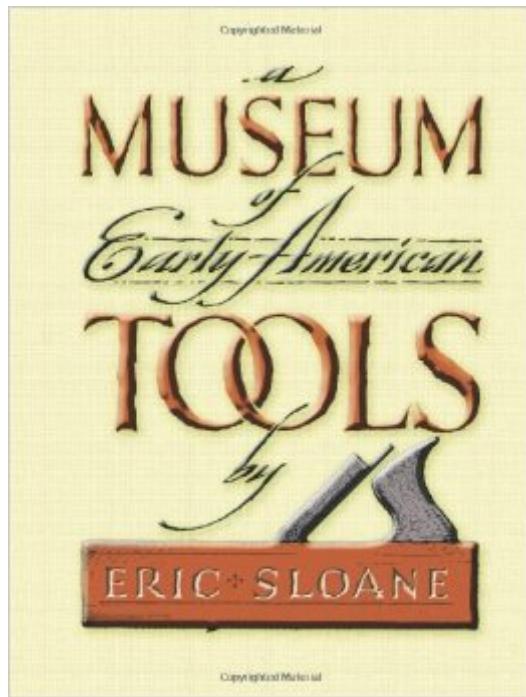


The book was found

A Museum Of Early American Tools



Synopsis

Venture back into the handmade world of apple butter paddles, hay forks, and other traditional implements with this fascinating and charmingly illustrated book. Its guided tour of folk tools and artifacts from the pre-industrial age examines farm and kitchen utensils as well as devices used by curriers, wheelwrights, coopers, blacksmiths, coachmakers, loggers, tanners, and other craftsmen. Written by a distinguished historian and collector of antiques, this absorbing survey offers informal but accurate depictions of "special tools for every job," from a holding dog and a hauling sledge to reaping hooks, splitting wedges, and felling axes. Scores of pen-and-ink sketches by the author portray simple tools and other items that are ingeniously devised and exquisitely constructed. A valuable textbook for historians, this volume is also a fascinating handbook for all those who love Americana.

Book Information

Hardcover: 128 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (May 19, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486463036

ISBN-13: 978-0486463032

Product Dimensions: 8.7 x 0.5 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (59 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #238,787 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Hand Tools #41 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Americana #132 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Antiques Care & Reference > Reference

Customer Reviews

This book is dedicated to the pioneer Americans who made their tools, a symbol of sincerity, integrity, and excellence. Mass production made their tools obsolete, along with early individualism, said the author. There was a special tool for every job (pp.vi-vii). In Early America a museum referred to a library of collected facts (p.xi). Shovels were made of wood to prevent harm to grain and apples 9p.xii). A house built of posts and beams used wooden pins which don't rust and loosen like nails. Sloane says that studying the tools used by pioneer Americans reveals their conscience and personality. Things were built to be honest and long-lasting, not to make the most money.

There are 48 short chapters and an Index. These drawings are very interesting. "The Romance of Tools" says a tool was an extension of a man's hand. Some gave pet names to a tool then (p.3), some do today. The Civil War period marked a new era in tool design because of mass-production (p.5). Axe handles became curved, not straight; their end had a "Fawn foot", "Scroll knob", or "Swell knob" (p.7). Early American tools had a traditional design with subtle differences and decorative touches that identify the region of origin (p.6). An ax was the most important tool for early Americans: clear the land of trees, cut fuel, build a house or furniture. Early axes were poll-less; the poll added weight for chopping. There were more than 50 patterns of Axe heads (p.12). The Broad Axe was used to hew round logs into square beams (p.14). Early American roofs were thatched, shingling hatchets were unknown. The claw hammer hasn't changed much since Roman times (p.22). Square-cut nails had greater holding power than round nails. Log-house notches were often made with only an ax (pp.24-25).

This book or publication has been around for quite a long time now. I have a copy in front of me as I write this review with a publication date of 1964. There have been quite a number of reprints since that date. There is a reason for this and that reason is Eric Sloane, the author and illustrator. Anyone familiar with Sloane is aware of his unique drawing style and down to earth descriptions of not only tools, but of early American building and craftsmanship. He, Eric Sloane is simply one of the best! In this 168 page book the author has introduced us to a very large number of tools which were used in the past in this country. Tools made of wood and tools made of iron/metal. From cutting, to drilling, to shaving to crushing to measuring to forging to animal care to domestic to various trades...they are all here. These tools actually tell the history of our country and these tools are much more important as a history lesson than for something some yuppie paid too much for and hangs on his or her wall...you know, that "Country Look." No, these tools built a nation. There is nothing wrong in collecting them as it is a great way to preserve our history, but they mean so much more if you know what they are, what they were used for and what impact they may have had on a family or craftsman. They kept families alive, housed, fed and relatively comfortable. They should be held in respect. The first thing the reader will note is just how ingenious people are. If they have or had a task to perform, they were able to figure out a way to do it more efficiently and more effectively. The second thing the reader will note is that by simply looking at some of these tools used by our forefathers, we do not have a clue as to what their use was.

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