth, in a manner that engages all of their senses and intellect is the best way for us to plant the seed of knowledge and interest.

Many EAIA Members make this effort to engage younger audiences using these methods already, at their community events, fairs, local museums, historical societies and even after-school classes for schools that don’t offer shop classes as part of their curriculum. Taking these steps are an important means by which EAIA can reach out to both children, but also Millennials who value “experiences” more than anything else. Additionally, as we plan future regional and national meetings we should develop and formalize more opportunities for these kinds of encounters. We would encourage any EAIA Member to reach out to those already undertaking these efforts for ideas and inspiration for how they can do the same in their communities and thus ensure we are achieving our goals of preserving and promoting the important history of trades and technology.
Quarantine Projects

When the Annual Meeting in Staunton was postponed to 2021 because of the Corvid-19 virus, we found that much of the planned content for this issue of *Shavings* was no longer of use. We sent an email out to our members asking for you to share some projects you are working on. Perhaps you are organizing a tool collection, building something with those hand tools you have collected, or doing some research on a trade or craft. Well we had a great response to that email and following are some of those projects that were shared with us. If you would like to submit a project for the summer issue of *Shavings* please let us know before the end of June, just email our Executive Director, John H. Verrill at executivedirector@eaiainfo.org. A few lines of description and a photo or two is all we need.

A big thank you for all who submitted projects!

*Jim Durochia, Essex Junction, Vermont*

I am reworking a storage/display cabinet that I purchased at a local estate auction last October. From a loose label that was found in the base, the unit originally was purchased and used in MAGRAMS, a former women’s department store in Burlington, Vermont. It was made in the early 1900s by the Grand Rapids Show Case Company.

Have made a top, replaced some missing parts and painted the top, left side, and bottom section drawer fronts. I finally received on Friday afternoon the materials that I need to finish the replacement parts for the bottom section. I cut, shaped, and glued in the replacements for missing drawer supports and guide right away. On Saturday I removed and replaced one drawer bottom and its associated glue blocks, and did two more drawers today. As can be seen in the most recent photo, I have already started utilizing the upper section for storage of some of my tools. It has helped me organize similar tools in individual drawers.

I am glad that it is complete. Last week I started working on my stock of old hand saws to be cleaned. I’ve cleaned and sharpened four handsaws and two 12” Disston & Sons back saws. Only another forty or so saws to go! I used one, a Disston & Sons 28” No. 12 with 12 TPI to cut the ¼” plywood to width for the drawer bottoms.

*Patrick Kennedy, Owenton, Kentucky*

As for many folks, being sequestered at home has provided the time for those projects that have been put off for years. I’m working on a dry-laid stone wall adjacent to an outbuilding. I use old and new tools and rely on a few favorite old ones.

The small stone hammer is marked 1 on the bottom. It was extensively used by a right handed person as the cutting edge is worn on left side when held by handle. I have adapted to using it to chip with the right side. I would like to know more about it (see photo below).
I dug slightly below grade, only a few inches, to remove top soil, and then placed large, flat stones for the base. This is typical of a dry stone wall; it has no below grade foundation. The wall will settle and tighten together over time with the weather cycles.

I’ve done about five feet of this one. It is about 30” wide at the base and tapers towards the top. It should cant back a bit towards the hill but since this is such a low wall I opted to make the face vertical. I will fill in behind with dirt and grade it out. I plan to top with row of plate size vertical stones along the length, which is also typical of dry-laid walls in this area.

It will taper down to ground level as I move away from the building. I’ll then use some flagstones for the walk. I just found a stash of them I had put away some 20 years ago that will be perfect if I can still lift and move them!

Advice I got years ago gave me courage and confidence on building stone walls, “Even if you do a poor job it will last a hundred years!”

Laurent J. Torno, St. Louis, Missouri

Auxamis réunis (The Friends United)

Who were these friends? They were obviously French and their reunion was a significant event in their lives. But reuniting after what?

First, a backstory. In the 1960s I won a national architectural design competition whose prize was a stipend for one full year of foreign study and travel. In May 1968, Betty, our four children, and I set off for Europe to take delivery of our new Volkswagen Camper, which was to be our home for the year. December 1968 found us staying for two weeks in the home of my great uncle in Seignelay, Yonne, Lower Burgundy, France, where he had been the mayor. While there I attended a provincial antiques fair at a nearby town. Shortly after entering I came face to face with an articulated folk sculpture (see photo). It was standing atop a rather ordinary steamer trunk. I was intrigued and immediately paid a substantial sum to purchase it. This was quite a stretch for us, as we only had $11,500, for the entire year!

We acquired it because it embodied multiple aspects of French culture dating to the late 16th century and because it related to the central tenet of our collecting philosophy.

Since we began collecting circa 1965 (two years before joining EAIA), we have eschewed manufactured tools, focusing our collecting effort on those handmade tools which are iconic and aesthetically representative of the culture which produced them; which fall “between the hand and the spirit.” The most sublime title of any of my hundreds of books on tools is L’Outil, Dialogue de l’Homme avec laa Matiere (The Tool, Dialogue between Man & Material).

This folk sculpture commemorates the reunion of a group of craftsmen at the conclusion of the Tour de France as apprentices in the
building trades, during which they worked under a series of Master Craftsmen. This centuries'-old guild tradition dates to the 15th century and is an important element of French culture and the place of artisans, craftsmen, and their guilds within French society. To go from town to town to work, to learn, to know, to see, and to come to know one another. This folk sculpture depicts six men sawing planks on a trestle in the French manner, two blacksmiths working at an anvil, and a man hewing a large framing timber. Above them are two priests, one dancing with a woman, possibly a wife of one of the men on tour, thus introducing an anti-Catholic element into the scene. Behind them are two musicians blowing their horns, presumably in judgment. Though not itself a tool, the existence of this sculpture speaks to the place of skilled craftsmen in French society.

We have never regretted our decision to acquire this folk sculpture, whose spirit continues to inspire our collecting decisions. To learn more about Compagnons and Tour de France, one should Google information from one of the six museums, Le Musée du Compagnonnage where the objects made by the compagnons are exhibited.

William Francis Brown, Forest, Virginia

Here is a project that I have been working on. The design is mine but it is based on 18th-century English & colonial American Chippendale motifs. Here are some of the specifications:

- Serpentine drawers
- Figured walnut is the primary wood
- Drawer fronts are crotch walnut
- Ebony, cock-beaded drawers
- Block ogee feet with fretwork
- Hand-forged Londonderry English brasses
- Cantilevered corners with hand cut fretwork
- Rubbed shellac & wax finish

Dimensions are: 33 1/2” high, 42” top at widest, 22” deep

It has taken 6 months to build (I work full time as an anesthesiologist) project!

The last photo (next page) shows a spice box I made recently. It is based on a piece made in Nottingham Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, ca. 1750. It is made of curly cherry with inlays of holly, cedar, Osage orange and walnut. It is 22” tall and 11” deep.
In the summer I also teach woodworking classes at my Maine Coast workshop, www.mainecoastworkshop.com

Ralph W. Dowdell III, Trenton, New Jersey

I have been a volunteer at the Washington’s Crossing State Park, Titusville, New Jersey, for some 30-odd years, specifically at the 1740 Johnson Ferry House historic site.

Back in 1991, as part of a volunteer project there to rebuild a donated four-harness loom, I was making a right-awful mess in the house, using my then small collection of tools to rebuild and replace missing parts of the loom. They asked if I could find another place to do it. Well, the Johnson Ferry House, where I was volunteering, also had a 1780s stone barn. The barn had been converted in the 1930s to a visitors’ center and display area, complete with central heat and restrooms. However, for the 1976 Bicentennial celebration, the State of New Jersey had built a brand new modern visitors’ center a good distance away from the John Ferry House historic site and barn. Other than the restrooms, the barn had been abandoned and was vacant. Somehow, I convinced them to let me build a woodworking shop and display area on the ground floor in the vacant display area situated in the former livestock quarters. For the next ten plus years, I built the display area and added to the collection.

I am still a volunteer there. Unfortunately, since I am not retired, I only get there for weekend special events. But it is still a blast to speak with the visitors and talk about early technologies, tools, trades, politics, and the history of the site.

Perhaps about 6 or 7 years ago, one visitor, a retired gentleman, became very excited about discovering this wood shop and had a lot of questions. He asked if I had ever heard of Early American Industries Association. I replied that I had been a member for a number of years. At that moment, I also had about a dozen other visitors, and he left without us exchanging contact information, which I still regret. Unfortunately, due to continuing to work, I have only had two opportunities to attend EAIA annual meetings; once in Albany and once in Staunton, Virginia, both during periods of unemployment.

Attached are a couple of overall shots of the barn and the collection. This is likely just for your amusement. It is only casually orga-
nized, and not well curated. I am an amateur, at best. But I have used some of the tools to make repairs to the Johnson Ferry House and the Trenton (Quaker) Meeting House, as well as some reproductions for other sites. If you would like to see more of this, just let me know. I have a few more detailed shots.

Joe D. Rogers, Hereford, Texas

Permit me to introduce myself. I am Joe D. Rogers, one of the rare EAIA members from Texas. In response to your request for items to replace the Annual Meeting articles, I would like to offer the following.

I have been collecting, restoring, and demonstrating tools for about thirty years. I am a member of the Texas Archaeological Society and our annual Field School was held in Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas Panhandle. As part of our Public Outreach day, I brought my ‘half-a-ton’ of tools to the canyon. The demonstration was appreciated by young and old alike.

My primary focus is on 19th century woodworking tools. The irony is, of which I am often reminded, is “that only a fool would collect woodworking tools in a place where there is no wood.”

If you look closely, the bench I use is a modified version of one by longtime EAIA member and mentor Roy Underhill.

Jean Hosford, Dexter, Michigan

I’m weaving a strap for a shoulder bag on my early 20th century dobby loom built by the Insigner Company, Wayne Junction, Philadelphia. If anyone has knowledge of the company I’d sure love to hear from them. My email is: jeanhosford@gmail.com.

The strap has double layer plain weave on the selvages (5/8” wide) so I can enclose the bag front and bag and minimize seam thickness; the selvage will switch to a tubular structure for the shoulder strap portion. The center is twill woven on opposites.

Below: the makers tag on Jean Hosford’s dobby loom (see next column).
Dana B. Shoaf, EAIA President, Burkittsville, Maryland

Dana has sent photos of his work building a stone retaining wall at his property in Maryland. This is in addition to the split rail fence he built along his driveway.

He laboriously hand dug the footer for his stone wall. Some of the stones came from his property, others were purchased. It is a continuing project which he describes as “back-breaking but satisfying.”

He is used to finding pottery shards when digging the stone wall footer, but this projectile point was a surprise! As you can see from the photo it is quite large. Can anyone enlighten him on the age, material or use of this point?

Paul Van Pernis, Ashland, Wisconsin

We’ve been keeping busy. I had a large white pine tree that blew over in a storm about four years ago sawn into lumber. It was on 78 acres of land that we own near our home here. It has a small river running through it that goes into Lake Superior. The tree was 34 inches in diameter at the butt end and went up almost 30 feet before the first branch. A friend with a portable sawmill came and sawed the first 30 feet into wonderful, wide boards. Some of the boards are 24–26 inches across, 100 inches long, and are clear. I counted 115 rings on the stump of the tree. They’ve been drying since we cut them.

I’ve wanted to try my hand at making some Colonial-style benches using different joinery techniques and so I’ve completed five simple but different Colonial benches. It was fun, and I’ve given them all away.

I’m just finishing the second of two children’s chairs based on those found in the early colonies. They’re in the style of a settle. One is a chair and the other is a rocker (photo above). I used some hand-cut nails on these and utilized some hand-cut dovetails.

Also see the pictures of the two early colonial children’s chairs that I’ve just finished. I haven’t painted them yet, but I’m thinking of using milk paint and then either a wipe-on varnish or some other type of top coat. They’re each about 30 inches high. The rockers are made of red oak and held to the chair with a pinned mortise and tenon joint. I had fun hand cutting the dovetails for the piece on
the front just below the seat. These also were made with some of that white pine!

The bench with the cat and mouse (photo bottom right on previous page) on it was made for a friend who has two cats and they love colonial furniture. The others were just me having fun, and I’ve managed to give them all away. All of them were made with clear pine boards and I used different joinery techniques for each one.

Heidi Campbell-Shoaf, Burkittsville, Maryland

Photography

EAIA Member and DAR Museum Director Heidi Campbell-Shoaf has been researching 19th century photography methods. Here she presents an 1850 photograph called an ambrotype.

A substantial Greek Revival-style mill stands at the side of a canal in this late 1850s photograph. It is an ambrotype, a medium of photography invented in England in 1851 and patented in the US in 1854. The technology enables an image to be captured on a glass plate sensitized using a sticky substance called collodion, which is a combination of ether, alcohol, pyroxylin (gun cotton), and silver nitrate. Once the plate is exposed in the camera and developed, it is then backed with black material, either Japan varnish, paper, or fabric, to increase the contrast of the image. The same process is used to create tintypes.

On the gable end of the mill in this picture is painted “Gordon & Brothers” which helps identify where this mill was located and what it might have produced. Another clue appears on a stenciled card attached to the back of the photograph that reads “T. B. Allbee Photogarphist and Ambrotypeist now in Matamora.” Metamora is located in Franklin County, Indiana, which borders the state of Ohio. Brothers Orville, Milton, and Mahlon Gordon owned and ran a number of mills and a store in and around Metamora in the middle of the nineteenth century. According to an early twentieth-century history, they built a large flour mill in 1850, and also owned a woolen mill. Both were fed by the Whitewater Canal, that is pictured here in the foreground.

The 76-mile long canal was constructed between 1836 and 1847 by the White Water Valley Canal Company with funds from the state of Indiana. It was to connect the communities along the eastern part of the state with the Ohio River. The canal was never completed due to engineering challenges and Indiana’s 1839 bankruptcy, but portions of it were operational and facilitated the movement of grain and other goods in the area. Nevertheless, floods and the arrival of the railroad overshadowed the canal and it fell into disrepair.
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**Please take note!**

**The deadline for the Summer issue of Shavings is June 26!**

Please submit articles, events, classified ads and display ads to:

Dan Miller (dan@dragonflycanoe.com) or

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