

“Can anybody tell me how old this Craftsman plane is and who made it?”

About a year ago I saw yet another post on Facebook asking for help in identifying the model and age of a Craftsman plane, to be met mostly with silence or with model numbers that were actually social security numbers inscribed by the previous owner, or with dates outside the period Craftsman existed. When the question of Craftsman lever cap colors came up in a Facebook group recently, I knew I had the data from my Sears, Roebuck & Co. Fulton plane study to provide some answers.

Now I am NOT a Craftsman hand plane collector, all my available space is filled with Fulton planes for my research, nor do I have the inclination to acquire all the Craftsman hand plane study pieces necessary to fully validate a type study. However, other hand plane collectors with Craftsman planes in their collection have been quick to help. Many thanks to those who have taken time to search their collections in response to my questions, send me endless photographs and share the knowledge of their manufacturer specific collections. John Thompson and his collection of Millers Falls Tools made Craftsman planes and Casey Benton with his Sargent made Craftsman plane knowledge are the first to come to mind. Many others have posted responses to my Facebook questions, and I am grateful to the hand plane community. This is just the beginning. More facts will be discovered, more unusual Craftsman planes will surface, and enthusiasts will compare their planes to this information shedding light on areas for improvement.

Type studies generally represent the catalog dates the planes were advertised, not the manufacturing dates. This type study follows that genre. Sears, Roebuck & Co. published two general catalogs per year, for example a 1950 Spring/Summer edition and a 1950/51 Fall/Winter edition. This sometimes provides very distinct and narrow eras for their “in-house” branded tools. You will see Craftsman planes defined not just by years but by Spring/Summer or Fall/Winter catalogs.

Lastly, a type study should not be view as the final word, but rather as an evolutionary process that continues as long as there are interested collectors.

This information covers Craftsman cast iron bench planes from introduction in 1927 to 1974. I am working on a much more complete document of this period of Craftsman planes to include far more illustrations and much of the underlying data used to define the different types and eras. I hope you find this information useful. Please contact me at aPlaneLife@comcast.net with any errors, omissions, questions, or photos of Craftsman planes that do not fit the data. In the meantime, I need to get back to my passion, Fulton planes.

Enjoy!

Craftsman cast iron bench plane Type Study 1927-1974

Craftsman never manufactured hand planes. There was no Craftsman hand plane factory. All Craftsman hand planes were manufactured by other companies Sears, Roebuck & Co. under their “in-house” brand, Craftsman. This study does not address Craftsman planes manufactured in other countries. Sears, Roebuck & Co. contracted with local manufacturers in Europe to produce tools for their in-house brands. Arguably, one of America’s most famous tool brands, owners of antique Craftsman hand planes desire to know the age and model of their plane. While determining the manufacturer of the hand plane, be it Sargent & Company, Millers Falls Tools, or Stanley Works, a collector can use existing type studies of these hand planes to place their Craftsman plane in a broad period of history usually encompassing several decades.

This identification method can be greatly improved upon by relying on the lever cap logo and cutter trademark stamp that was revised many times as suppliers changed and as Sears, Roebuck & Co. updated corresponding model numbers. The Craftsman logo and trademark used on the lever cap and cutter appeared in many different forms from 1927-1974. While there are other components of Craftsman “trade-dress” such as tote decals, body decals, body color, frog color, plating, and machine finishing, the primary use of the lever cap logo, and cutter trademark allows Craftsman bench planes to be placed into 23 distinctive eras or types that align with the catalog period in which the planes were available.

Broadly, from introduction until 1933 all Craftsman hand planes were manufactured by Sargent & Company. In 1934, Millers Falls Tools joined the list of Craftsman bench plane manufacturers. In 1969, Stanley Works was added to the list of Craftsman bench plane manufacturers.

Unlike other hand plane type studies, Sears, Roebuck & Co. in-house brands can be broken down further than just one-year increments. Sears, Roebuck & Co. produced two general merchandise catalogs per year, a Spring Summer edition, and a Fall Winter edition. The Spring Summer edition is dated to a single year, i.e., Sears, Roebuck & Co. 1930 Spring Summer Catalog. The Fall Winter edition is dated to two years indicating it was applicable over the December 31-January 1 new year, i.e., Sears, Roebuck & Co. 1930/31 Fall Winter Catalog. This study follows that catalog nomenclature and defines eras by the catalog year and season. Sears, Roebuck & Co. also produced annual specialty catalogs, i.e., 1910 Home Builder’s Catalog, 1940 Craftsman Power Tool Catalog, 1950 Craftsman Mechanics Tool Catalog, and the 1939 Wish Book (Christmas catalog), but these are only a factor with the introduction of the Craftsman brand in 1927.

Craftsman brand hand tools were introduced in the 1927 Sears, Roebuck & Co. *Hardware & Cutlery* specialty catalog. To date, an example of this specialty catalog has not been available, so the 1927 data is speculative. Craftsman brand hand tools first appear in the Sears, Roebuck & Co. general catalog in the 1928 Spring/Summer edition, used for this study (*figure 1*).



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Sears, Roebuck and Co., Chicago

Spring and Summer-1928
Index and Information-Pink Pages, 481 to 508

Figure 1 - 1928 Sears, Roebuck & Co. Catalog



Figure 2 - 1928 Sears, Roebuck & Co. Spring/Summer catalog

The first step in identifying a Craftsman hand plane Type is determining the manufacturer. The manufacturer can be determined mostly through cutter and lateral lever design. Millers Falls Tools manufactured bench planes are easy to identify by the distinctive left-hand bend lateral lever, while Sargent & Company bench planes and Stanley Works made Craftsman bench planes feature an inverted "U" bend lateral (figure 2).



Figure 3 Millers Falls Tools left-hand bend lateral (left). Sargent & Company and Stanley Works inverted "U" lateral (right).

However, Sargent & Company bench planes are always equipped with keyhole up cutters, while the Stanley Works made planes will always feature keyhole down cutters (figure 3). Additionally, by the time Stanley Works began supplying Craftsman bench planes, Sears, Roebuck and Co. had assigned a 3-digit manufacturers code of 187 to Stanley Works and it appears on the cutter near the trademark.



Figure 4 Sargent & Company keyhole up by trademark, left. Stanley Works keyhole down away from trademark with the 187-manufacturer code, right

There are other distinctive markings that can be used to differentiate between these three manufactures of Craftsman bench planes, but with one exception, the 4-edge cutter design bench planes, the lever cap and cutter markings will suffice for all Craftsman bench plane identification.

Now that you can determine the manufacturer of your Craftsman bench plane, how do we determine the model number and era?

There are 21 different lever cap designs and 14 different cutter trademarks used as primary identification of Craftsman bench planes from 1927-1974. In some cases, the difference in lever caps is only in the finish, polished versus chromed versus nickel plated. In one instance the planes are differentiated by the distinctive and short lived 4-edge cutter design.

An illustrated guide to all Craftsman 22 Types with the lever cap logos, cutter trademark and other necessary distinctive features appears first in this study. A discussion of the background of each Craftsman plane type and supporting data, including catalog illustrations begins on page 13.

This is the sequence of the first 22 types of Craftsman cast iron bench hand planes.

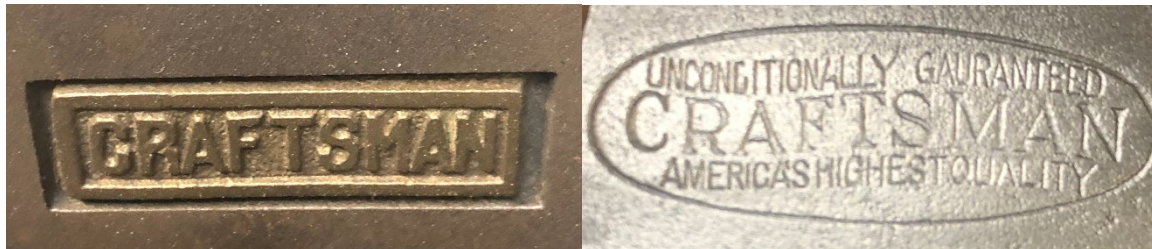


Type 1 Plane

TYPE 1 Lever Cap. Type 1 Cutter

1927-1928 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY

Size 4 Models 5264/5265C Size 5 Models 5266-5267C
 Size 6 Model 5268/5269C Size 7 Model 5270-5271C



Type 2 Plane

Type 2 Lever Cap. Type 1 Cutter

1928/29 FALL/WINTER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY

Brass badge lever cap

Size 4 Models 5264/5265C Size 5 Models 5266-5267C
 Size 6 Model 5268/5269C Size 7 Model 5270-5271C



Type 3 Plane

Type 3 Lever Cap. Type 1 Cutter

1929 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY

Brass badge lever cap

Size 4 Models 5264/5265C Size 5 Models 5266-5267C
 Size 6 Model 5268/5269C Size 7 Model 5270-5271C



Type 4 Plane

Type 4 Lever Cap. Type 2 Cutter

1929/30 FALL/WINTER - 1931/32 FALL/WINTER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY

Polished lever cap

Size 4 Models 5264/5265C Size 5 Models 5266-5267C

Size 6 Model 5268/5269C Size 7 Model 5270-5271C



Type 5 Plane

Type 5 Lever Cap. Type 3 Cutter

1932 SPRING/SUMMER - 1932/33 FALL/WINTER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY
 Nickel plated lever cap. First appearance of "BL" Manufacturer mark for Sargent & Company

Size 4 Models 5264/5265C Size 5 Models 5266-5267C

Size 6 Model 5268/5269C Size 7 Model 5270-5271C



Type 6 Plane

TYPE 6 Lever Cap. Type 4 Cutter

1933 SPRING/SUMMER - 1933/34 FALL/WINTER manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS

Nickel plated lever cap

Size 4 Models 5264/5265C Size 5 Models 5266-5267C

Size 6 Model 5268/5269C Size 7 Model 5270-5271C



Type 7 Plane

Type 7 Lever Cap. Type 5 Cutter

1934 SPRING/SUMMER-1934/35 FALL/WINTER manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS.

Nickel plated lever cap. Craftsman changes to blue for their trade dress.

First appearance of segmented big "C" Craftsman

First appearance of "BB" manufacturer mark for Millers Falls Tools

Size 4 Models 5264/5265C Size 5 Models 5266-5267C

Size 6 Model 5268/5269C Size 7 Model 5270-5271C



TYPE 8 Plane*

Type 8 Lever Cap. Type 6 Cutter

1935 SPRING/SUMMER* manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY.

Nickel Plated lever cap. Note the segmented "C" on lever cap is the same size as the other letters.

Size 4 Models 5264/5265C Size 5 Models 5266-5267C (*1935 Spring/Summer only)

Size 6 Model 5268/5269C Size 7 Model 5270/5271C (*Continues through 1939 Spring/Summer)



TYPE 9 Plane

Type 9 Lever Cap. Type 5 Cutter on #3, 4, & 5

1935/36 FALL/WINTER – 1939 SPRING/SUMMER *EXCEPT 1936/37 Golden Jubilee planes

Manufactured by: MILLERS FALL TOOLS

Size 3 Model 3715 Size 4 Models 3716/3722C Size 5 Models 3717/3723C



TYPE 10 Plane Golden Jubilee

Type 10 Lever Cap. Type 7 Cutter

1936/37 FALL/WINTER GOLDEN JUBILEE size 3, 4, & 5 manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS
 Nickel plated lever cap. Tote decal. The existence of size 6 and 7 Golden Jubilee planes remains unconfirmed.
 Size 3 Model 3715 Size 4 Models 3716/3722C Size 5 Models 3717/3723C



TYPE 11 Plane

Type 11 Lever Cap. Type 5 Cutter

1939/40 FALL/WINTER – 1941/42 FALL/WINTER manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS.

Chrome lever cap. "Chased" cheeks with cheek stamp.

Size 3 Model 3741 Size 4 Model 3742/3746C Size 5 Model 3743/3747C
 Size 6 Model 3744/3748C Size 7 Model 3719/3749C



TYPE 12 Plane

Type 12 Lever Cap. Type 8 Cutter

1942 SPRING/SUMMER – 1942/43 FALL/WINTER manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS.

Note: Level cap same color blue as Type 12. **Polished lever cap. "Chased" cheeks with cheek stamp.**

*Size 3 Model 3741 Size 4 Model 3742/3746C Size 5 Model 3743/3747C
 Size 6 Model 3744/3748C Size 7 Model 3719/3749C

*Note Size 3 Model 3741 manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS continues through 1943 SRPING/SUMMER



TYPE 13 Plane

Type 13 Lever Cap. Type 9 Cutter

1943 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY. **Chrome plated lever cap and cutter.** Note the segmented "C" on lever cap is the same size as the other letters. Last of the **"Chased" cheeks.**

Size 4 Model 3742/3746C Size 5 Model 3743/3747C
 Size 6 Model 3744/3748C Size 7 Model 3719/3749C

*Note Size 3 Model 3741 is Type 12 plane Manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS



TYPE 14 Plane

Type 14 Lever Cap. Type 9 Cutter

1943/44 FALL/WINTER - 1945 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY. **Polished lever cap and cutter.** Note the segmented "C" on lever cap is the same size as the other letters. Machined Cheeks.

Size 4 Model 3721 Size 5 Model 3722/3723C

Size 6 Model 3748C Size 7 Model 3725C

*Note Size 3 discontinued until 1947/48



TYPE 15 Plane

Type 15 Lever Cap. Type 10 Cutter

1945/46 FALL/WINTER - 1950/51 FALL/WINTER manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS.

Note the segmented "C" is larger than the other letters on the lever cap. Same blue lever cap as Type 12. First appearance of Manufacturer number (107) versus mark (BB).

*Size 3 Model 3741 1947/48-1950/51 Size 4 Model 3742 Size 5 Model 3743/3747C

Size 6 Model 3748C Size 7 Model 3749C



TYPE 16 Plane

Type 16 Lever Cap. Type 11 Cutter

Plastic knob & tote

1951 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY.

Chromed lever cap, plastic knob/tote secured with Philips head machine screws. Corduroy cheeks.

First appearance of Manufacturer number (619) followed by plane model number on cutter stamp.

Size 3 Model 3741 Size 4 Model 3742 Size 5 Model 3743/3747C

Size 6 Model 3748C Size 7 Model 3749C



TYPE 17 Plane

**Type 16 Lever Cap. Type 11 Cutter
Wood Knob and Tote**

1951/52 FALL WINTER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY.

Chrome lever cap, wood knob & tote fastened with threaded rod and cylindrical nuts. Corduroy cheeks
(Suspect shortage of plastic knob/totes resulted in wood returning for short period).

Size 3 Model 3741 Size 4 Model 3742 Size 5 Model 3743/3747C
Size 6 Model 3748C Size 7 Model 3749C



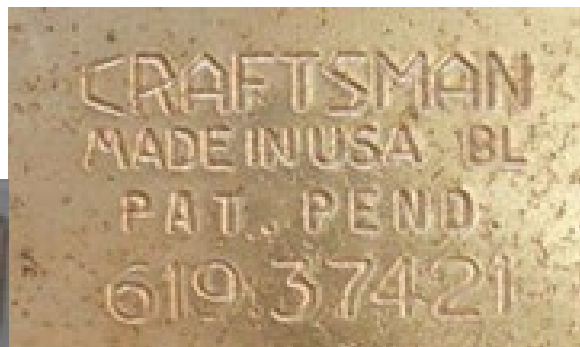
TYPE 18 Plane

Type 17 Lever Cap. Type 11 Cutter

1952 SPRING/SUMMER – 1960 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY.

Gray enamel lever cap and body. Corduroy cheeks.

Size 3 Model 3741 Size 4 Model 3742 Size 5 Model 3743/3747C
Size 6 Model 3748C Size 7 Model 3749C



TYPE 19 Plane

Type 18 Lever Cap. Type 12 Cutter

1960/61 FALL/WINTER - 1962 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY

Red lever cap background. Corduroy cheeks. **4 edge cutter size 4 and 5 with 5-digit model number.** Only size 6 still had 4-digit model number and standard cutter. Red lever cap background. First appearance of 5 digit model numbers.

Size 4 Model 37421 Size 5 Model 37431 Size 6 Model 3748C



TYPE 20 Plane

Type 18 Lever Cap. Type 11 Cutter

1962/63 FALL/WINTER - 1964 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by SARGENT & COMPANY

Red lever cap background. Corduroy cheeks. Standard cutter design with 4-digit model number.

Size 4 Model 3742

Size 5 Model 3743

Size 6 Model 3748C



TYPE 21 Plane

Type 20 Lever Cap. Type 13 Cutter (unmarked)

1964/65 FALL/WINTER - 1969 SPRING/SUMMER manufactured by MILLERS FALLS TOOLS

Yellow crown lever cap logo with non-kidney shaped hole. Corduroy cheeks.

107 manufacturer code with 5-digit model number on left cheek stamp.

Size 4 Model 37034

Size 5 Model 37035

Size 6 Model 37036C



TYPE 22 Plane

Type 21 Lever Cap. Type 14 Cutter

1969/70 FALL/WINTER – 1973/74 FALL/WINTER manufactured by STANLEY WORKS

Yellow crown lever cap logo with kidney shaped hole.

187 manufacturer code with 5-digit model.

Teal enameled body. Wood knob/tote

Size 4 Model 34054 Size 5 Model 37055