

Newsletter ^{of} the Blacksmiths Association of Missouri



December-January

1987-1989

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The Blacksmiths' Association of Missouri is a chapter of The Artist-Blacksmiths' Association of North America. This organization is devoted to preservation, advancement, and communication between blacksmiths of Missouri and surrounding areas. EAM's newsletter's goal is to support these ideas. Letters to the editor, tech tips, tools for sale, or any ideas which further these ends will be considered for publication.

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BAM MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____:

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New Member: _____: Renewal: _____:

Dues are \$15.00 per year, which includes a subscription to the bimonthly BAM newsletter. Please make checks payable to Blacksmith Association of Missouri.

SEND CHECKS TO: Steve Austin
44 N.E. Munger Road
Claycomo, MO 64119

THANKS STEVE BAKER

A special thanks from BAM to member Steve Baker for his generous donation. I'll not cause Steve any more embarrassment by publishing the amount of this gift. If you see Steve, pat him on the butt and say thanks.

BAM's greatest hits, our annual two day workshop will be held at SIU-Edwardsville in Tom Gipe's sculpture studio on March 18-19. Details, maps, hotels in the area and registration forms will be in the next newsletter.

Watch the St. Louis Post Dispatch on Sunday January 8th. The P.D. magazine will feature our own Jerry Hoffmann with the story written by Pat Corrigan.

November Meeting

by Patricia Corrigan

Blacksmiths make music; I knew that. I've listened while Doug Hendrickson composed a ginko leaf just for me and I've heard Jerry Hoffmann beat out the rhythm of a snub end scroll.

What I didn't know was that blacksmiths make music together, and in perfect harmony. Then I attended my first BAM meeting, held November 19 at Jerry Hoffmann's. Mostly, I hovered around the edge of the crowd, certain that I wanted only to be a member of the audience.

The day started slowly, with a sort of low hum, as the men greeted old friends and welcomed new members, sipping coffee and munching doughnuts. Then Jerry Hoffmann tuned up for his solo, gathering the men around a work table to discuss the design of one of BAM's future hits -- the Food Preparation Center/Pot Rack/Butcher Block.

"If somebody doesn't like this, let's change it," Jerry began. Slowly, other voices joined in. The high notes, the low notes, the suggested alterations all were combined into a new melody.

Then the real music-making began. Some of the men moved to pick up instruments, the tools of the blacksmith's trade. They stoked up the fire and set free the pure, clear ring of the anvil. Some of the men stood nearby, adding notes of encouragement and support. And a few of the men continually moved from place to place, filling in where needed, always supplementing the song.

Before mid-day, a veritable symphony was in progress; a triumphant concert born of mutual

interest, commitment, skill, cooperation and fellowship -- all underscored by the ringing of the anvil, as true as any bell's, the sound of an ancient art living on.

Sweet music, indeed, to this listener's ear.

BUSINESS MEETING NOTES NOVEMBER 19, 1988

In Bernie Tappel's absence, vice president Dan Whitmore called the meeting to order.

Old Business.

1. We decided to draw for the pitching shoes and the big skillet at the January meeting, and draw the raffle to a close. John Sherwood took the remaining 30 chances to sell to his family. Good luck John! Hope you have lots of relatives.

2. Tom Clark brought up the subject again of paying the BAM's Greatest Hits workshop demonstrators. It was the opinion of the membership present that the demonstrators should be paid as fairly as possible within the confines of our net take. After the workshop the membership will decide how much to pay the demonstrators.

3. The last circle project was sold to a hotel in Ste. Genevieve. Our patron would like a brief bio on each smith who participated. Please bring your bio to the meeting at Stan Winkler's. If you can't attend, send it in now.

4. Dan Whitmore reminds us to do more utensils for the Butcher Block/Food Prep/Pot Rack project.

5. We have seven rings done for our ABANA Museum Fund project, eleven to go. Dan urged foot draggers to get on the stick. Please present a bio when you turn in your ring.

6. Jerry Hoffmann has taken the job of final design for the Food Prep project.

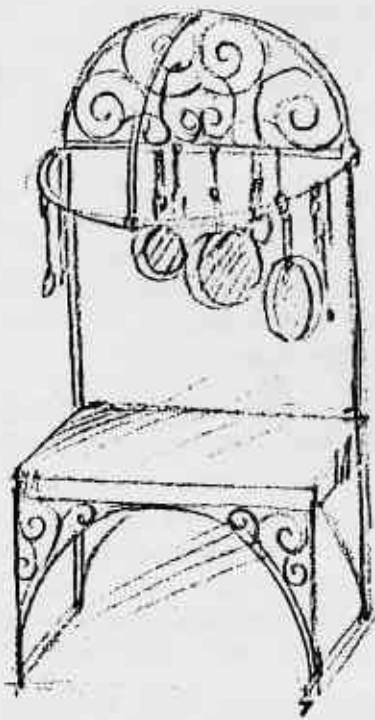
Members offered ideas and worked out practice joinery, scrolls, etc., at the November meeting. Jerry will now pull it together and assign us all parts to fabricate at home. When all components are finished we will assemble and sell the project.

7. Steve Austin reports \$1000 in the bank.

New Business.

1. Members present voted to spend \$40 per issue of the newsletter to hire Jim Waller's wife to paste it up. This \$40 will free Jerry Hoffmann to concentrate on illustrations and other design work.

2. Video taping BAM's Greatest Hits was discussed. Steve Baker and Vernon Fischer expressed interest in seeing it through.



Dear ABANA Members,

TO: ABANA Chapters - Presidents, Editors
FROM: Dorothy Stiegler, ABANA President
DATE: November 1988

We just came away from the most successful ABANA Board meeting to date. The meeting was held at Emmert and Jane Studebaker's Homestead in Tipp City, Ohio - November 11, 12, 13. We welcomed ABANA's new board members:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Bill Callaway (re-elected) | - 627 votes |
| Ward Brinegar | - 611 votes |
| Robert Mark Smith | - 462 votes |
| Hubert "Ham" Hammond | - 455 votes |
| Randy Calhoon | - 385 votes |

(Runner ups: Clayton Carr - 367, Jerry Grice - 315, Robert Fredell - 159)

We came in under budget for 1988. We filed the 1987 tax return on time with a receipt for every penny spent and earned. And . . . we are going to have a balanced budget in 1989 based solely on income from membership fees, earned interest, sales, and donations. We will not touch the Merrill Lynch account or the new account which will be set up for the net profit from the Sloss Conference. The Alabama Forge Council has not as yet released those funds to ABANA, but Conference Chairman Bill Manly was at the board meeting and gave us the good news that there will be approximately \$30,000 net profit after all expenses.

This is really great because we have never been able to run ABANA on a balanced budget before. The biennial conference was always a bail out situation until this year. I can assure you this has been a very difficult task -- but with our new accounting practices implemented this year and detailed checks & balances procedure, it should be a trend for the future. Balancing the budget in this way should give rise to getting future grants. This is something we haven't been able to do before because no one wants to lend money to an organization that can't take care of what it already has. We should be able to use the conference fund to support the biennial conference and hopefully never need to touch anything but interest on the Merrill Lynch Account. The balanced budget approved for 1989 and the bank account funds will be printed in the next issue of the Anvil's Ring for all of you to view.

Our Executive Secretary, Janelle Gilbert, will be sending you an update on member and chapter benefits. Please check your files to see if you have an ABANA Chapter Charter. If you don't have one, let Janelle know. It would appear that we have a current listing, but you never can tell.

Thank you very much for your many letters and phone calls of support. They are really appreciated by all of us on the board.

Dorothy Stiegler, ABANA President
DES/jrg

BOOK REVIEW BY DOUG HENDRICKSON

HEARTLAND BLACKSMITHS CONVERSATIONS AT THE FORGE

By Richard Reichelt, with photography by Richard Wilbers and Richard Reichelt.

Published in 1988, by the Southern Illinois Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville.

This book is composed of interviews and conversations with nine blacksmiths who live and work in Illinois and Missouri. Several of these blacksmiths have received international acclaim, Daryl Meier for his blades and research into pattern welding, and Brent Kington for the promotion of our craft and also personal artistic excellence.

The author is obviously no stranger to hot iron and his questions demonstrate an understanding of the process and history of blacksmithing. The nature of Mr. Reichelt's questions allow each smith to talk in depth about what is important to him or her as a blacksmith. It's great to read, in their own words, why, how, and when they got into blacksmithing, and the reason they stay. The ideas expressed in this book are many and diverse and range from art to how many points can be sharpened in a day.

Heartland Blacksmiths is not another how to book. It is a how blacksmiths think book.

Four of the nine blacksmiths featured in this publication are EAM members. Congratulations to Don Asbee, Bob Schantz, Tom Gipe, and Roberta (Bert) Elliot-Francis on their inclusion in this fine book.

WANTED: Ken Markley, Rt. 1, Sparta, IL 62286, is looking for a good fire pot.

NEWS

Southern Illinois University Press
P.O. Box 3607 Carbondale, Illinois 62901
(618)453-2281

September 23, 1988

The ancient craft of blacksmithing still flourishes in the heartland.

The vitality of Vulcan's art stands out on every page of Richard Reichelt's Heartland Blacksmiths: Conversations at the Forge (188 pages, \$29.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper). This book of interviews with and photographs of blacksmiths--eight men and one woman working within a 100-mile radius of St. Louis--will be published October 12, which coincides with the opening of the Heartland Blacksmiths Exhibit at the Southern Illinois University Museum.

The nine blacksmiths featured in Heartland Blacksmiths are all committed, experienced professionals, having worked in the craft from 7 to 49 years. Blacksmithing, however, refers only to hammering hot iron; these smiths are quite diverse in both approach and personality, some producing purely utilitarian work, others striving for fine art.

Reichelt, a working smith himself, framed his interviews around four questions. Who trained you? How did you start blacksmithing? What type of work do you do? And most important, why did you decide to become a blacksmith?

While the smiths portray themselves and their varying crafts in their own words, Reichelt and photographer Richard Wilbers supplement each portrayal with black-and-white photographs that convey the ambiance of the shop. They provide nearly 70 photographs: a portrait of each smith, shots of each smith in action, and pictures of the finished product.

ISBN 0-8093-1475-5 (cloth)

ISBN 0-8093-1476-2 (paper)

Note to Book Review Editors: If you have not received a copy of Heartland Blacksmiths by Richard Reichelt and would like to consider this book for review, please write or call Dan Seiters, Southern Illinois University Press, P.O. Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62902-3697 (618/453-2281). Clipping appreciated.

BLACKSMITHS ON THEIR CRAFT, THEIR ART

RUDOLPH WILLIAMS, blacksmith for 49 years: "I had a good forge, good anvil. It'd ring like a bell. I'd know it if all the other anvils were ringing. If Dad or someone was using that one, I could tell. I went to bed many a night hearing that thing a-ringin'. It had one of the prettiest tunes to it."

LESLIE OSTENDORF, blacksmith for 37 years: "In my younger days, my dad took work as a blacksmith. He used to say, 'Why in the hell don't you become a blacksmith?' And I'd say, 'Aw, I'd rather farm. [But after all these years as a blacksmith], it's just rooted into me.'"

DAROLD RINEDOLLAR, blacksmith for 25 years: "I won't do anything that doesn't please me. If somebody comes in and wants me to make something and I don't like the looks of it, I won't do it, because when it gets done I won't have a good feeling about it."

DARYL MEIER, blacksmith for 21 years: "I'm not a salesman, I'm a blacksmith. I think like a blacksmith, and when I lay the hammer down, I lose interest. When I see I've accomplished what I wanted as far as hammering is concerned, I'm done."

L. BRENT KINGTON, blacksmith for 17 years: "I've always worked on the fringe of the crafts. I've never been interested in making coffee pots or serving silver or rings that fit people's fingers. The work I made through the 60s dealt with toys and precious metals, in part because they're not utilitarian. The weather vanes provide the same sort of freedom. I wouldn't be satisfied just making weather vanes that point in one direction. . . . They may just play in the wind. They may simply be a viewing experience, rather than an accurate instrument."

DONALD ASBEE, blacksmith for 12 years: "It's great to know how to forge and how to mortise and tenon. Those are fine disciplines. They fit in nicely with various designs, and they're wonderful, but that isn't being a blacksmith, necessarily. You have to produce."

ROBERT SCHANTZ, blacksmith for 11 years: "There's a mystique or magic involved. In a forge weld, for example, I put two pieces of metal in the fire, and if I do the proper blessings and incantations, I can hammer them together. And with luck, you can't see where they were hammered together. . . . That's sort of magical. I'm still awed by it."

THOMAS GIPE, blacksmith for 11 years: "Perhaps the most important reason of all for staying in blacksmithing is that I get great pleasure out of beating the hell out of that metal. I think it's an emotional cathartic, a stress reliever that's better than drugs or alcohol or anything I can think of."

ROBERTA ANN ELLIOTT-FRANCIS, blacksmith for 7 years: "I do what I call functional art. I do much better when I can start with a function and design from there. . . . I like making something that someone likes to use. It gives them pleasure to hold it, to use it, so that it means something to them. It becomes a part of them because they're using it. That's mainly what I go for."



by Jerry Hoffmann

Tom Clark loves a challenge. During the November meeting, he produced two small pieces of steel and asked if anyone could determine which one was softer. It reminded me of a coke vs. pepsi taste test.

The two pieces of steel were 1018 cf & 1035 cf. The last two numbers of these designations indicate the carbon content (in this case, .018% & .035%). The first two numbers indicate what alloy it is and cf stands for cold formed. Both the alloy and the carbon content can effect the hardness of steel. In this case the 1035 was harder to work because of the carbon content.

In The old days, blacksmiths had an abundant amount of wrought iron to work with. Wrought iron has practically no carbon and is very malleable. As a result, work made with this material takes on pleasing characteristics, much like pressed clay.

Eventually, wrought iron was replaced by mild steel because of it's greater strength and consistancy. 1020 hr (hot

rolled) in merchant and special quality became the new raw material for blacksmiths. It's the next best thing to wrought iron, and until recently, came to us made in the good old U.S. of A.

The good old days are gone. mild steel bars are, for all practical purposes, unavailable in hot rolled. If you want it, you have to buy cold formed and pay twice as much. Even then, the supplier might not know whether he has 1018 or 1035. Hot rolled has been replaced by a36, a steel commonly used for structural products. In short, it's a merchant quality medium carbon steel.

Today steel is commonly imported from Korea or some other far away land of cheap and abundant labor. It is consistantly crooked, scaley, undersize, unsquare and, worst of all, hard, springy and unyielding I suspect the change to a36 was ordered by someone who doesn't have to deal with broken and worn out shears, forming tools and sore muscles.

The first question we ask is what can be done about this unfair ban of our precious mild steel. The truth is, we've found ourselves waiting outside the kitchen door, taking whatever scraps the steel industry chooses to throw our way, and we have neither the power or the money to make any effective change.

The only solution I have is to use 1018 cf when we can afford to and a36 when we have to. The only good thing I can say about a36 is that it makes good quick tools and springs around the shop. I have an a36 rivet set I've been using for four years and it's still as good as new.

I failed Tom's test. It wasn't because I don't know the difference, but because I'm not good at tests. I can't tell the difference between coke and pepsi either.

Tips & Techniques

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BLACKSMITHING WITH PETER ROSS

By Nick Vincent

I received a scholarship grant from the Blacksmiths' Guild of the Potomac to attend the John C. Campbell Folk School for a course in eighteenth century blacksmithing instructed by Peter Ross in September of 1987. My first challenge was to find Brasstown, NC. It is in the southwest corner of North Carolina, about two hours from Asheville, and about eleven hours from my home near Baltimore, MD.

The school is secluded in the mountains with NOTHING around. Brasstown is a general store and gas station with about six houses. The setting was beautiful in the fall with cool nights and nice days. Accomodations at the school were very nice dorm-type rooms in the main house above the living room, and auditorium and dining room below. I shared a room with four others, and we had our own bath. Meals were served family-style in the dining room. The food was really good, Southern cooking, and with our group of blacksmiths, there were never any leftovers.

There were twelve students in Peter's class, held in a shop that was a converted dairy barn. Other classes offered included: basket making, and pottery. The total enrollment the week I was there was about thirty students. The school had programs planned for every evening, but we never got to any of them. Class hours were from 9 AM to 5 PM, and most of us were back in the shop by 7 pm and worked until about midnight.

The first night, Peter helped us set up our course of study. It was decided that the first two days would be spent on utensils (spatulas, forks, etc.) and decoration (filed and punched), with a design problem requiring a utensil with three different geometrical designs in the handle, to be designed and made. Days three, four, and five would be spent on a project that required a welded and riveted joint. That night we also picked our forge locations, and got settled to start work on Monday morning.

The first morning, Peter demonstrated making a spatula from a single bar. The normal process would be to work with a scrap of bar to determine the size of stock needed for the project. Since Peter had made a few of these before, he explained that he would use a 9" piece of 1/4 x 3/4" bar. This material was later dubbed "magic bar". It was used in a lot of eighteenth century projects, from forks to door latches.

The first step in forging a spatula is to upset the end for the blade. This area will get spread wide and thin, and needs just a little more meat. The next step is to do the "set up" for the blade. This defines the transition areas of the spatula. This is done at a high heat. With about 1 1/2" of bar on the edge of the anvil, shoulders are formed for the lower section of the blade.

The following illustrations show the remaining steps in forming the spatula. Hammer from the back side to leave the finish side smoother for easier filing.

Hammer over far anvil edge, and leave about 3/4" for cheek area.

About 3/4" is left for the transition area between the blade/cheek area and the barrel of the handle. It would probably help to

mention that to this point, all forging has been done on the edge of the bar.

Now the blade of the spatula is spread with the peen of the hammer, taking three heats to finish the blade. Start at the center of the blade section to spread the sheet. Aim the spread with a straight down stroke.

By starting the spread at the center, the edges stay at full thickness, reducing the chances of burning. This is the second heat.

Third heat: Smooth the blade with full-faced blows. Decide on a top and bottom for the blade, and stretch for evenness. Set the neck on the edge of the anvil so that the top of the neck and blade are in the same plane, and the fullness of the barrel will be below the bottom of the blade.

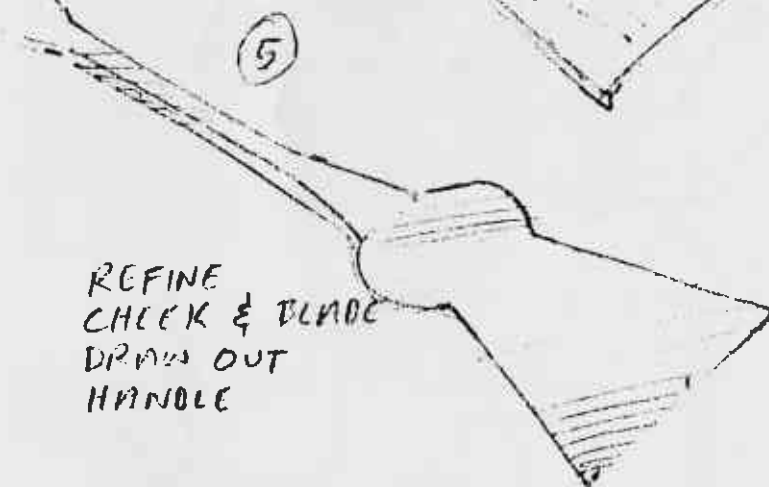
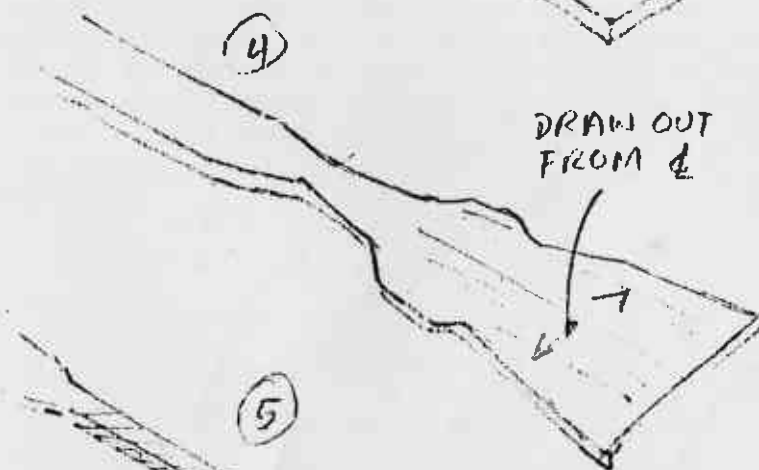
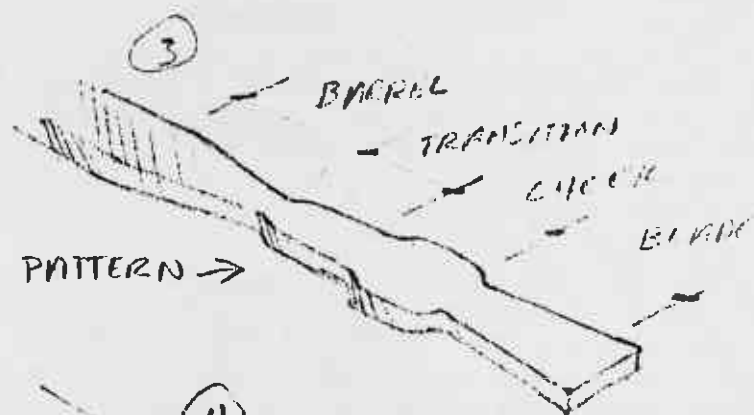
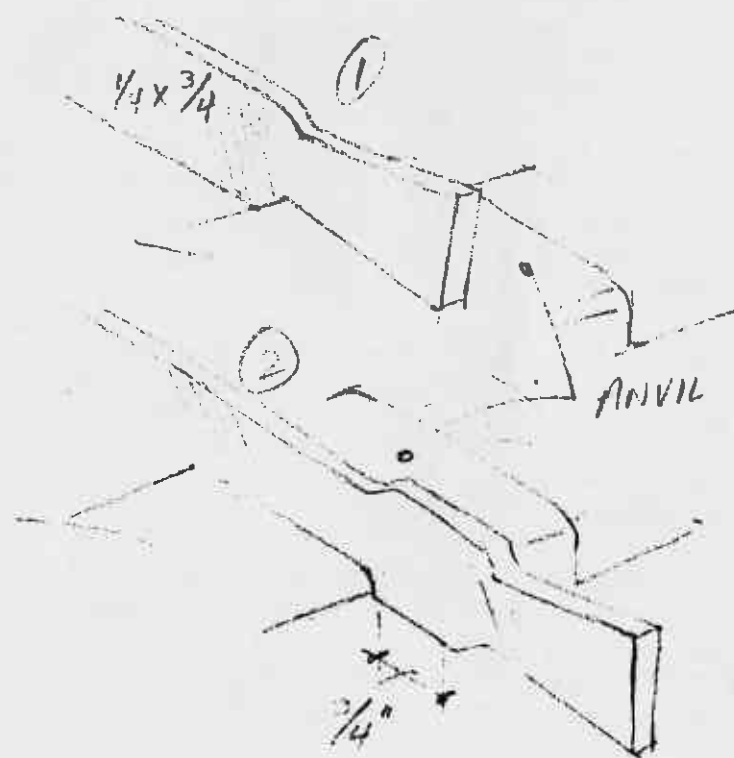
Spread the neck with the peen as with the blade, and smooth. Set the top of the barrel on the edge of the anvil. The forging of the barrel will be almost to final size. When forming the barrel, work hot to do away with a fold in the barrel, and avoid an I-beam effect. The barrel has to be hit hard to get the hammer blow through the bar.

To finish the handle section, reduce the width of the bar and stretch the length of the handle with a tipped hammer. This spreads the handle with a fuller effect. The width of the handle increases slightly while the thickness decreases.

The very end of the handle has a finely tapered, flat curl that forms a hook. Draw out the end to about 1 x 1/4" wide and cut off 1/2". Then draw out what is left to about 1 1/2" x 1/4" wide and paper thin.

The forging of the spatula should take about twenty minutes and the filing, about forty

minutes. In review, define the transitions and "set up" while thick, and then mostly flatten. Work should start at one end of the bar, and progress to the other end of the bar. When you get to the end of the bar the project is finished. Avoid going back and forth between sections. Forging the handle of the spatula is similar to forging the handles of forks, spoons, ladles, etc. If you are going to file the surface, remember to keep the finish side down on the face of the anvil, and hammer on the back side. This will eliminate hammer marks that have to be filed flush, and also eliminate a lot of aggravation.

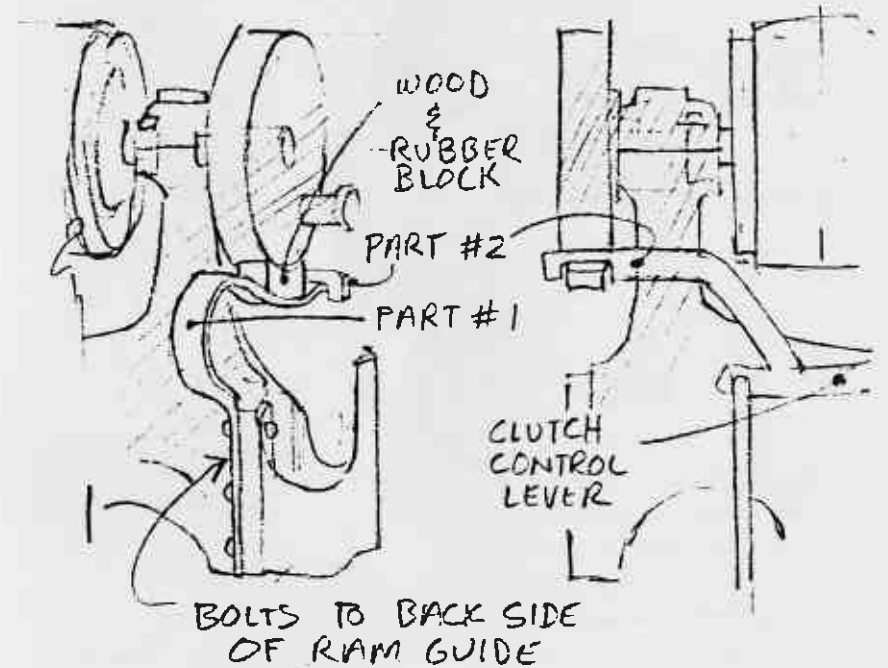
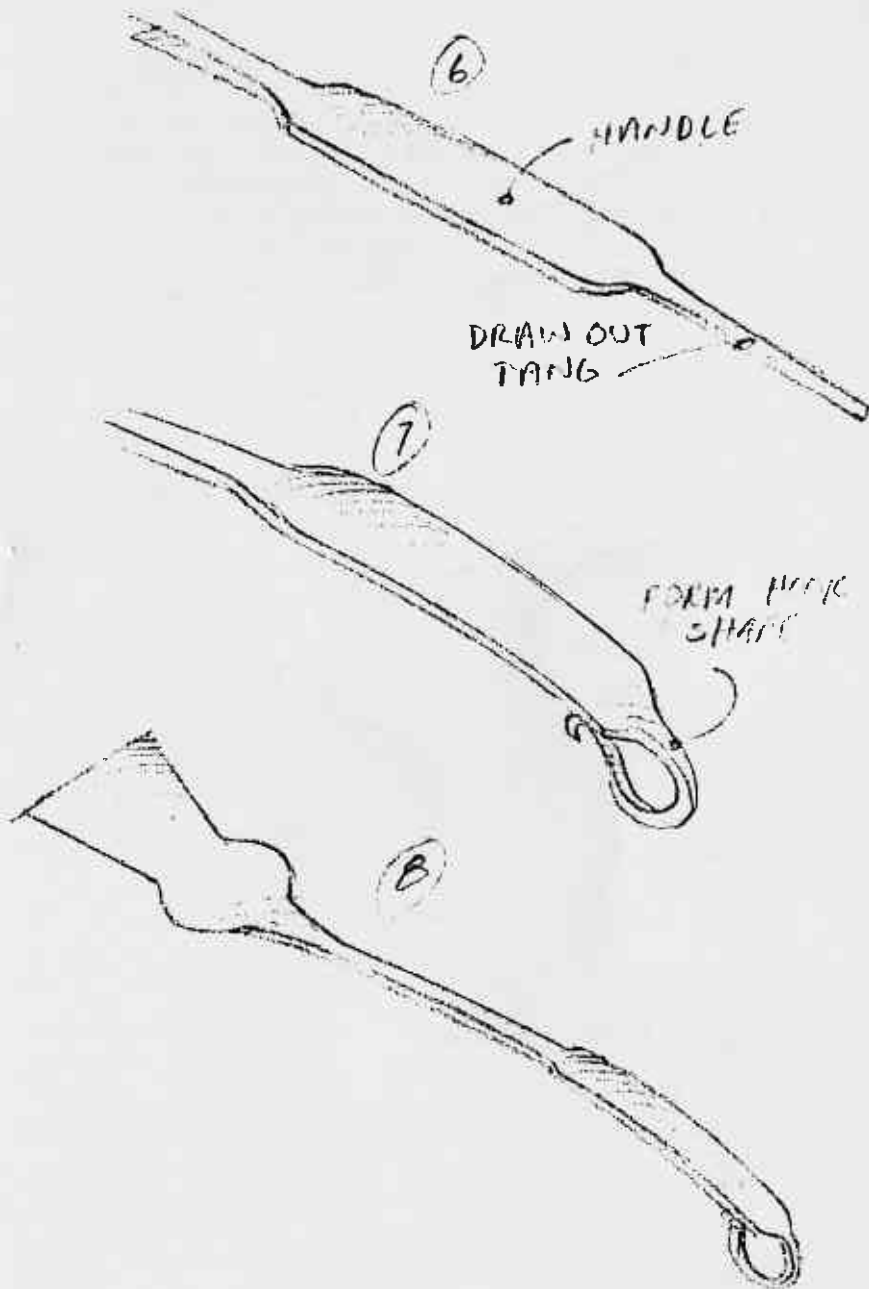


BRAKE FOR LITTLE GIANT HAMMERS

By Joe Elliot

Reprinted from Hot Iron News of the N.W. Blacksmiths Association.

The material I used was 1 1/2 x 1/8 and for the 25 pound hammer, about 2' long for Part I. Part II was made from 1 x 1/4 and about 16" long. The wood is attached from the bottom with 3/8 lags - making sure not to go all the way through. The rubber was attached to the wood with brass brads so as not to mark up the fly-wheel. The way I have mine adjusted is that the foot bar needs to be depressed at least half way before the brake begins to pull away from the fly-wheel. By having it set this way I have no "running on" problems and lots of control on my "softer" blows. Good luck and if you have a problem with whis, feel free to call me at (503) 548-2564.

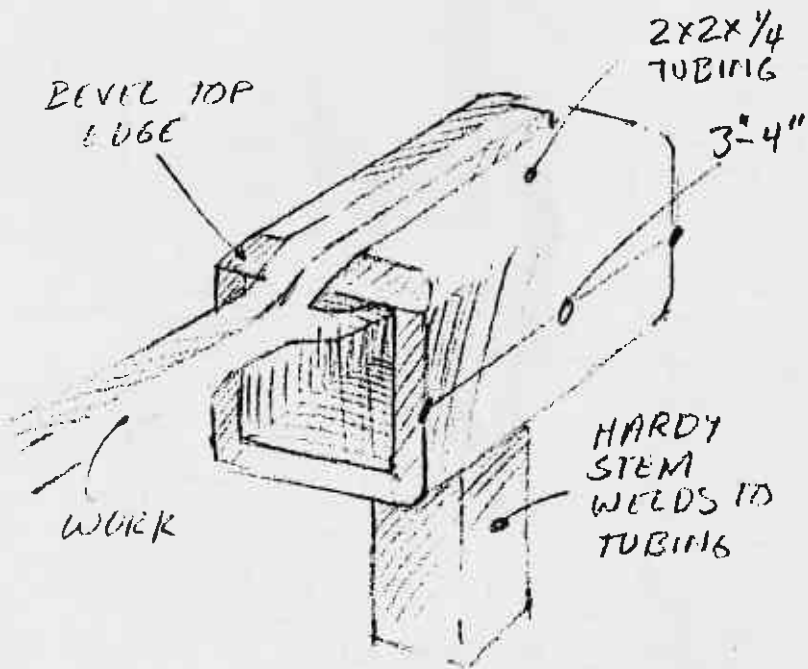


A HANDY JIG FOR TIGHT CORNERS OF SPLIT WORK
 By Stan Strickland from The Hammer's Arc.

Many of us have had trouble working inside the corners of split work, such as found on forks, etc. This jig makes it much easier to do things like taper the tines of a fork for one thing.

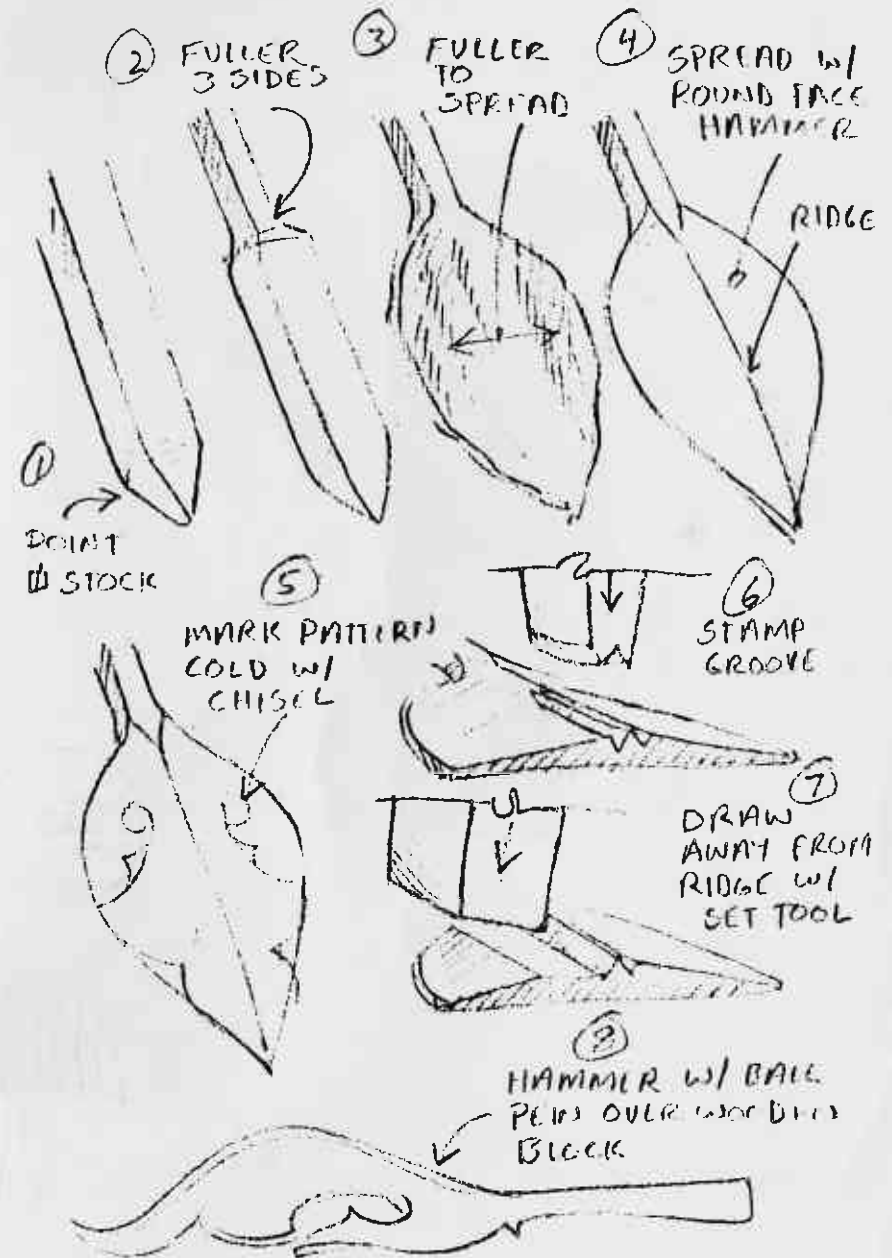
To make the jig, use a length of square tubing 3 - 4 in. long and at least 1/4 in. wall thickness. Next, sharpen one wall of the tubing, then weld a piece for the hardy hole onto the side opposite the sharpened one.

Mount the jig in the hardie hole or in the vise according to your preference.



Forging a Bold Leaf

The following is a description from The Metalsmith of a Tom Latane demonstration on how to forge a leaf from a railroad spike.



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