

FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

HARNESS-MAKER'S VISE EXHIBIT

The harness-maker's vise was an invaluable tool allowing the craftsman to precisely hold and steady the item on which he was working. It essentially gave the worker an extra set of hands. The harness-maker's vise was sometimes referred to as a saddle-maker's vise when being used for that purpose. The pedal at the base has an adjustable bar to allow the vise to be opened and closed without using one's hands.

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A craftsman would cut out the leather to an exact pattern. The craftsman would then step on the pedal which would cause the vise to open so he could insert and position the piece(s) of leather he was to work on. By releasing the pedal the vise would close tightly on the leather and hold it in the desired position. The craftsman would then stitch together the pieces of leather using a well waxed thread and attach any fittings. Stepping on the pedal again would open the vise and release the leather.

Gift of the Thulander Collection.