# The Stanley Educational Department

by Preston Sweeney



Figure 1. Some documents, including the graduation program, from Mr. Hall's Technical Notebook from Westfield Technical High School, class of 1939.

he inspiration for this article started when I was gifted the school binder of Alvin C. Hall, who was a 1939 graduate of Westfield Technical High School in Westfield Massachusetts. Upon graduation, Hall worked for the Forster Machine Company and later Hall Brothers Woodworking Company. He soon would serve in World War II as first lieutenant in the U.S Army Air Corps. He was awarded the Certificate of Valor in recognition of the forty-one combat missions he flew as a pilot of a B-24. As I was looking through Hall's binder, I found Stanley Educational charts and noticed that the bottom of each chart listed "Stanley Rule & Level Company Department of Education." This sparked my interest to learn more.

# The Stanley Educational Department:

There has been a vast amount of information and research related to the Stanley Tool Company and it is my hope to add to information available. Stanley Black & Decker, as the company is now known, has been celebrating its 175th Anniversary. The company has seen some changes throughout the course of its history, however, it should be noted that Stanley continues to offer innovative products and services.

The Stanley Educational Department, a division of the Stanley Works Company, offered a tremendous amount of resources and supplies to teachers and schools. At a time when industrial arts, also commonly known as "shop class," was a core subject offered to most junior high and high school students, Stanley took the opportunity



Figure 2. Vintage Shop Class photo taken February 7th, 1913. Notice the Stanley hand planes on the bench.

All images from the author's collection unless otherwise noted.



Figure 3: A picture from 1932 Stanley News featuring Fred Gross who was manager of Industrial and School

to develop tools, and offer repair services and educational support materials that would assist instructors in the development and delivery of the curriculum.

This study is not intended to be an in-depth presentation, but an overview of what I have discovered through my research and from others along the way. It is also an invitation to other tool collectors and enthusiasts for additional information regarding the subject, and who are willing to share for further develop of this research topic.

I have not discovered a definitive date on the establishment of the Stanley Educational Department, however, according to documentation and other research, it is my opinion that the department started to take form around the 1920s. Even during the company's early years, Stanley invested a tremendous amount of money and effort in advertising to aggressively promote the sale and services of products they offered. The Stanley Rule & Level Company, as it was known before the merger in the

The Chronicle Volume 72 No. 4

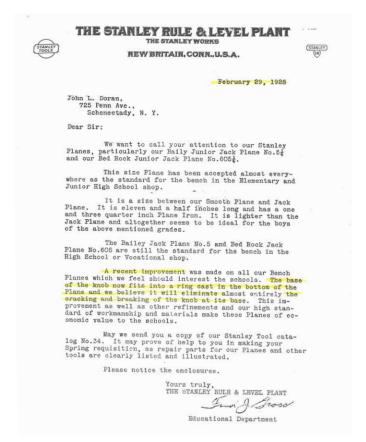


Figure 4:. A letter dated 1928 from Fred Gross, Manager of Industrial and Schools Sales, promoting the new Junior Jack Plane 5-1/4 that was intended for school shop use.

1920s with Stanley Works, advertised in catalogs, farm journals, newspapers, exposition fairs, and educational magazines.

#### **Tools for School**

As are most companies, Stanley was driven by profits and running a successful business. As I mentioned, Manual training and industrial arts were common subjects offered until relatively recently in most school systems. One of my challenges was to try to decipher which tools were created specifically for school shop use, given that any tools and products could have been used in these classes, but among the many Stanley tools created, I've determined that the No. 203 block plane, No. 17 square, Nos. 5-1/4 and Bedrock 605-1/4 jack planes, No. 118 block plane were developed specifically for school shop programs.

The first account I discovered was the development and manufacture of the No. 203 adjustable block plane, manufactured from 1912 until 1961. According to Stanley Catalog No. 110, published in 1911, the No. 203 was new to the product line and described as being designed specifically for manual training programs. This plane features the "hand-y grip," in which the sides of the plane body were shaped to include an indent for added grip sup-

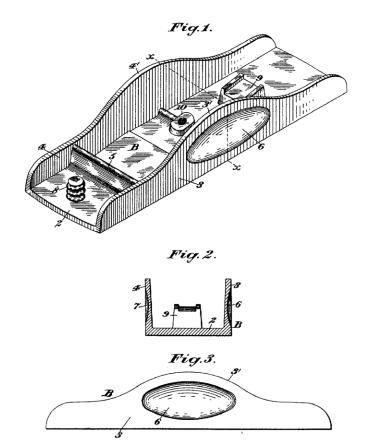


Figure 5: Drawing of J.A Traut's "hand-y" grip block plane body; New Britain, Connecticut, Patent No. 27,474, August 3, 1897. https://patents.google.com/patent/USD27474



Figure 6. The Stanley No. 203 block plane was developed for industrial arts classes.

port (Figure 5). The plane measures 5-1/2" in length and 1-3/8" in width. Earlier models have a rosewood front knob, which was then replaced with a stained piece of hardwood. (Figure 6)

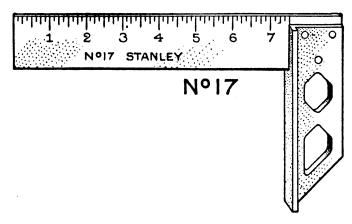


Figure 7. "No. 17 is designed especially for Manual Training Schools. It is light, weighing only 8 ozs., and the form of the handle enables the student to hang it up out of the way when not in use."

Exception Stanley Tools Catalogue No. 34 (1914), Lost Art Press Reprint, 2016.

Figure 9. A 1939 Industrial Arts and Vocational
Education Magazine
Advertisement of the
Stanley "Junior Jack"
plane.





Figure 10: Front: No. 5-1/4 "Junior Jack" plane alongside a Bedrock 605-1/4 (back).

The nickel-plated No. 17 try & mitre square (Figure 7) was noted in Stanley Catalogue No.110 as a square created for manual training programs. At 8 ounces, it was light in weight, and designed for students to easily handle and store when not being used. The No. 17 was divided in to 8th measurements and was also available in metric. It was manufactured from 1909 until 1942.

Both the No. 203 block plane and No. 17 mitre square are hard to find in decent condition (I do not yet have a No. 17 in my collection). Many are beat up and/or with markings on them, as they were heavily used by students. Also, many were probably discarded or lost as schools



Figure 8. Stanley "Boy Proof" Tool advertising ad from 1942, The American School and University Magazine.



Figure 11: A No. 5-1/4 "Junior Jack" (left) alongside a standard No 5 (right). with the iron and chipbreakers removed.



Figure 12. The corrugated sole of the Stanley No. 5-1/4C.

would clean out inventory.

In the later 1920s, Stanley began its "Boy Proof" advertising campaign, which focused on tools that were specifically designed to absorb the everyday use and abuse of students in school shop programs. (Figure 8).

The Junior Jack plane No. 5-1/4 and the Bedrock No. 605-1/4 were intended for school shop courses. Smaller in size and lighter in weight than the standard Nos. 5 and 605, the junior jack planes were well-proportioned for student use; they soon also became a popular tool for homeowners and do-it-yourself individuals (Figures 9 and 10).

The No. 5-1/4, manufactured from 1921 until 1983, has a lighter casting than the No. 5, and measures 11-1/2" in length and 1-3/4" in width (Figure 11). Some models were equipped with hard rubber or aluminum handles that were able to withstand the abuse of students (more on that to come). Stanley also manufactured the "junior jack" No.5-1/4C; it has a corrugated bottom but is otherwise the same as the 5-1/4 (Figure 12). The C was manufactured only until the 1940s, making it a very hard plane to find.

The Bedrock No. 605-1/4, manufactured from 1925 until 1943, was also marketed as a "junior jack," but with the superior bedrock construction. The 605-1/4 shared the same patent dates (see chart below) and casting sizes as the 5-1/4. To my knowledge, the 605-1/4 has only been manufactured with flat top sides of the plane body, though earlier Bedrock planes had round side profiles. There is no known corrugated bottom on a No. 605-1/4.

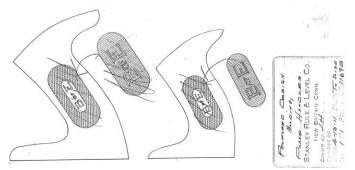


Figure 13. A proposed design drawing of the Board of Education Handles, dated April 4th, 1911.



Figure 14. Board of Education handle in the Stanley Vault Historical Room. Authors collection

| Stanley Nos. 5-1/4 and 605-1/4 'Junior Jack' Planes Shared Patents |                |           |   |  |
|--|----------------|-----------|---|--|
|  | Date           | Patent #  | Description   |  |
| Leonard Bailey   | Aug. 31, 1858  | 21,311    | Cammed lever cap                                      |  |
| Leonard Bailey   | Aug. 6, 1867   | 67,398    | Vertical post lever adjustment                        |  |
| Leonard Bailey   | Dec. 24, 1867  | 72,443    | Improvement on carpenter's plane                      |  |
| Josef Nicht  | Feb. 8, 1876   | 173,177   | Lateral lever adjuster for plane cutters; improvement |  |
| Justus A. Traut  | Oct. 21, 1884  | 306,877   | Fulcrum pins for lateral adjuster lever               |  |
| Justus A. Traut  | July 24, 1888  | 386,509   | Lateral lever with rotary disc                        |  |
| E.A. Schade  | Sept. 3, 1895  | 545,732   | Frog adjuster   |  |
| Henry Richards   | March 25, 1902 | 696,081   | Two-step frog for planes                              |  |
| Alex W. Stanley  | Aug. 19, 1902  | 707,365   | Raised frog receiver                                  |  |
| E.A. Schade  | April 19, 1910 | 955,556   | Frog adjuster   |  |
| Earl V. Higbee   | July 18, 1933  | 1,918,750 | Kidney-shaped hole in lever cap                       |  |

### **Board of Education Handles**

Board of Education Plane handles were developed to be replacement grips and advertised as unbreakable (Figure 13). Manufactured from 1911 until 1931, the material was hard rubber with a steel insert that was embossed "B of E" on the handle on each side (Figure 14). These handles were interchangeable with most Stanely bench planes, and were soon replaced with aluminum handles starting in the '30s. While I have not found proof, I and fellow tool enthusiasts believe that the "B of E" handles were developed for a contract with the New York Board of Education. (If any readers have further information about these handles they're willing to share, please contact me through editor@eaiainfo.org.)

## **Block Plane & Other Tools**

The Stanley No. 118 block plane, sometimes called "School Block" or "School Plane," was another tool developed for school use. Advertised as being "unbreakable," the No. 118 was produced from 1933 until 1983 (Figure 15). It had a stamped steel frame measuring 6" in length by 1-5/8" wide, and consisted of only three parts: the body; lever cap; and blade. (Figure 16) It was a general-purpose block plane that could easily be maintained and could take the everyday use of students. During its years of manufacture, the No. 118 block plane came in four finishes. Earlier types are japanned with nickel-plated trim and a separate plate on the front of the plane with

Figure 15: Industrial Arts and Vocational Education Magazine Advertisement of a Stanley No. 118 block plane:





Figure 16. The No. 118 block plane body, blade, and lever cap (from left). This example is from 1960.



Figure 17. A 1940 example of the No. 118 block plane.

"Stanley No 118" stamped raised letters highlighted in red (Figure 16). In the 1950s, it changed to a gray painted finish, then to dark blue paint from 1960 to 1971 (around the same time as when the stamped plate was changed to a sticker), and to a red/brown finish from 1971-1983.

The No. 80M cabinet scraper was manufactured from 1930 until 1974 (Figure 18). Measuring 11" in length by 2-3/4" wide, it is identical in size to the Stanley No. 80 cabinet scraper, but made of malleable iron, designated by the "M." The different casting gave the material more of a flex, which was intended to help the tool withstand a fall from a bench. The cabinet scraper wasn't the only tool manufactured with that idea in mind; the No. 151M spokeshave is among other Stanley tools made of malleable iron.

# **Educational Support Materials**

A sindustrial arts programs became increasingly popular in schools, more educational support materials were created to help instructors (Figure 19). While there is no evidence Stanley developed a specific curriculum for shop classes, the company provided instructional books, wall charts for tool use and safety concerns, and film strips to support state and local curricula.

The 19 wall charts – each explaining a specific tool, its use, and safety tips – were first offered in the 1920s.



Figure 18. Stanley No. 80M cabinet scraper; inset: the top of the casting on the back.

The Chronicle Volume 72 No. 4

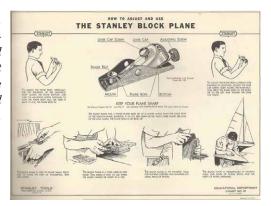
They were 19" by 25," printed on both sides on heavy card stock, with brass grommets in the corners. (Figure 19) They can still commonly be found at tools sales, auctions, and online sales.

From the 1940s to the 1980s, Stanley also offered 18 safety charts (Figure 20). They were 18" x 25," printed on both sides on heavy card stock. Each consisted of quirky safety illustrations showing a mistake and resulting accident. These are harder to find; many were probably disposed when schools were dissolving their shop programs.

From 1950 to 1980, the Stanley Educational Department offered 35mm film strips on topics suitable for vocational courses, including how to use a plane and a chisel, reading a ruler, and sharpening. The films came in a bright red box packaged in sets of nine. Each box set came with a booklet that suggested questions for instructors to use for assessment (Figure 21).

The company also offered a staff-written book from 1927 to about 1960, "How to Work with Tools and Wood." It was suitable for students and amateur woodworkers alike, with how-to technique instruction for var-

Figure 19.
Stanley educational wall charts that showcase the block plane and bench planes.



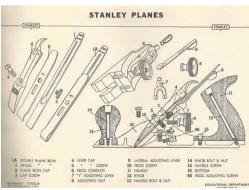


Figure 20. Stanley Educational safety chart.



ious woodworking tasks (Figures 23 and 24). Later editions were in paperback.

Stanley of course provided many publications to promote the sales and services of their products, among them inserts for schools in the company's catalogs (Figure 25). One was a quick-reference guide so teachers could check off items they needed to order for the following school year rather than search through the entire catalog. The company offered schools discounted rates, and replacement parts (a service available only to schools).

There was also a newsletter, *School Shop News* (Figure 26), that highlighted various school shop programs (along with information on the company's tools and services).

Beginning in the late 1960s the company sponsored an annual woodworking and furniture building competition for high school students in grades 9 through 12. It



Figure 21. Stanley Educational Film Strips. These films covered topics on tool use, reading ruler and sharpening.

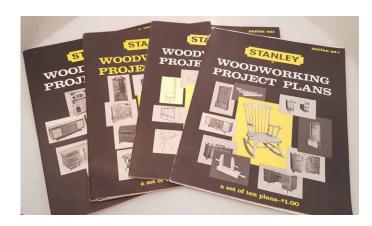


Figure 22. Stanley plan sets were first published around 1930. These offered many different woodworking projects that could be used in shop-class programs. Some plans were focused on specific themes such as Early American Furniture. Most of the plans were sold in a binder. These plans are still commonly found at tools sale,s estate sales and auctions. Stanley ceased publishing these around 1980.

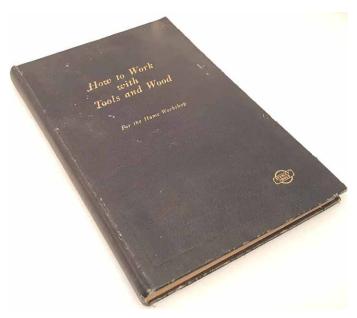


Figure 23. "How To Work with Tools and Wood" was published by Stanley for school and home workshops.



NEW!

STANLEY THE TOOL BOX OF THE WORLD

inserts promoting the educational program offerings.

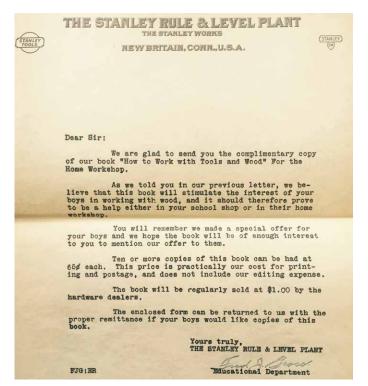




Figure 24. A letter and order form from Fred Gross, manager of industrial and school sales for How to Work with Tools and Wood.

COURTESY OF THE MIKE MUENCH COLLECTION, DUBUQUE, IOWA



Figure 26. The Fall 1981 edition of School Shop News.

The Chronicle Volume 72 No. 4 149 STANLEY

## STANLEY EDUCATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES OFFER SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO TEACHERS

STANLEY TOOLS EDUCATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES and the territories they cover







Because of the nature of their profession, teachers are required to look to many sources to build their teaching resources. Often they must have an immediate response to their questions, problems, or for materials to construct courses. Stanley Tools Educational Department wants to do all it possibly can to respond to these needs.

Stanley Tools Educational Representatives are trained specialists in their field and will welcome the opportunity to be of service. They will be glad to help you with Tool Specifications, teaching aids and repair problems, to take advantage of this exclusive Stanley school service, send the coupon at the bottom of this page to the Stanley Educational Representative responsible for your area.

| 1 |     |     | 1 |  |
|---|-----|-----|---|--|
| 0 | 100 | 9.0 |   |  |
|   | 1   | -   | V |  |
|   | V   | ¥   |   |  |

\*States not covered by Educational Representatives: Idaho

Montana, Nevada, New Mex ico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska,

Hawaii - write Stanley Tools, Educational Department, New

Britain, Connecticut 06050









| STANLEY TOOLS S  | ECIAL SCHOOL SERVICE COUPON |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Need Hand Tool Specificati Need Hand Tool Repair Par Need Information On Instru Need Information On Instru Other (Explain) | Information  tional Films   |
| NAME   | TITLE                       |
| SCHOOL   | TEL                         |
| SCHOOL ADDRESS   |                             |
| CITY   | TATE ZIP                    |

Figure 27. Stanley Educational Department representatives were in charge of sales and services for schools throughout the United States and Canada by region. This flier is from 1980.

challenged young craftspeople to design and build a finished piece of furniture, along with drawings and a cut list for the design. The top designs, as determined by area judges, would compete in the finals at Stanley's headquarter in New Britain, Connecticut. In the 1980s, Stanley added a mass production contest, which challenged students to design and mass produce a product in a given amount of time.

The competitions soon dissolved; school shop programs were being closed and the Stanley Company was going through changes as well.

The Stanley Educational Department began to dissolve in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Today, Industrial Arts has been replaced by what is known as Technology/ Engineering Education. The current incarnation of the company, Stanley Black & Decker, does offer educational outreach programs as part of its social responsibility, but now focuses on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Education and assists with what is called the "Skills Gap." More information about the company's current educational initiatives can be found on its website, at stanleyblackanddecker.com.

### **Notes**

Beginning in around 1890, Manual Training was an eduction movement to teach students skills applicable to the industrial world. It was a decade later that industrial arts programs were developed specifically to instruct students in industrial workforce skills.

## References

- "Directory of American Tools and Machinery Patents" DATAMP, http://www.datamp.org/.
- Leach, Patrick. "The Superior Works." The Superior Works, http://www.supertool.com/.
- Notebooks of Stanley Tool Company Memorabilia collected by Roger K. Smith, now a part of author's collection.
- Sellens, Alvin. The Stanley Plane: A History and Descriptive Inventory. Early American Industries Association, 1980.
- Stanley Tools Catalogue No. 110, Stanley Rule & Level Co., 1911.
- Stanley Tools Full Line Catalog 1979/1980, Stanley, 1979/1980.
- Stanley School Shop News. Stanley Tools Educational Department, Fall. 1981.
- Stanley News. Stanley Tools Educational Department, Apr.
- "The Finest 'Zig Zag' Rules We've Ever Made-Stanley 'Duplex' Rules in Both 'F' and Regular Marking." Stanley News, Mar. 1932.
- 10. "TimeTestedTools Vintage Tool Information." Don Wilwol, https://www.timetestedtools.net/.
- 11. Walter, John. Antique & Collectible Stanley Tools: A Guide to Identity and Value. Tool Merchant, 1996.
- 12. Wells, John G. "Tool Tid-Bits." The Gristmill, June 2016, p. 20.
- 13. Wicks, Harry, and Steve Wilson. "A Craftsman's Prize-Wining Ducan Phyfe Table." Popular Mechanics, Mar. 1982, pp. 140-144.
- 14. Visit to the Stanley Vault Historical Room located in New Britain Connecticut. July 12, 2018