

THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Newsletter

Vol. 9, No. 3



BOG SHOES

March 2023

A HORSE'S LOT

Why on earth did our early ancestors decide to settle in what is now Francestown? While the area was part of New Boston it did not really have a settlement here. In fact there were no roads other than trails. What there was, were rivers, a source of cheap power with which to operate a mill. We had a lot of mills; everything from **A** - an axe maker to **W** - a whip manufacturer. A complete list of the some 32 mills and what they did can be found in the 12/2020 Newsletter.

Another attraction of the area was relatively good farmland. Yes, there were plenty of rocks and trees but those could be dealt with, and we had meadows. Those were the low areas along rivers that provided coarse heavy hay for the winter.



Now the meadows (a/k/a marshes) can be picturesque but the going can be a bit arduous as your feet sink in up to the ankle. Fortunately some help was at hand for our ancestors - most had a horse or two. Hence the title of this article - A Horse's Lot. But if you sink in up to your ankle how far do you think a 1,000+ pound horse will sink? Well, we know our ancestors could rise to most occasions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE # 3

IT PAYS TO BEG -

You may recall that in our January Newsletter on preparing wool for spinning, we spun a sad story of how the museum lacked a "carder" for our fiber arts exhibit. Not being above groveling we asked if our readers would check their barns and attics and see if anyone had a carding comb they would like to donate to the museum.

**CARDING COMB DONATED
BY JANE EVANS HAMILTON.**



We were not disappointed. Within a couple of weeks a box arrived in the mail from South Carolina. Charleston is the now home of a former Francestown resident, Jane Evans Hamilton. She found this carding comb in her carriage house and promptly sent it on to us.

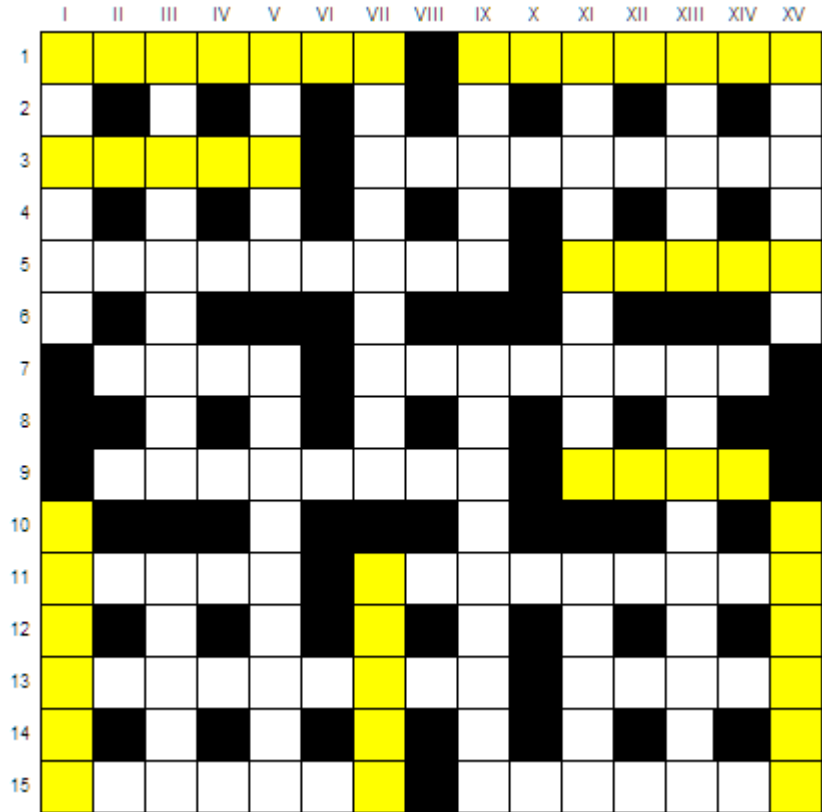
The next time you are at the Museum be sure to take a look at the ever improving fiber arts exhibit and see this and many of the other items we have been describing in the recent issues of the newsletter on spinning. Ω

(2)

MARCH THEME CROSSWORD

The **yellow** blocks contain the theme words and all come from the text of this newsletter.

This is a French Grid Crossword. There are no numbers in the cubes but rather along the margins. Therefore any one line or column can have multiple words in it. For example line 1 has 7 adjoining open spaces and also has another 7 adjoining open spaces. This line has two words and in looking at the clues you see there are 2 clues for 1 across. The same procedure would be used for the Down words. For example, Column II has no adjoining open spaces and so there are no words going down in Column II.



Across

- 1. ORNAMENTAL ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES
SHOE FOR WALKING ON WETLANDS
- 3. AN EQUINE
Property held by lease
- 5. Special cut of veal
Thread used to form a textile
- 7. Pleased or delighted
Inhabitant of Los Angeles
- 9. Lens at the eye end of a microscope
ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN
- 11. Cremona artisan
Express by exaggerated mime
- 13. Spitiual ruler of Tibet
Tire feature
- 15. Refashion
Saw for cutting metal

Down

- I. Austrian composer and conductor
PERSON WHO PREPARES WOOL FOR TEXTILES
- III. Expressing feelings beautifully
Book of maps
- V. Concept of what's perfect
Deception
- VII. Cover with thin layer of gold
USED TO SMOOTH WOOD
- IX. Food growing in long pods
Misleading environmental information
- XI. In a joyful manner
Kind of nerve
- XIII. Hydrogen energy explosive
Silliness
- XV. Live through
TYPE OF FIELD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE # 1

A HORSE'S LOT – con't....

If snowshoes can keep a person from sinking into soft snow, how about something similar for your horse? Enter the “equine bog shoe.”



These came in all shapes AND sizes WITH various devices to attach them to the horse's hoof. Perhaps the simplest one is that above which was typical of the homemade bog shoe. It is simply a hole, the size of a horse's hoof, cut into a board. A steel strap was fastened across the bottom of the hole to keep the hoof from going all the way through. Then a simple leather binding was fastened to the bog shoe and around the horse's hoof.



In another design an iron toe strap was fastened to a board and an adjustable metal heel strap was affixed to the rear of the board. With the horse's hoof against the toe strap, the heel iron could be forced against the rear of the hoof and tightened.



Yet another way to fasten the bog shoe to the horse's hoof was to cut a slot in the front of the board and two holes in the rear. These were positioned to receive flanges on the horse's metal shoe. An iron bolt on each side also attached to a flange on the horse's steel shoe.

Regardless of design, the bog shoe enabled the horse to walk, if not on water, then at least on snow, soft ground, mud, peat, etc. While the horse could not walk on water, our coastal ancestors used them so the horse could walk on wet sand while the fisherman emptied his weirs.



Finally, many of our ancestors were a superstitious lot and when rumors arose about seeing the footprint of a Yeti in the snow, it was quickly debunked as having only been made by a horse with an equine snow shoe. Ω

THE FEBRUARY WHAT'Z IT REVEALED -

In the February Newsletter you were introduced to an unusual looking tool. While many folks would immediately say it is a plane for smoothing wood, your challenge was to provide the proper name for the tool, tell us why it was adopted/adapted by first coopers and then wheelwrights – i.e., what did they use it for. Bonus points if you could identify the maker.



THE TWO HANDLE BENCH PLANE

The correct name for this tool is the Two Handle Bench Plane. It was made by the W. Butcher Tool Company in England. William Butcher was born in the late 1700s and was operating the W. Butcher Tool Company by 1813. This company specialized in cutting edge tools (saws, files, chisels, jointer tools, etc.) and also had interests in the United States. This tool is designed to give the craftsman better control when smoothing long lumber. The above plane is in the Heritage Museum exhibit.

A bit of history:

Coopers were among the first craftsmen to see the utility of a plane such as this. Coopers had started out making wooden casks and barrels and so usually had to deal with lumber only 4'-6' in length. The coopers needed a special plane for shaving/smoothing the edges of the staves they used in the casks and barrels. To do this task they came up with a specialty tool known as the cooper's long plane.

That plane was similar to a jointer and is

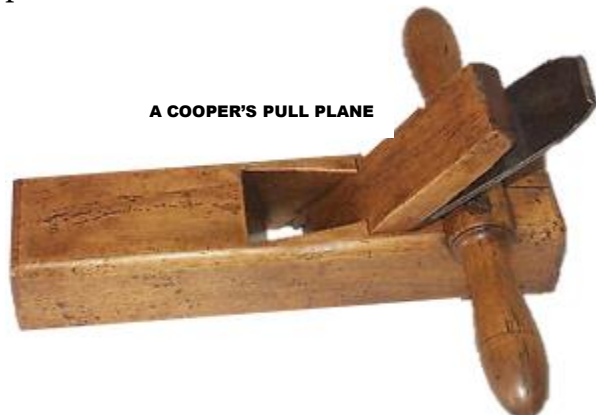
some 5' or more in length and designed so the cooper would push the board over the plane rather than the plane over the board as is usually done. This allowed the cooper to smooth the edge of the stave in one long continuous pass.



A COOPER'S LONG PLANE



As commerce and industry grew the need for wooden tanks became apparent. Once again the cooper was called on, this time to make the wooden tanks. Now these tanks could have staves up to 20' long and the traditional cooper's long plane was just not up to the task. A better way to plane these long staves was needed. To do this they created the short jointer plane which became known as the pull plane.



A COOPER'S PULL PLANE

CONTINUED ON PAGE # 5

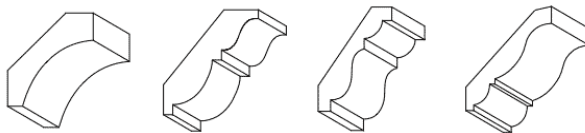
CONTINUED FROM PAGE # 4

It required great strength and steadiness of pressure to smoothly shave the length of a 20' board. The solution was to add a second handle to make this even more effective. This allowed one man to bear down on the body of the plane ensuring a smooth even pressure while the second man pulled the plane toward himself. Thus the two men could walk along the length of the board making a smooth and even cut.



THE TWO HANDLE BENCH PLANE

The wheelwrights had a similar problem when the ornate moldings between the ceiling and walls (crown molding) came to be a sign of a fine room and a skilled craftsman.



To make these deep hollow and rounded cuts in long lengths of wood they would use multiple planes, each cutting a different part of the pattern.



They soon realized that they could adapt the two handle bench plane of the coopers by modifying it into a crown molding plane, which could cut all the round and hollow surfaces in one pass of the plane. This resulted in a smooth, even pattern the entire length of the board. Ω

WHO IS KING OF THE JUNGLE?



The photo was taken in the Savannah where a lioness and her cub were crossing in the excessive heat. The cub was having great difficulty trying to walk. An elephant realized that the cub would die before reaching water and carried him in his trunk to the nearest water with the mother walking beside. We would refer to the subjects in the photo as wild animals. After watching the nightly news these days perhaps we humans could take a few lessons.

After all, we know our ancestors had to rely on one another to survive their harsh climate and way of life. Ω

So you drive across town to the gym to walk on a treadmill?

PUZZLE SOLUTION

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
1	M	O	L	D	I	N	G		B	O	G	S	H	O	E
2	A	Y	D	O	E	L	B	N							
3	H	O	R	S	E		L	E	A	S	E	H	O	L	D
4	L	I	A	D	N	E	M	U							
5	E	S	C	A	L	O	P	E	S		F	I	B	E	R
6	R	A				L				U				E	
7		G	L	A	D		A	N	G	E	L	E	N	O	
8			L	U	T		R			L	U				
9		E	Y	E	P	I	E	C	E		Y	E	T	I	
10	C			L				E				T		M	
11	A	M	A	T	I		P	A	N	T	O	M	I	M	E
12	R		T	C		L		W		P		N		A	
13	D	A	L	A	I	L	A	M	A		T	R	E	A	D
14	E		A		T		N			S		I		S	O
15	R	E	S	T	Y	L	E			H	A	C	K	S	A

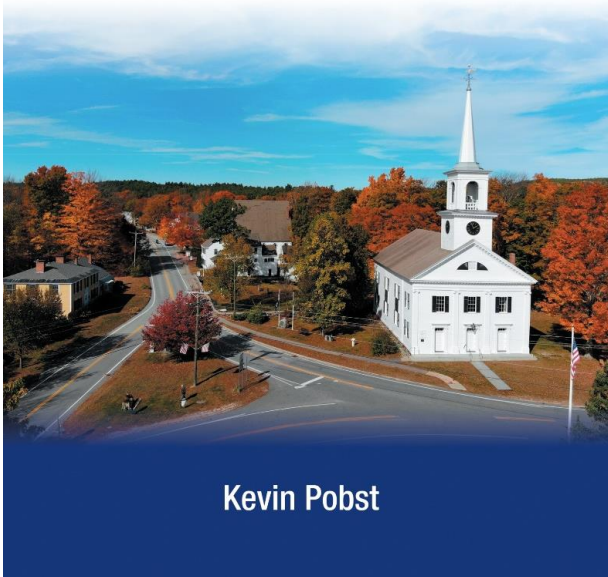
FRANCESTOWN – 50 YEARS OF GROWTH AND CHANGE

In conjunction with the 250th celebration of Francestown, Kevin Pobst took on the task of writing an update on the history of Francestown during the preceding 50 years. The last book doing so was written by John Schott in 1972. This new book by author Pobst picks up where the previous one left off. A paperback 1st edition was released late in 2022. Since then an updated 2nd edition is now at the printers and the book will be available in both soft cover and hard cover.

Francestown

FIFTY YEARS OF GROWTH AND CHANGE

1970–2020



Kevin Pobst

Eight chapters cover topics ranging from “Projects that define the town” to “Key Organizations” and “Joyful Living. In addition, eight appendices present a plethora of facts and figures on subjects ranging from Budgets to Voting.

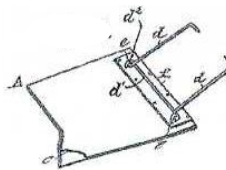
If you think you know Francestown or want to know more, you need this book. Available on Amazon or by contacting the author – Kevin Pobst ftown7020@gmail.com. Copies are also available in the Heritage Museum at \$16 for the soft cover. Ω

SUGARING SEASON HAS STARTED –

Today we see miles of blue tubing running between the maples in the woods. Our ancestors had no such luxury. In those days they tapped the tree and hung a bucket on it.

Then as now they collected the sap and boiled it down to get the maple syrup we all love. This process is essentially that of removing the water from the sap and cooking that sweet concentrate down into maple syrup.

So you’ve hung your bucket on the tree but before you can collect the sap it rains. Now your sap has a lot of water in it and that too has to be boiled off. A time consuming process, especially when you have to chop the wood for the fire to boil it on. Nobody wants to have to do that. So in 1891, up steps Titus Stowe from VT. With his latest invention – the sap bucket lid.



CONTINUED IN THE APRIL NEWSLETTER

FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Distributed monthly via BCC e-mail.

Subscription – there is no subscription cost. The Newsletter is distributed by the Museum via BCC e-mail at no charge.

For any of the following contact Bill McAuley at: wfm03043@comcast.net

Distribution – if you would like to be added to the distribution list and receive a copy monthly, or:

Letter to the Editor – If you would like to write a letter to the editor – they are always welcome and may appear in later issues (with permission of the writer), or:

Receive a Past Issue - they will be sent upon request. An index of past issues is also available.