

THE MYSTERY OF HISTORY — APRIL 5, 2021

# WHAT'S IT?



Fig. 1 (left): Face view. (right): Side view of same artifact. PHOTO: © 2019 Norman J. Frisch

## ARTIFACT 21-02

### SPECIFICATIONS:

*Handle:* Wood. Length = 38.1 cm (15 in); Circumference (max.) = 8.89 cm (3 1/2 in).

*Body:* Iron. Length = 39.37 cm (15 1/2 in), tapered section is hollow with 0.64 cm (1/4 in) thick wall that tapers to a near knife sharp edge at the slot opening. Slot length = 21.91 cm (8 5/8 in), width at the large end = 1.59 cm (5/8 in), width at the narrow end = 1.27 cm (1/2 in). The large end of the taper = 25.08 cm (9 7/8 in) circumference, the small end = 12.07 cm (4 3/4 in) circumference.

Total weight: 2.015 kg (4.44 lb)

*continued...with answer on page 3.*

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**WHAT'S IT?**

Fig. 2 (above): Close up view. PHOTO: © 2019 Norman J. Frisch

**ARTIFACT 21-02****TEASER / CLUES:**

Just a reminder, our clue/teaser introduction to all artifacts may include double entendres', paradoxes, and other nonces throughout the hole document that might give a hint as to what it could be. How are y'all doing? Curious I hope! As one BCM member put it, this is a "handsome" artifact. Discovered in a mortise and tenon 1870s barn, this tool was critical in creating the structural integrity of the building. Two simple machines are utilized to perform its function. The business end uses an inclined plane wrapped around a cylinder, a screw, and the handle is a lever that applies rotational force through the center fulcrum. This tool was in every carpenter's tool box involved with raising barns—especially prior to 1870. Besides being handsome, its design is simple, elegant, and functional—an idealized complement of using two simple machines to do work. On an historical note, this device was not used to attach Captian Ahab's made-of-whale bone artificial left leg.

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### ANSWER:

Get ready for a mouthful: this tool is known as a Bit and Barn Boring Beveled Drill. It created the hole at the junction of a mortise and tenon where a wooden peg would be pounded into the joint. Besides welding together the two load-bearing posts and beams, the wooden peg was breathable as the barn expanded and

contracted with the changes in temperature throughout the season.

In terms of an alternative use, it appears to be a dandy put-a-hole-in-the-ground-device for plopping plants into the earth. Did you come up with other potential uses?

### GUESSES:

#### *Seymour Library In-person Responses*

**Madeline Duval**, “Jack hammer / tool to go through stone.”

**Chuck Facchini**, “Drilling bung holes in wine barrels.”

**Tony Vasquez**, “To release the gas from a cow’s stomach”

**Nathanael Verna**, “It was used to cut or drill a hole in the center of a wagon wheel.”

**Ron Wood**, “Drill to make tapered hole that receives a peg in timber-frame construction.”

**“Jessica”**, “Garden tool.”

**“Guess”**, “Clearly it is a dentist’s tool for providing root canals!”

**“Susan”**, “Clean teeth!”

#### *Brockport Community Museum Facebook Page Responses*

**Lisa Velez-Sack**, “It looks like a drill to maybe drill nail holes into the beams for the barn”

#### *Remembering Brockport, NY Facebook Page Responses*

**Les Tandler**, “Very seldom am I skunked but this one has gotten the better of me!”

**Darlene Baxter Almeter**, “Isn’t it a tow ball?”

**Jayne Alexandra Guzzetti**, “Oh, dear”

**Mark Beebe Ox**, “In my world it was called the shinwrecker!”

**Scott Lawson**, “Tie rod?”

**Vikki Dimatteo**, “Trailer hitch”

**Frederick Colaprete**, “shoe stretcher”

**Peggy McCormick Leverenz**, “Iron...”

**Tony Zappone**, “automotive front end component”

**Laurence Vaughan**, “Great guesses, but open the link to see the different views – is definitely a tool”

**Colleen Rosario**, “omg, not even sure what it is ! Ok I had to look again definitely a tow ball jajaja”

**BettyJane Marlowe**, “Trailer hitch shin wrecker”

#### *Remembering Clarkson, NY Facebook Page Responses*

None

**GUESSERS:** Like Laurence Vaughn (above) says “...open the link to see the different [and full] views...”. [—Ed.]

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**WHAT'S IT?****BACKGROUND**

“WHAT’S IT?” has been a feature of the BCM website since its inception in 2007. In 2017 Brockport Community Museum board member Archer “Buck” Noble, a Brockport Central School District teacher (now retired) developed “The Mystery of History” school project that encouraged fourth and fifth grade students to use observational and investigative techniques to help determine the type and use of different historic artifacts.

That project was introduced to the general public during a Brockport Community Museum outreach presence at the 2017 Brockport Sidewalk Sale. That success led to this collaboration between the Brockport Community Museum, Seymour Library and Brockport Central School District.

**GET INVOLVED**

- **Take your best guess** regarding the current artifact.
- **Do you have an artifact** you would like to know more about? Open your query to a larger audience.
- **Have a suggestion** about how we can improve this project?

**If so...**

Leave your contact information in “Ye old prediction box” near the exhibit display.

**CREDITS**

*Museum project committee*

Archer “Buck” Noble

Norman Frisch

*Seymour Library*

Jennifer Caccavale, Director