

Newsletter of the Horological Tool Chapter #173 of the NAWCC

# Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up

In This Issue: The 2009 NAWCC National  
Convention and the Liquidation of the South Bend  
Watch Company Factory



Oswald Lewis selling Keystone Clock Tools  
at the 2009 NAWCC National Convention

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No. 2

**The Horological Tool Chapter of NAWCC**

The Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up is the newsletter of the Horological Tool Chapter #173 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors Inc., a non-profit educational organization. This chapter and its newsletter are intended to foster interaction among NAWCC members who share a common interest in the use and collection of horological tools of all sorts. If you have an item you have researched, a book of interest, or notes on a project you have made, please consider sharing your knowledge with others through the newsletter. Editorial help and writing assistance are available to help you organize an article. Submissions should be sent to the Editor.

The annual chapter dues of \$10 will ensure that members receive the newsletter and are included in the Membership Directory when it is published. Members are also entitled to one classified ad in each issue. If you are interested in joining this chapter, which will meet at various large regionals and also at the National Convention each year, please send your annual dues to the Chapter Secretary/Treasurer.

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**Editor's Message – Amish Email**

Do you still own a rotary phone, refuse to pay for cable television, or use a foot powered treadle lathe? I am guilty of all of the above and proud of it! In many respects we tool enthusiasts are Amish in that we never trust new fangled technology until it has been proven for at least 50 years..... sometimes longer.

Unfortunately, technology progresses at a much faster rate than we would like and so does the cost associated with publishing a newsletter. We published the last newsletter in full-color to help improve the picture quality. This certainly had the desired affect but was more costly than black and white printing.

One member has suggested that we could save money by issuing the newsletter via. Email. Email has several advantages in that you would receive the newsletter without folds or mutilation by the United States Postal Service and the resolution of the photographs is much better than a printed copy. Also, you could print out a copy if you like or save it in the paperless world of your computer system.

The disadvantages are that you would no longer get your daily exercise walking to and from the post box and you would need to buy an expensive computer with a high speed connection. (sounds suspiciously like the government's converter box program to me) In addition, you would also need a printer if you would like to print out a hard copy to read during your weekly bath.

To be serous, we have no plans to make anyone buy a computer, but we would like to survey the members to find out how many might be interested in an Email version. We may even send you a trial copy to see how it works. The money we save could be used to help fund future Chapter #173 activities. Please Email the Editorial Director with your comments.

Bruce Forman

## The 2009 NAWCC National Convention

The NAWCC National Convention can be a great place to meet other tool enthusiasts and to buy and trade tools. For those not fortunate enough to attend the National Convention this year we will give you the following highlights as they relate to tool activities.



Tool Enthusiasts at Work

The 2009 NAWCC National Convention took place at the DeVos Place Convention Center, June 10-13, 2009. This complex is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is connected to the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel by a skywalk. There was plenty of parking and many fine restaurants in the hotel for dining.

This year there was no formal meeting of Chapter #173 but many of our members were in attendance. A small exhibit was setup on the Mart table of Bruce Forman to show future issues of the newsletter and to help spark interest in Chapter #173. We gained several new members thanks to the efforts of our officers and their wives; some of our unpaid members promised to send in their dues for this year.

Lewis Oswald of the Mile High Clock Supplies/Keystone Tools had several Mart tables of new tools necessary for clock repair. They included a high quality mainspring winder, depthing tool, and a bushing machine. His firm is also selling a little gadget that can be used to make hand washers. It appears to be a well made leather punch but the jaws can be replaced so that the curvature of a clock hand washer can be changed. This means an end to stacking several washers to get the proper hand tension. The author was so taken by this tool that he promptly purchased one but like many other projects he has yet to remove it from its original box to see how it works.

There was a good selection of antique and used tools throughout the Mart. One vendor had a complete Chronos pinion cutting machine as well as a watchmaker's lathe for sale. A very old wheel cutting engine was seen as well as a brass lathe. The author turned his back on a large clock size depthing tool only to discover a more enthusiastic member from Chapter #173 had already purchased it by the time he returned.



Tool for Forming Clock Hand Washers

Several of the big used tool dealers were present with collets and lathe accessories. One dealer had a large inventory of Sherline three and four jaw chucks as well as other Sherline accessories that could be used with a watchmaker's lathe. Merritt's Antiques and Timesavers were also in attendance selling tools and supplies for clock repair.

The 2009 Craft Competition had several entries in the horological tool category. First place was won by Harvey Schmidt for his lathe milling attachment. Second place was awarded to a very interesting depthing tool that was equipped with a digital readout. This tool was made by Boris Vojudich. NAWCC Members showed their many talents in other craft categories by building wooden clock cases, painting dials, and producing original clock designs.



A Bushing Tool For Sale



Winners In The Craft Competition

In the exhibit-only area, there were artifacts from the McIntyre Watch Company and the Star Watch Case Factory. Star invented and held patents on a multiple head pantograph machine to decorate watch cases. One example of this tool was on exhibit but most were sold to the Swiss when the plant closed in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Next year the National Convention will be held in York, Pennsylvania, and this is only a few miles from the NAWCC Museum and Library. This should be a terrific show so make your reservations early as most major tool collectors and dealers will be there.

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### **A Scrap Dealer's Delight** **The Liquidation of the South Bend Watch Company**

Jesse E. Coleman (1897-1975) is well known for his technical articles that appeared in the American Horologist and Jeweler for over 20 years. Coleman was a serious researcher and once he started a project he never gave up regardless of the time or expense. He had a long standing interest in the history of the South Bend Watch Company and continued to collect historical data on this company until his death in 1975. In 1964, he was able to locate W. C. Shelton, the last General Superintendent of the South Bend Watch Company that had closed its doors during the great depression. Shelton was pleasantly surprised that Coleman was able to track him from South Bend, Indiana, to Riverview, Florida, where Shelton had retired.

From this meeting, Shelton wrote two letters that describe both the South Bend Watch Company and what happened to the watch factory machinery once the plant had closed. The following article is based on these two letters and what Shelton had to say about the South Bend Watch Company factory liquidation.

W. C. Shelton was first employed by the Elgin Watch Company and was one of the first employees hired when the South Bend Watch Company was formed. South Bend purchased the old Columbus Watch Company following their bankruptcy and Shelton worked on finishing the Columbus movements which he said were "really rotten to work on." Shelton was eventually promoted to the position of Service Department Manager and to General Superintendent by the time the factory closed in 1929.

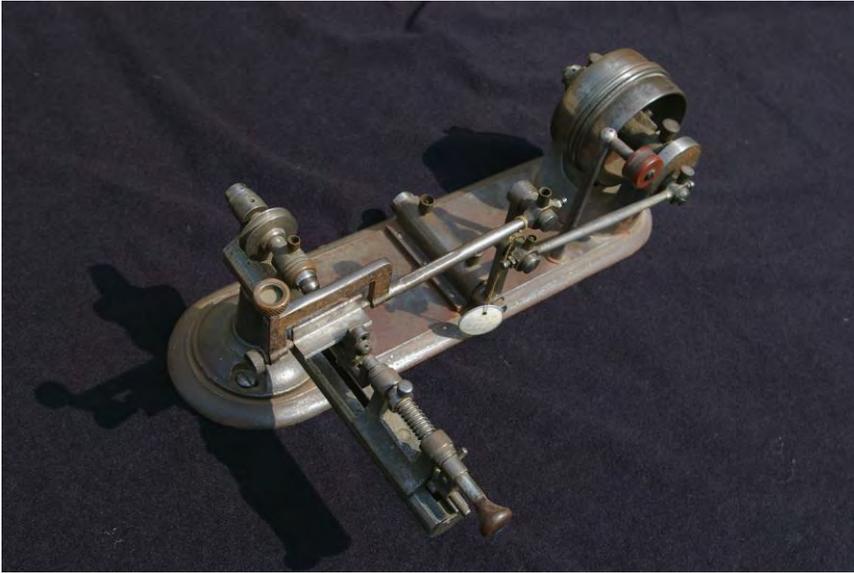


Figure 1. A wig-wag tool from the South Bend Watch Company

before he was required to vacate the building. He started his own business called "South Bend Watch Service" to provide factory service for South Bend Watches. This business lasted until 1951, at that time Shelton had been in business for 21 years and had almost 50 years of service associated with the South Bend Watch Company.

Shelton had nothing to do with the liquidation of the South Bend Watch Company machinery or building and lamented at how this task was handled. A group from Chicago dismantled all the machines and made piles of the lathe beds, heads, tailstocks, chucks, etc... There were many valuable machines while intact but after disassembly they became a pile of junk that sold for \$11,000 to salvage dealers in Chicago. The brick factory building was sold and later caught fire during dismantlement, in 1957.



Figure 2. A close-up view of the polishing lap.

The South Bend Watch Company was a victim of the great depression and many people had hoped that the factory would reopen, but it never did. The factory remained idle for about a year and one-half at which time the creditors hired Shelton to manufacture the needed materials and assemble all watches that could be salvaged from the remaining inventories. He hired some people and about 38,000 watches were eventually finished at a fair profit for his employer; Shelton was given a letter of commendation for a job well done.

After finishing the remaining movements for the creditors, Shelton purchased some of the factory equipment and spare parts

It is unknown what happened to all of the factory equipment Shelton saved from the old South Bend Watch Company but one wig-wag tool passed his grandson Hank Shelton and then to NAWCC member and South Bend watch enthusiast, Fed Fox, Figure 1. It later became the property of a tool collector in Chapter #173.

The wig-wag tool was commonly used in watch factories to polish watch and balance wheel pivots. The tool is comprised of a lathe that turns the pivots between centers and a cam that drives a reciprocating arm with a polishing lap across the pivot face, Figure 2. This procedure imparts a high degree of finish on the part in a short period of time.

For most tools with only a verbal provenance, there is normally no proof of the accuracy surrounding the chain of ownership. The letters written by W. C. Shelton seem to support the verbal history received with the tool but more definitive evidence is available.



In 1912, a tour was given of the South Bend Watch Company and this was documented in Machinery Magazine. This publication was recently reprinted by Lindsay Publications and shows a similar machine in operation at the South Bend Watch factory, Figure 3.

The author wonders if any other South Bend machinery survived the scrap heap?

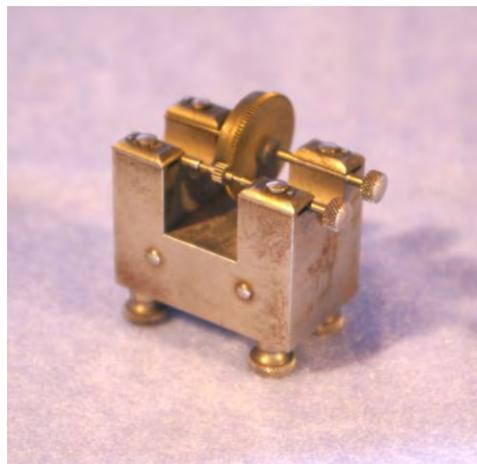
By Bruce Forman  
Copyright 2009

Figure 3. A period photograph of a wig-wag tool being used in the South Bend Factory.

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### Readers' Feedback

Several photographs of depthing tools were received from our members in response to the article "The Common Depthing Tool" that appeared in the Summer 2009 issue of the Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up.



A watch factory depthing tool used for the inspection of a barrel and pinion. Note the centers are fixed.



Just for comparison – a small watch size depthing tool held between the runners of a clock size depthing tool. (Courtesy of R.F.)



A digital depthing tool made by Boris Vojudich. This was a prize winner in the Horological Tool category of the 2009 NAWCC Craft Competition.

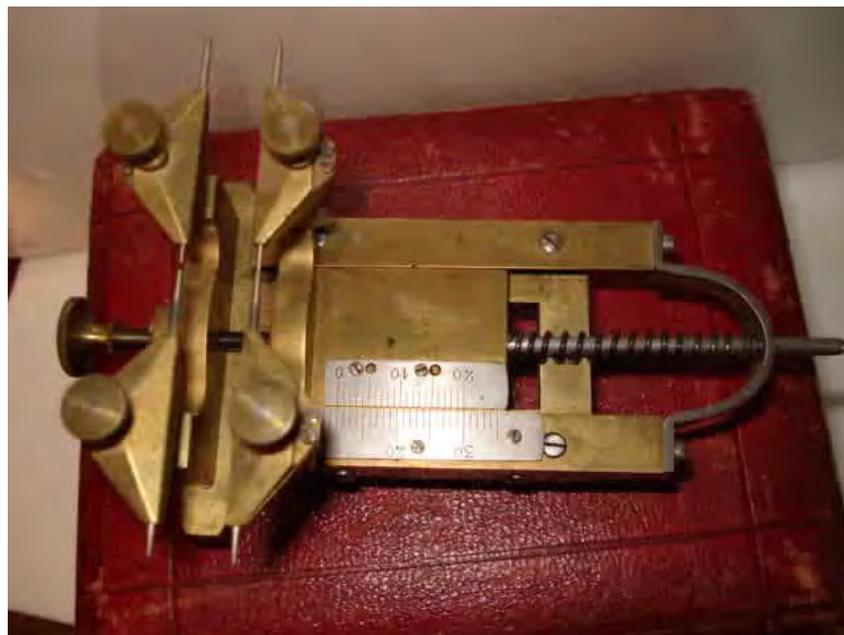


An vernier depthing tool?

Is no idea new or original?



(Courtesy of Mark Fulmer)





A depth tool for testing unmounted wheels and pinions.  
Made by Bruce Forman

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### **Upcoming Features**

Multiple Origins for Paulson Supreme Lathes  
A Visit with J. M. Wild – Horological Tool Maker

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### **Classified Advertising**

Each paid member is allowed one for sale or wanted classified ad in the Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up newsletter. Please try to limit your add to 25 words or less. For bigger and more interesting objects, you may include a photograph, but these will only be published if we have extra space available. Please send your ad copy to: Bruce Forman, Editorial Director, 234 Eagle Ridge Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46385, (219) 763-4748, email: [forman21@netzero.net](mailto:forman21@netzero.net)

#### **Wanted**

Derbyshire Elect model lathe attachments- pivot polisher, screw cutting attachment, roller file rest, and screw feed tailstock - will trade - for sale: tools from the Elgin watch factory, lathes, grinders, millers, etc...some made by American Watch Tool. J. Dill, 2117 22<sup>nd</sup> St. Road, Greeley, Co. 80634, Tel: 970-353-8561.

#### **For Sale**

10 mm Levin and Derbyshire Collets, numbers: 5,8,14,15,16,17,18,20,21,22,24,27,30,37,41,45,50,58,60,67.  
\$450 or will trade for tools of equal or greater value. Bruce Forman, 234 Eagle Ridge Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46385. Tel: 219-763-4748.

Horological Tool Chapter 173, NAWCC  
Financial Comments  
Year Ended 6/30/09

Fiscal year ended 6/30/09 was okay financially. The Chapter had a slight loss of \$40 on Revenues of a little over \$1 thousand. On an operational basis however the Chapter made significant progress in getting new members and having existing members re-up, so to speak. Last year we had 42 members however most of them were dues delinquent. Membership increased to 97 with only 6 delinquent as of year end. This was primarily based on two efforts, one to get new members, the other to improve the quality of our products, namely the newsletter and catalogs. Ron Bechler, our new Vice President brought in about 40 new members. Bruce Forman, our new Editor brought vitality by publishing an excellent catalog on the South Bend Watch Manufacturing Company and issued an outstanding newsletter near year end. These publications contained comments about the Chapter's new efforts and were responsible for the re-ups.

The costs reflect a newsletter and two catalogs. A summary of results of operations follows. Cash at year end was \$2,518, the Chapter's only asset.

Respectfully,  
Dave Kern, Treasurer

Tool Chapter 173, NAWCC  
Operating Statement  
June 30, 2009

Cash Balance - June 30, 2008	<u>\$2,558</u>
Revenues	
Dues	<u>\$1,055</u>
Total Revenues	<u>\$1,055</u>
Expenses	
Postage	\$185
Newsletter costs	<u>910</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$1,095</u>
Net Income	<u>-\$40</u>
Cash Balance - June 30, 2009	<u>\$2,518</u>