

CINCINNATI TOOL COMPANY

Ohio Tool Collectors newsletter

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My gateway into tool collecting was through woodworking. As I began to acquire tools to work with, it became apparent that the quality and price of old tools made them a clear choice over new tools from a hardware or home center. A necessary, if not highly collected, woodworking tool is the clamp. As every woodworker knows, "you can never have too many clamps." This led to the purchase of handscrews, pipe clamps, bar clamps, cee clamps and assorted other work holding devices. Among the bar clamps, a certain type became a clear favorite. These were usually marked CINT'I TOOL CO., showed a patent date, a model number and had the trademark of a capitol H within a circle. A little research led me to the Cincinnati Tool Company.

According to the Directory of American Toolmakers, the Cincinnati Tool Company started business in 1877 and continued producing tools until the 1960's. Early in the company's history, Frank Martin and P. S. Anderson were the main investors and directed the interests of the company. The Samuel C. Tatum Company also seemed to have a large influence in the products of the Cincinnati Tool Company although it is unknown if they were just a supplier or played a larger role in the direction of the company. Through out the 1880's and 1890's, Frank Martin continued to play an important role in the company's fortunes. He served as president until 1899 according to Cincinnati business directories. Starting in 1899, Edwin Hollister Hargrave was listed as president and J. B. Hargrave as vice-president. In 1911 or 1912, according to John McCutcheon E. H. Hargrave's great-grandson, E. H. Hargrave passed away and was succeeded by his son John Morris Hargrave. In 1924, the name of the company was changed to the Hargrave Tool Company. J. M. Hargrave is believed to have retired in the 1950's and the Hargrave Tool Company became a part of the Warren Tool Corporation of Hiram, OH in 1962.

The Cincinnati Tool Company made an eclectic assortment of tools during its history. Some of their products included a selection of spokeshaves, bit stock, clamps, pliers, punches, chisels, box scrapers, saw vises and machinists tools. Many of their tools had a unique appearance while others bear a strong resemblance to tools manufactured by Stanley and E. C. Stearns. As was sometimes the practice during this period, the president of the company's name was used as a trade or brand name on the products that the company

produced. Early spokeshaves from the Cincinnati Tool Company often have the name MARTIN cast into them while later spokeshaves are marked C. T. CO. or CINT'I TOOL CO. with a cutting iron marked Hargrave.

As was noted earlier, J. M. Hargrave took over the company early in the second decade of the 20th Century. He had just graduated from M.I.T. with a degree in Electrical Engineering when he was called home due to the death of his father, E.H. Hargrave, who was the President of Cincinnati Tool Company at the time. This must have been a daunting position to be in, the tool manufacturing industry was going through significant changes. Many of the hand tools that had formerly been the mainstay of many companies were becoming obsolete due to the Industrial Revolution and technological advances. Companies such as Harvey Peace, Richardson Brothers, Wheeler-Madden & Clemson, Langdon Mitre Box, Goodell-Pratt, Union, Siegley, Fray, Eagle Square, and Atha were bought out by Disston, Millers Falls or Stanley. Others, such as Ohio Tool, Sandusky Tool Company went out of business. J.M Hargrave guided the Cincinnati Tool Company through this period by changing the focus of their products and his own inventiveness. From the period of 1915 to 1935, he was awarded 11 patents and 1 design patent for different improvements to tools. Most of the patents were for clamps, but they also included tool handles and drills. During the 1920's, it is thought the company stopped manufacturing spokeshaves, and also during this period began to focus more on clamping devices and tools for metal working. The Cincinnati Tool Company and Hargrave Tool Company still exist along with Columbian Vise, Red Arrow and Devil as brand names used by the Warren Tool Corporation.

Information about the Cincinnati Tool Company is a bit sketchy with many gaps and a great deal of supposition. If you are aware of any catalogues or tools by this company, please contact me to help fill in some of those gaps. Or if you have any additional information, please set me straight.

REFERENCES:

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Hargrave Brand of Cincinnati Tool Co.,
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