
OUR HERITAGE

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Jakie Mentzer & His Craft

The miniature basket pictured above was skillfully crafted by a man living in the Schoeneck, Pa area. His baskets are recognizable by the colorful paint that he applied to the round oak material that he used in weaving his baskets. Jakie made handless baskets; baskets with two arched handles on the sides and baskets with a single arched handle across the top. Reuben Mentzer, Jakie's father, also made the same types of baskets as made by Jakie but they were not known to be painted. Painting was exclusively Jakie's design. The Mentzer families lived in an area at the edge of Schoeneck, PA known as Mentzertown, along "Pole Cat Hill". The person writing this article was fortunate enough to have known a Mrs. Henley who guided him and showed him the Mentzertown area.

The wrought iron tool that's pictured in the next column, known as a draw plate, would have been used to size the oak material used in forming the miniature basket. As can be seen, it has six different size holes through which oak material could be drawn for sizing. It's the type of tool that the family

of Mentzers would have used to produce their baskets and this particular tool is from the Schoeneck area. It's identified as having been the property of Ed Latshaw, also a maker of the round oak baskets.



The set of four Mentzer baskets pictured below was sold Sept. 17, 2022 at Horst Auction, as was the miniature basket. The miniature size Jakie Mentzer basket is a rarity and the only one known.



An Effort to Preserve Local Artifacts

Our October 2014 newsletter pictured a nicely crafted fork by H. R. Eby. The fork was purchased by Jake Buchen, an antiques dealer from Lancaster, at a household sale in the Mastersonville area. Jake sold the fork to another dealer from Delaware Water Gap and that dealer sold the fork to a dealer from New Holland. Many months after the first sale transaction, a collector from our area located the fork and purchased it.

More than forty years ago a dealer from the Denver, PA area spoke about a H. R. Eby fork that he sold to a collector and, because the fork went to a collector, he said that it might come up at auction sometime. Well that time was Sept. 17th, 2022. Like the fork mentioned above, this second H. R. Eby fork also came back to our area.

Both forks are pictured below.



Hiram R. Eby, Blacksmith, Mastersonville

Upon Hiram R. Eby's retirement, Abe Garman and his son, Vere, both blacksmiths by trade, took over Eby's shop. Vere told the person writing this brief article that he and his father also had charge of settling Hiram's estate. Vere continued the blacksmithing business into the late 1980s. The fork pictured below was crafted by Vere Garman for his wife.

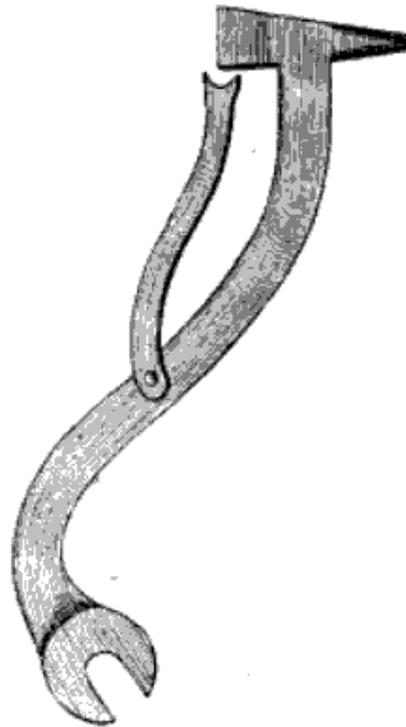


The following article was copied from the March, 1907 issue of **The American Blacksmith**.

Three Tools in One.

HIRAM R. EBY.

The accompanying engraving shows a very handy little tool which every practical smith will appreciate on sight. It is a combination of an S



A COMBINATION TOOL THAT SHOULD BE OF VALUE TO THE PRACTICAL SMITH.

wrench, a punch and a clip tongs. Any smith can forge it in a short time and will find his labors well repaid by a very convenient combination tool. The wrench end or part to receive the nut is bent as in an S wrench. This makes it especially convenient for ironing a gear or for turning nuts and bolts in tight corners. The punch end is hardened and serves very conveniently.

Footnote: If Hiram designed the above tool he must have made one or more of them. Perhaps we can locate one for our museum. The word will go out to EAIA and MWTC.