IVORY NOTEBOOKS, A Lady’s Tool

By Cliff Fales

Collection of Georgiana Fales

The subject of the presentation at the September Annual Meeting was ladies’ notebooks with ivory pages. Ladies' notebooks are certainly not a tool usually discussed at a tool club meeting, but nevertheless they were sometimes a functioning tool and sometimes a fashion item.

The defining factor for this collection is the fact that the writing surface of the pages in most all of these notebooks is elephant ivory. The ivory surface could be written upon using a lead pencil and erased to use again. We all know that ivory was used in a wide variety of tools, and even in one observed instance—a boxwood rule with an inset ivory plate solely for the purpose of writing notes where the user could write on the surface and subsequently erase his notes.

While the pages in these notebooks were nearly always ivory, a variety of other materials was used for the covers and for decoration. In addition to ivory as a material for the covers, the most commonly seen are mother of pearl, sterling & nickel silver. Less commonly seen are materials such as tortoise shell, hard rubber, celluloid, Bakelite, brass, Pinchbeck (a copper/zinc gold substitute) and iron.

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President’s Message

Thank you to everyone who helped with the annual meeting. Thank you to everyone who showed up to the annual meeting, Thank you to everyone who helped me and the club over the last couple of years and Thank you to every member of the Rocky Mountain Tool Collectors for making this club what it is today; A special thank you to Leo Stambaugh, for stepping up in the club’s hour of need and agreeing to become President.

I have had a great time as the club’s president and have been lucky to be surrounded by a great group of people. I think the club is moving in a good direction, but I still feel we need to all step up and help where we can.

For as long as I can remember we have had an auction at every meeting. The auction is a combination of an education and a comic review. As long as I can remember the person who has brought us this entertainment and the estate finds that make these auctions the highlight of the day, is Steve Scruggs. Steve, as many of you know, is having back problems, and has asked for help with picking up, cataloging, organizing and delivering these tools to our meetings. If you know Steve, you know he is serious if he asks for help and remember he is always willing to help you and the club. Steve will still be the auctioneer, he just can’t do the leg and computer work anymore. I can help, but I can’t do it all, if no one steps up we will forced to stop cataloging auctions and maybe stop auctions all together. Contact me or Steve Scruggs if you can help.

THANK YOU, Steve Scruggs, for the work you have done over the years and all the work you will do in the upcoming years.

Next meeting is January 13th. At the Red Rocks C.C. wood shop, great place for a meeting and good way to start the year off, I hope to see you all there.

THANK YOU,
Steve Gosselin

Editor’s Ramblings

I’d like to start my column by saying "congratulations" to our new board members: Leo Stambaugh - president & Ken Burris - vice president. I’d also like to congratulate the following members for being re-elected to the board: Chris Gomez - treasurer, Dennis Scheel - secretary and Jason Fink as returning director.

Best of luck! Thanks go out to our former president, Steve Gosselin, for serving and to Dennis McCaigue for serving as vice president - great job! And you only got a little grayer, only developed a few bags under your eyes but didn’t lose too much hair...

For all of you who missed (or were unable to attend) the Annual Meet in September I’m so, so sorry... It was a great time, one of the best! Lots of old friends (and new friends were made) showed up, the auction was out of this world and the banquet was delicious; More about the meeting elsewhere in this issue.

As many of you are aware I suffered a life threatening medical emergency - a blood clot in my right leg that moved up into my lungs - thankfully it was caught in time and after 3 days in the hospital and excellent care from family & friends I'm on the mend and expect to be fully recovered in the near future. I was quite humbled (and appreciative!) of all the warm wishes and phone calls from folks of RMTC - THANKS! It just reinforced what a great bunch you all are.

Just one last thing - I was told, at the last meeting, there was many, many rare and hard to find Union Tool Mfg planes (for those of you who don't know Union is my primary interest). If I had known this I would have slipped away from all those doctors & nurses and crawled to the meeting. Since Steve Gosselin informed me of this highly unusual happening I'm sure he bought them all for me and will give them to me as a 'get well' present...

Don
A variety of techniques was used for decorating the front and sometimes the rear covers. Frequently seen decorations are carved, engraved, or inlaid.

The notebooks in this collection are primarily of English origin and of the Victorian era. The earliest authenticated example includes a printed paper calendar for the year 1830. Later examples extend into the early 1900s.

### Three Main Categories

These notebooks fall into three main categories: purse notebooks, chatelaine notebooks (attached by a chain to an ornamented belt called a chatelaine) and the carnet de bal (dance card).

### Basic Purse Notebook

The most common basic purse style typically would have ivory front and rear covers, the size would be 2½ to 3½ in length, it would have 4 to 6 ivory pages, and would pivot on a rivet at one end to open in the style of a fan, with a clasp at the opposite end to latch in the closed position.
Chatelaine Notebook

The chatelaine style notebook hung by a chain from a chatelaine. The chatelaine was an elaborate, ornamented belt with multiple chains attached, from which 2 to 6 ladies’ household implements hung. These implements might include such “tools” as pencil, notebook, mirror, perfume, pincushion, needle holder, scissors, thimble, button hook, corkscrew, tape measure, or penknife. The term “chatelaine” was also a designation given to the lady of the manor house or lady of the castle. While the chatelaine in earlier times was a functioning tool belt, in later years it became more an item of ornamentation and ostentatious display.

Chatelaine Style Photos

Figure 5: Basic style, ivory covers with ornamentation of floral and leaf pierced design opened to display ivory pages and pierced design

Figure 6: Basic style, tortoise shell covers, no ornamentation

Figure 7: Chatelaine style, diamond shaped silver covers with engraved design

Figure 8: Chatelaine style, sterling silver covers with hallmark and cast design with a figure holding wine glass and staff
Another notebook style is the carnet de bal. This style is most commonly in a long slender, tapered shape, pivoting on a rivet at one end, and opening in the style of a fan. These were typically about 40 in length. They are also sometimes in a rectangular shape and frequently incorporate a chain and finger ring allowing to facilitate its holding by the lady to hold it while dancing. Gentlemen at the dance could reserve their dance with the lady by signing their name on one of the pages of the carnet de bal.
Ivory notebooks are not very well known in categories of collectibles, but like many other subjects there is a wealth of information regarding these notebooks on the internet.

For more information in reading format I would suggest: Chatelaines: Utility to Glorious Extravagance by Genevieve E. Cummins & Nerylla D. Taunton
2018 Annual Meeting

As usual, this year’s Annual Meeting was held over Labor Day weekend but at a new location - The Radisson South West in Denver. We were pleased to see so many folks show up from all over the Mid-West & Southwest. Many old friends we hadn’t seen in a while and some new friends (and now members!) were able to join us. This venue was one of the best - the meeting room was large enough for all the goings-on (easy access for unloading and loading tools), the rooms were spacious and reasonable and the dinner was absolutely delicious. A+ for this place!

Setting up – Too much to do! (and too much talking...)

Of course we had many, many fine displays. Our outgoing President, Mr. Steve Gosselin, won 1st place for his display of 'Sash Makers Planes', with your humble editor coming in second for a display titled 'Hand Tools as Folk Art. Our new President elect, Leo Stambaugh, won two awards - one for Best Single Tool, a 'Transit used in mining' and the second award for The People’s Choice, 'Mining Tools' - I get the feeling we can expect great things from President Stambaugh...

1st Place Winning Display by Steve Gosselin – Sash Makers Planes  People’s Choice award by Leo Stambaugh – Mining Tools
Sales tables were plentiful with many treasures to be found - I know I found a Union Plane that I didn't already have and once again spent more than I sold. I think that happened to a few more of us but, then again, we did have those new members who seemed to delight in buying the more common tools we had for sale. As if that weren't enough, the auction (on the second day) was one of the largest in recent memory!

The auction consisted of 226 lots from various estates plus all the member's lots. I'm not sure how long it went on but our extraordinary auctioneer, Mr. Steve Scruggs, kept the bidding lively (even after a bazillion collectible/rare screwdrivers/turnscrews were sold - I spent $150 on four of them!) and the auction fun. Highlights were: $600 for a 'Keen Kutter, #KKEC Freestanding Electric Clock', $310 for a tool box full of molding, fore, smooth planes plus chisels, gouges, saws & plumb bobs, $250 for a Patented 'Swan Screwdriver Set' in the original oak box w/bits and $210 for 'The Maine Screwdriver' by FURBISH & HAMLEN (a screwdriver w/reversing mechanism) of Augusta, Maine. Wowza!

Special Thanks go to Scott Roth for his lecture/demonstration of Marquetry and to Chris Gomez for his lecture on symbols/numerals found on rules and how they can help date them. We also owe the RMTC Board "big time" (especially Secretary Dennis Scheel) for arranging/planning such a wonderful time for all of us - it took countless hours... And thanks go to Cliff Fales for an entertaining/educational evening talk on 'Ivory Notebooks - Lady's Tool' and for sharing his wife, Georgia's, extensive collection with us.
August 2018 New Mexico Area Meeting

Ken and Toni Burris held the August RMTC tool meeting in Albuquerque, their second hosting this year! It was a fine summer afternoon, perfect for spending time in the shop pondering tools and tool related ephemera, not to mention a cold beverage or two. It was a small group today; seven members walked up to Ken’s open garage door and entered his efficient and orderly workshop.

As per our usual order of business, we spent the first lively hour (or so) with the for-sale tables, examining and tangentially discussing every available item.

With prodding, and only after through of examination of every table, folks heads inside for some delicious food, a small raffle (the raffle items are donated and help offset meeting costs for the hosts), and a discussion headed up by Ken himself.
The discussion started with a complete machinist chest the Ken had purchased, with original hang tags (for $23), original ‘inspected-by’ tags, lottery tickets, soda pop ‘deposit’ tickets, a few wheatie back pennies (allegedly to help keep stuff from rusting) and the obligatory can of Prince Albert tobacco.

One big premise of Kens talk concerned the tiny machinist tools that often end up orphaned in toolboxes, cardboard boxes, and general detritus found in the corners of garage and estate sales everywhere. When one researches some of these machinist bits and pieces, current prices may be a cause a bit of a stir. Ken managed to pull some of these bits out and printed up the corresponding new offering from Amazon.

The results were a little surprising, and I am sure everyone will see these small bits with in a new light. Finally, we should note that Ken just returned from the Senior Olympics, where he picked up Silver and Bronze medals in the Air Rifle competition. Great shooting Ken! Thanks again to Ken and Toni, both going above and beyond expectations hosting us a second time in 2018. Though we are a small group down here, it is always so good to see and talk with everyone at these meetings.
November 2018 Colorado-Wyoming area meeting

Ranch Event Center, Loveland

Hosts: Buz Engleman, Fred Freimuth, Tom Wiersema and Al Nelson

By Carl Planeman

Todays’ meeting at the Ranch was well attended, though Don Burd was conspicuously missing. Don was a little under the weather, but I’ve been told he is on the mend. The sales tables were full and everyone was busy shopping when a business meeting broke out.

buying, selling, swapping, lying

Lame Duck (goose) President Steve Gosselin called the meeting to order and introduced the newly elected President Leo Stambaugh.

Leo Stambaugh – our new President – showing a unique miner’s candlestick

We expect great things from Leo!
Leo’s new Vice President Ken Burris was not in attendance, as he lives in Albuquerque, but Secretary Dennis Scheel and Treasure Chris Gomez were both there. There was a ‘Whats it’ display, Steve Gosselin, displayed rare ratchet screwdrivers, from the Miclean estate and Dennis McCaigue displayed a set of chisels.

Handmade chisel display by Dennis MC

Display of Ratchet Screwdrivers by Steve Gosselin

Today’s program was, ‘Your favorite tool’ Steve Butti shared his antique watchman’s time clock, which later he placed in the member’s auction. Steve Scruggs brought a tool in the bottle project he has been working on for years. Dennis McCaigue showed the club a set of chisels that he made handles for. Michael Springer shared and educated us on Peaveys and Picaroons and the uses. Allen Jordan displayed his favorite hatchet and Leo Stambaugh showed us a rare (surprise) candle stick. Steve Scruggs has asked for help with auctions, he is no longer able to do all of the work, regarding the auctions, someone needs to step up.

The auction was a good one with several rare Union Planes going for prices way below average and a large lot of tool boxes and other rarities selling for above market prices.
**WANTED**
Union X5AG
Jack Plane w/ Grooved Bottom
Condition: Good or Better
Email: Don Burd
historicdonburd@hotmail.com

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**2019-2020 RMTC Officers**
President – Leo Stambaugh
303-519-0716
Vice President – Ken Burris
505-872-2373
Secretary – Dennis Scheel
303-690-7447
Treasurer – Chris Gomez
720-587-5930
Board of Directors
Jim Bewley - (719) 488-1291
Jason Fink - (505) 266-1908
Brian Ken - (970)-226-2738
Editors - Don and Kelsey Burd
Web Master - Jason Fink
Email Master - Fred Mares

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**Whatsit??**

Last issue's Whatsit went unidentified, your humble editor believes it to be a chain clamp!

The Whatsit for this issue is made of metal and can be adjusted from 9 ½" to 10 ½" via the center wheel. The Jaws widen from ½" to 1 ½"