

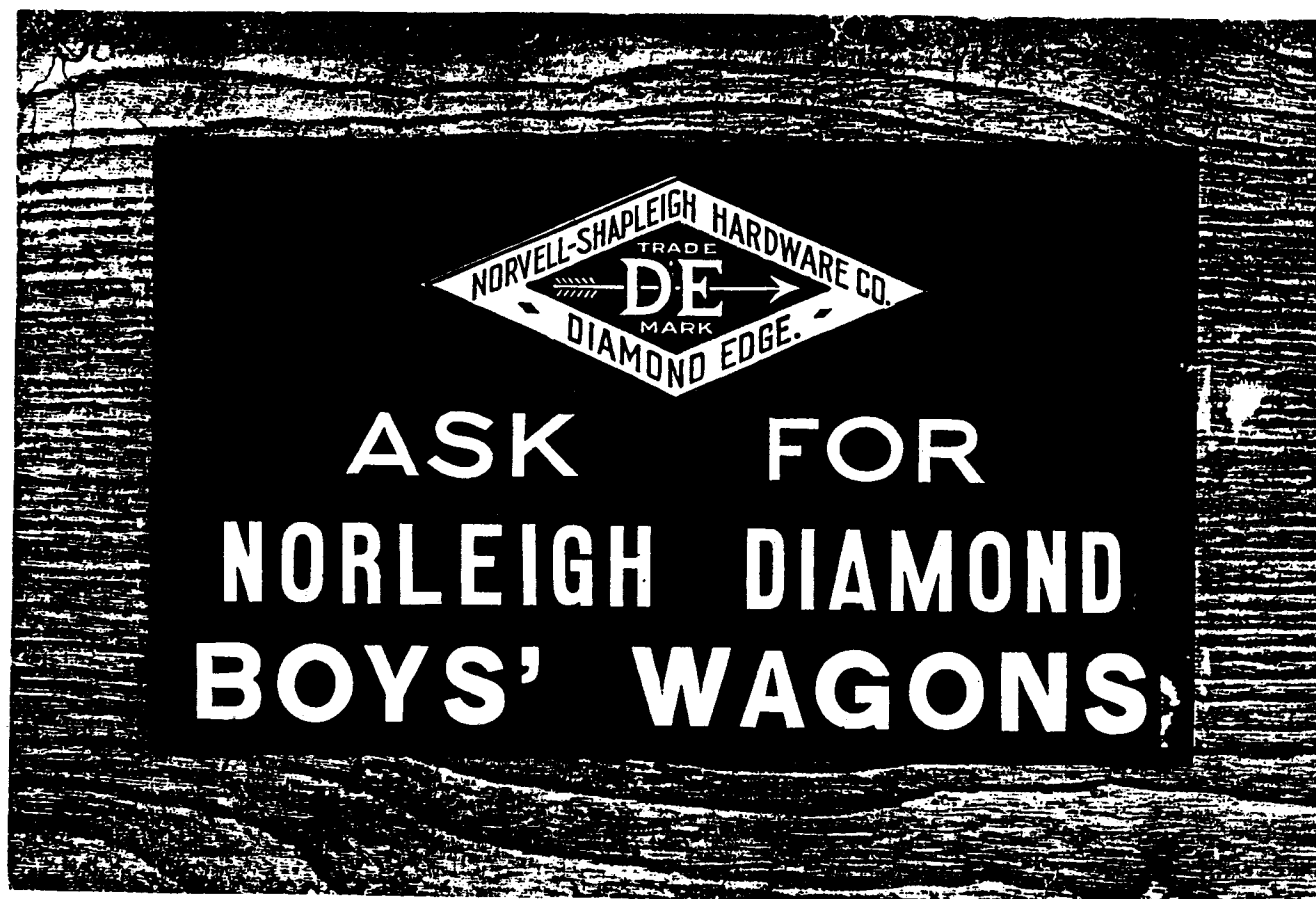
*The*  
**Winchester•Keen Kutter•Diamond Edge  
Chronicles**

The Official Newsletter of The Hardware Companies Collectors Klub

Volume 1, Number 3 & 4

"Anniversary Issue"

March 1997



Photocopy Of An Original Cardboard Hanging Store Sign: 9" X 13 1/2"  
Norvell-Shapleigh Hardware Company (Circa 1901-1911)  
Courtesy Of Bob Simmons



## A Letter From The President

Dear Fellow THCKK Members,

It has already been a year. Now it is time once again for our 2nd annual meet. This year's get-together will feature more collectors and dealers than ever.

It does not seem like nearly 6 years since the nomumental auction of the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Simmons in Kansas City. Over 1000 lots of Keen Kutter and Simmons Hardware collectibles were sold in one day. I had some items in my trunk for sale or trade as did others, but no tailgating ever occurred. Everyone left somewhat dazed by the excellent education that they had received by attending. Each year since, Simmons and Ross, now Simmons and Company Auctioneers, have provided an opportunity to educate ourselves. To get acquainted with others who share our interest in the history of Simmons, Shapleigh and Winchester.

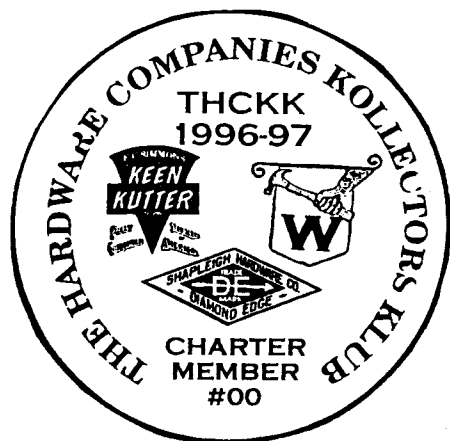
From the very first auction of this type in 1991, there have been discussions each year about the possibility of a club. Last year I decided to write the letter that most of you responded to. This letter was motivated by two main forces. 1/ impulse 2/ a desire to create a common bond, a line of communication for collectors. The letter was written one day, mailed to Simmons and Company, Jerry Heuring and other friends. About 2 months later, we had over 100 members. We now have 140.

I was advised early by a person who made a similar move in another area of collectibles, not to expect immediate organization. I appreciate the efforts of Larry Eastley and Rilla Simmons in putting forth this issue of our newsletter.

I hope that every member, especially those who were disappointed with this first year, will contribute something to the newsletter project. You can help by sending items of interest or by active participation. Either way we want you to be part of the success of THCKK.

Thank you,

Tom Basore.



## From Your New "Struggling" Publication Editors Larry Eastley & Rilla Simmons

As our self-imposed deadline of March 28 & 29th quickly descends upon us, Larry and I are besieged, bewildered by and buried under the awesome task of getting another newsletter ready for our friends and fellow THCKK members. Whew!! It is a very educational and enriching experience and one we think we will enjoy once we get the hang of it. We fully appreciate Tom's prior efforts. The old adage of walking a mile in another's moccasins holds oh so true.

We hope that you enjoy this Anniversary Issue of *The Winchester, Keen Kutter, Diamond Edge Chronicles* and will graciously bear with our faults, foibles and foul-ups, for both of us have easily-dented confidence in our ability to do justice to the task. Please tread on us gently.

Our many thanks to those of you who submitted information and articles for this issue. We hope to hear from many more of you in the days to come.

Please join us in making these newsletters a true reflection of the hobby we all share by sending us any and everything you think might benefit our membership. There's a whole storehouse of information out there somewhere (in your collections and in your experiences) but unless you feed it to us, we'll all starve.

Sincerely,

Rilla and Larry

Our addresses are:

Rilla Simmons  
Rte. 1, Box 186  
Richmond, MO. 64085

Larry Eastley  
Box 65  
Hardin, MO 64035



"The Recollection of **QUALITY** Remains Long  
After the **PRICE** Is Forgotten."—E. C. SIMMONS



**Edward Campbell Simmons, Founder of  
Simmons Hardware Company,  
St. Louis, MO.**

Edward Campbell Simmons was born in Maryland in 1839, and moved with his merchant father to St. Louis, Missouri in 1846. At the age of seventeen, he began his career in the wholesale hardware business on the bottom rung of the ladder of Child, Pratt & Company. In 1859, he entered the firm, Wilson, Levering and Waters as a clerk. This hardware business eventually evolved into E. C. Simmons & Co.

He successfully developed the Simmons Hardware Company into one of the most extensive corporations of its kind, with divisions in Wichita, Sioux City, Ogden, Toledo, New York, Minneapolis and St. Louis. By the turn of the century, warehouse space occupied over 1,500,000 sq. feet. The company's tool plants were in New Hampshire, and its pocket knife plant in New York was the largest in the U.S. They had their own saddlery factories as well. Mr. Simmons retired in 1898.

To be comprehensive, any account of Simmons Hardware and its Keen Kutter brand must include the success story of another St. Louis firm, A.F. Shapleigh & Co. Due to the excellence of its merchandise and its aggressive advertising, Shapleigh's was a leading wholesaler for well over a century. Mr. Shapleigh retired in 1901.

Shapleigh's adapted the **DIAMOND EDGE** as their brand name for a line of superior tools and cutlery in 1864. "**KEEN KUTTER**" was the name chosen by E.C. Simmons in 1870 for their high grade tools and cutlery. The famous wedge and bar logo was adapted after 1904. No laws governed trademarks at that time.

Evidently, this created no real problems for the sales of either company. They continued to steadily expand their trade areas throughout the West and Middle West. The years that followed were extremely prosperous ones. Due primarily to the enormous combined volume of the two businesses, St. Louis was firmly established as the largest distributor of hardware in the nation by the early 1900's.

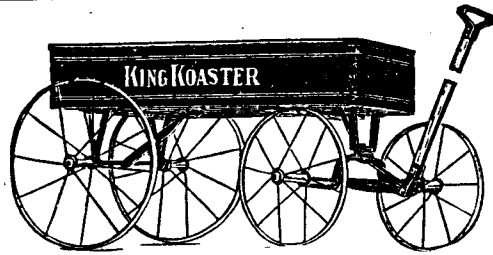
The wholesale hardware catalogs of Simmons Hardware and Shapleigh were the first, and most comprehensive, of their genre in the U.S, with the single exception being one from a Chicago firm. By 1880 both firms were publishing large, well-bound general line catalogs with sales representatives traveling to nearly every city and town, hamlet and village across the nation.

A 1909 Simmons Hardware Catalog had over 5000 pages. Simmons held firm in his belief that the "jobber's first duty is to help his customer to prosper." And the Keen Kutter line was not just tools and merchandise, but a complete campaign designed to simplify the job of the retailer and satisfy the customer.

Shapleigh Hardware Company purchased all the assets of Simmons Hardware in 1940. The trademarked Simmons lines continued to be marketed by Shapleigh until its closing in the early 1960's. They promoted the merger with the slogan, "From the past comes the promise of the future".

E. C. Simmons and A.F. Shapleigh not only achieved truly remarkable successes as businessmen in their lifetime but are greatly responsible for founding the wholesale hardware industry as we know it today.

The Keen Kutter logo was first applied to high grade axes, but later it was the trademark for all superior lines of merchandise directly manufactured and sold by Simmons Hardware. Early on, it became synonymous with an unparalleled guarantee of quality and satisfaction. Every item marketed under this highly visible brand was tested and inspected before being stamped. It was the maker's promise and the customer's protection. If it wasn't perfect, you got your money back.



Simmons capitalized on the overwhelming customer demand for his Keen Kutter items by using the KK format on many different types of products. The Simmons line included King Koaster children's wagons; Klipper Klub ice skates; Korn and Koffee Krushers; Karpet King sweepers; Kool King ice boxes; Klear Krystal lamp chimneys; Kar King accessories; Keen Klipper lawn mowers; even Klicher mousetraps and locks.

Items stamped or labeled Keen Kutter or those from the KK line rank most popular with collectors, followed by those marked Simmons Hardware or S.H.Co. Many collectors include items from the company's registered lines such as Polly Prim, Run Easy, Blue Brand, Oak Leaf, Delmar, Sterling, American, Delft, Van Dyke, or Wonder.

It was no accident that customers were impressed by the Keen Kutter line and asked for it by name. The company had a well-organized marketing strategy, unparalleled in its day. Simmons put its stamp on everything the retailer could possibly require or use in his business. Every size and description of display case, tool rack or shipping crate carried the brand as well. A Keen Kutter dealer would have store signs, postcards, invoices, letterheads, fans, clocks, thermometers, pencils, price tags, calendars, paper holders and even wrapping papers, all bearing the striking bright red logo.

Not only did the Keen Kutter line include every conceivable type of tool and hardware item needed by carpenters, mechanics, gardeners, handymen and farmers, but those for household use as well. Kraut cutters, food grinders and choppers, lard presses, kitchen scales, knife sharpeners and grist mills, waffle irons, sad irons and trivets, several models of coffee grinders, apple peelers, china, silverware, ice cream freezers, kitchen ranges, ice boxes, parlor stoves and sewing machines, all marked Keen Kutter, brought this quality line to the housewife's attention on a daily basis. Shotguns, razors, strops, honing stones and steels, tobacco cutters, pocket knives and other knives were marketed for the gentlemen's use. As were watch fobs and locks designed of the clever logo itself.

Anyone attempting to collect and display even just one example of all the items manufactured by Simmons Hardware would find that an average home could not contain the accumulation. So prodigious was its output of Keen Kutter items, spanning over a century, that it presents a bonanza for collectors and allows them ample opportunity to find new and different treasures to add to their collections even though the demand as well as price has continued to rise.



**Augustus Frederick Shapleigh, Founder of Shapleigh Hardware, St. Louis, MO.**

Born January 10, 1810 in New Hampshire, Augustus F. Shapleigh made his first excursion into the hardware business at the age of 15 in order to contribute to the support of his family after his father's death. A brief bout of wanderlust sent him to sea for the next three years.

In 1829, he took up a position as a hardware clerk with Rodger Brothers & Company of Philadelphia, PA. In response to the great westward expansion, this company opened a branch in St. Louis, MO. This hardware house, known as Rodger, Shapleigh & Company opened in 1843. An entrepreneur extraordinaire, Mr. Shapleigh quickly gained prominence in the business community and the store flourished. Its first year inventory exceeded \$20,000.00--quite a substantial amount for the mid-1800's. In 1847, the company reorganized as Shapleigh, Day & Company, due to the death of Mr. Rodger, the senior partner.

St. Louis was not only the gateway to the west, it was also the hub of the wheels of industry and progress for the nation during these years and well past 1900. The first traveling salesman went out from Shapleigh House in 1848. In 1852, the first steam railroad west of the Mississippi left from St. Louis. The first Shapleigh catalog was published in 1853, basically as a salesman's pricing book.

At Mr. Day's retirement in 1863, the name of the company became A.F. Shapleigh & Co. The famous Diamond Edge trademark was adopted in 1864. The slogan, "Diamond Edge is a Quality Pledge", is said to have first been used in 1909. Diamond Edge tools were the first line of edge tools (knives, razors, axes, cutlery, etc.) in the United States to be covered by a jobbers trademark.

By the late 1800's. Shapleigh Hardware was a well-established, healthy and successful enterprise. It incorporated under the name of A.F. Shapleigh and Cantwell Hardware Company, with A.F. as the president. It published its first general catalog featuring over 200 different items in 1880. Upon the retirement of Mr. Cantwell in 1886, the firm became A.F. Shapleigh Company again.

Augustus Shapleigh took his retirement in 1900 and the company reorganized in 1901. Another name change occurred. The new name was Norvell-Shapleigh Hardware Co. Saunders Norvell was its president for the next ten years. He was an extremely astute businessman, salesman and knowledgeable hardware man. He had been part of Simmons Hardware for many years. It is believed that his expertise and influence on that company was greatly responsible for its success. With his less than cordial leave-taking, Simmons Hardware started a downward slide from which it never recovered.

In addition to its famous Diamond Edge, other recognizable "house" brands marketed by Shapleigh were Mound City, Norleigh Diamond, Diamond Brand, Jersey, Panama, Ice Diamond, Bluebelle, Sageware, Black Jack, Red Raven, King Nitro, Sahara, Black Prince, Blue Diamond, Rugby, Triumph, Defiance, Black Wonder, Double Diamond, Mascot, Bull Dog, Ozark, Columbia, Longwear, Mizzou, and Bridges.

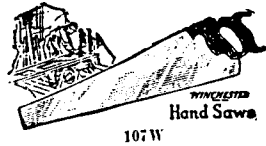
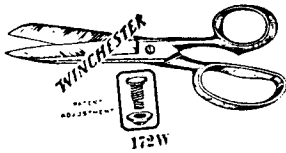


In 1918, the company became Shapleigh Hardware Company. They bought the assets of Geller-Ward-Hasner in 1937. After the bankruptcy and closing of Simmons Hardware, they bought its entire stock in 1940. At this time the Keen Kutter and Diamond Edge trademarks were joined. Other items were now marked Shapleigh's Keen Kutter, instead of E.C. Simmons. Shapleigh celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 1943. In 1955, the directors sold the company to Curtis Mfg. Co. He continued to operate the business under the Shapleigh Hardware name until closing in the early 1960's.



**Oliver F. Winchester , Founder of  
Winchester Repeating Arms Company,  
New Haven, CT.**

Another great venture capitalist, Oliver F. Winchester, familiarly known as "Governor Winchester," was born in Boston, MA, Nov. 30, 1810. In his twenties he worked at the carpenter's trade in various cities, becoming a master carpenter before he reached his majority. His entry into the business arena in 1834, was as a Men's Furnisher in Baltimore, MD. In 1848, he came to New Haven, CT, where he engaged successfully in manufacturing.



In 1855, Mr. Winchester became interested in firearms and organized a company known as the Volcanic Arms Company, which purchased an invention called the Volcanic Repeating Rifle. In order to extend its activities, the company was re-organized on April 25th, 1857, under the name of the New Haven Arms Company.

After a great deal of experimental work, Mr. Winchester engaged Mr. B. Tyler Henry, an inventor, to assist in the improvement of the Volcanic rifle. The Henry Repeating Rifle was the result of this move. The business grew steadily and toward the close of the Civil War, 1864-1865, the numerous rifles in service.

In 1865, to provide for the further expansion of the business, a new



company, the Henry Repeating Arms Company was chartered. The name was changed in 1866, to the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. The company's Model '66 Winchester was the first successful repeating rifle in the world. By 1872, its factory had grown until it covered an area of two acres and stepped into the manufacture of metallic cartridges.

From these beginnings the business grew steadily. Winchester expanded facilities and its manufacturing plant at New Haven covered over eighty acres of ground and was recognized as the leader, as well as the pioneer in arms and ammunition manufacture, and the name "Winchester" was known the world over as a synonym for quality and service.

Following the end of World War I, they made the decision to manufacture tools as well as firearms and ammunition. Partly this was done to better utilize their plants and equipment which had been beefed up to meet the demands for steel-related war goods. However they did not have much success in distributing these tools and hardware goods on a national scale. Distributed under "The Winchester Store", they launched a nationwide marketing campaign.

In 1922 Winchester Repeating Arms Company merged with Simmons Hardware Company. The company expanded into other areas of manufacture and product distribution, putting the famous Winchester brand on nearly everything from tools, sporting goods to houseware and hardware items, with its slogan being .... "As Good As The Gun". This merger was a financial disaster for both companies. In March of 1929, the Simmons Hardware Company announced that they were reverting to their original status and the name Winchester would no longer appear in conjunction with Simmons Hardware.

By 1931, Winchester was in bankruptcy and no longer producing tools. Subsequent mergers and partnerships changed the name and look of the Winchester logo. It was Winchester-Western for a while, starting in 1931 and today, Winchester™ is produced and marketed by the Olin Corporation.

Mr. Winchester was a public spirited citizen, serving as first a Republican state elector, a city commissioner in New Haven and finally in 1866, he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut. He contributed freely to religious, educational and other similar causes--one of his most notable gifts being the property on which the Yale University Observatory is located. Although Mr. Winchester died September 10, 1880, this man of the most upright character and the organization which he founded has continued through the many years of its development, to follow the inspiration of its first leader.

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## CLASSIFIEDS

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### RULES FOR CLASSIFIEDS

1. Three items may be advertised for each member per issue. These items may be WANTED TO BUY, TRADE OR SELL. Please be as accurate as possible.
2. Ads must be submitted for each issue. We will not re-run the same ad unless it is re-submitted.
3. All items should relate to THCKK areas of interest.
4. If you have books or other related items for sale that you would like to advertise on an on going basis, we will reprint without re-submitting each issue. The cost is \$1.00 per issue for members or \$4.00 per issue for non-members.
5. The editors reserve the right to refuse any advertisement in this publication for any reason he or she believes is legitimate.
6. Other ads for auctions, etc. will be accepted and priced on a case by case basis.

## \*\*\*\*\* BOOKS, ETC. \*\*\*\*\*

PADLOCKS, KEEN KUTTER AND SIMMONS. This book compiled by A1 pictures Keen Kutter and Simmons locks and the years that they were available through the Simmons catalogs. Alvin Sellens, 134 Clark St., Augusta, KS 67010 (316) 775-5540

KEEN KUTTER COLLECTIBLES: AN ILLUSTRATED PRICE GUIDE-1996 REVISED VALUES: 126 pp. Author signed, \$14.95 ppd by Jerry and Elaine Heuring, RR 1, Box 1110, Scott City, MO 63780

SIMMONS HARDWARE COMPANY: TESTIMONIAL LETTERS AS TO THE VALUE OF E.C. SIMMONS' KEEN KUTTER TOOLS: Reprint of an early book; approx 365 pgs. \$ 25.00 plus \$5.00 pstg.

FIFTY STEPPING STONES: by James A Carroll; Mr. Carroll worked for Simmons Hardware Company for 50 yrs. This book contains his stories and other important history; Reprint of 1932 book, approx. 93 pgs., \$15.00, plus \$5.00 pstg. Both books for \$35.00 plus \$5.00 pstg. John Cook, P.O. Box 95, Vernon, FL 32462

SHAPLEIGH DIAMOND EDGE. AN ILLUSTRATED VALUE GUIDE. 134 pgs.; \$14.95 plus \$2.00 pstg. Larry & Linda Edwards, P.O. Box 708, Salem, MO 65560

Bumper Sticker: I'M A KEEN KUTTER TOOL COLLECTOR, tri color bumper sticker w/ logo on the side. \$10.00 ea. ppd. John Otte, 800 N. Moulton, Perryville, MO 63775, (573) 547-6386

## \*\*\*\*\* LOGO-WEAR \*\*\*\*\*

We have the permission of Val-Test to produce hats and shirts with the Keen Kutter and Diamond Edge logos. We hope to obtain permission from Olin to use the Winchester Store logo in the same manner. We will take orders for Diamond Edge hats and shirts until we can order one dozen hats.

**Cap-** Adjustable cotton/poly. Available in white, dark green, black and other colors upon request. \$20.

**Shirts-** Very good quality white cotton polo shirts w/ logo on the left chest. (These shirts shrink slightly) State Size. \$30.

**Members Only Hat** - New Era Cap w/ member number. \$25.

The "members only" hat has your member number embroidered on the side. This hat is available only in New Era (the best) adjustable ProModel ball cap. The bill, vent holes and buttons are red. The hat is light gray.

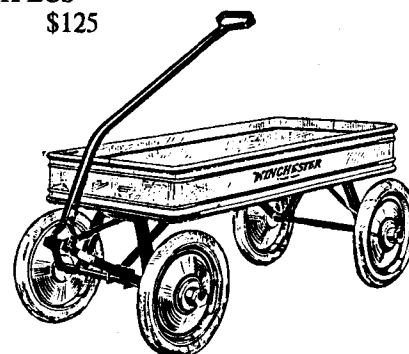
**All proceeds benefit THCKK.** Allow 4-6 weeks minimum for delivery. The logos are very nice embroidery. You will most certainly have people stop you wanting to know where they can get a hat or shirt. This is not silk screen. It is quality machine embroidery. If you are not satisfied, we will refund your money!!!

The Winchester • Keen Kutter • Diamond Edge Chronicles

## WHAT'S OUT THERE?

\$

Fishing Reel, Shapleigh  
Antq. Mall TX \$25  
Pocket Knife, 4-bld, "Congress", pearl hdl, ECS, Mint.  
Prv. Sale TX \$350  
Display, Razor Blades, Belknap, John Primble, complete  
Prv. Sale AL \$100  
Display, Knife, Belknap, John Primble, glass, full  
Prv. Sale AR \$200  
Child's Wagon, red metal, Shapleigh Racer  
Shop TX \$100  
Padlock, RR, Logo, Santa Fe, brass, w/ dust cover & key, mint, ECS KK  
Flea Market KS \$450  
Roller Skates, Winchester, orig. box, mint  
Flea Market KS \$135  
Display, Pocket Knife, "Hornet" ECS KK, etched glass  
Prv. Sale OK \$ undisclosed  
Display, Pocket Knife, Winchester, As Good As The Gun, etched glass, curved front  
Prv. Sale MT \$ undisclosed  
Display, Gun, 6 sided DE, glass sides, revolving  
Auction MS \$1800  
Sign, top of salesman rack, dbl sided, long  
Shop KS \$100  
Catalog, 1941, Shapleigh DE  
Mall MO \$250  
Saw, dehorning, KK ECS  
Mall MO \$45  
Plumb Bob, nickel plated, KK ECS  
Mall MO \$200  
Display (Holder), Punches, Logo Block, KK Shap  
Mall MO \$85  
Minnow Bucket, KK Shapleigh  
Mall MO \$150  
Hammer, 7 oz. curved claw, orig. handle, KK ECS  
Auction MO \$75  
Hammer, 6 oz. ball pein, orig. handle, KK ECS  
Auction MO \$75  
Plane, KKM4, in orig. Box, KK Shapleigh  
Auction MO \$145  
Pocket Knife, Texas Jack, KK ECS, mint, etched blade  
Knife Show \$600  
Pocket Knife, English Jack, KK, mint, etched blade  
Knife Show \$500  
Sign, porcelain, logo shaped, dbl. sided, KK ECS  
Dealer \$1500  
Hand Fan, axe head, KK ECS  
Dealer \$125



**WINCHESTER™  
TOOLS**  
**"As Good As The Gun"**  
by Dave Heckel

(The following article is reprinted by permission. It first appeared in The Fine Tool Journal. Mr. Dave Heckel is current President of Mid-West Tool Collectors Association and Secretary of The Hardware Companies Collectors Klub. From Charleston, IL, he began collecting Winchester tools in 1985.)

Following the close of World War I, the Winchester Repeating Arms Company needed to expand into new lines of peacetime products to keep up their level of production. The company decided that the best products to carry on the Winchester name were high quality personal items which could be produced with the same labor and equipment used to manufacture their guns and ammunitions, and marketed through the same trade channels they had been using for guns and ammunition. Some products that met these criteria were pocket and kitchen cutlery ice and roller skates, fishing tackle, flashlights, batteries and tools. Winchester's background in metalworking would enable them to manufacture these new products better and less expensively than the competition.

These new lines were to be marketed through a Winchester Dealer-Agency plan and through company owned retail stores. The Dealer-Agency plan was modeled after the successful Rexall Stores of the United Drug Company. The dealer-agent would buy stock in the Winchester Company and then become an exclusive agent for Winchester, bypassing the jobber or wholesaler. The company owned stores would be located in the larger cities to ensure a market for the new products. A dealer agency would be able to market other competitive brands, but it was expected to push the sales of the new Winchester products.

**THE  
WINCHESTER  
STORE**

**Under the Winchester Umbrella**

Beginning in early 1919, Winchester began acquiring companies that would

manufacture the new lines of products. The first companies acquired were the Eagle Pocket Knife Co., New Haven, CT, June 1919; Napanoch Knife Co., Napanoch NY, August 1919 (pocket knives); Lebanon Machine Co., Lebanon, NH, December 1919 (auger bits); Page-Storm Drop Forge Co., Chicopee, MA, December 1919 (flat wrenches); and Mack Axe Co., Beaver Falls, PA, May 1920. Some of the companies that Winchester acquired were absorbed into the Winchester factory at New Haven, CT while others kept up production at their present locations.

**Winchester's Tool Operations**

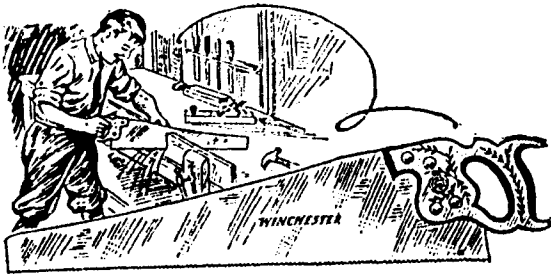
Tools were the most popular line for the hardware trade and Winchester placed importance on having an extensive range of this type of product. Screwdrivers, chisels, punches, hammers, hatchets and pliers were some of the first tools produced using methods developed within the arms manufacturing portion of Winchester. The purchase of Lebanon Machine Co. also bought that company's technical information and skills. A large number of drop dies used in the production of open-end wrenches came from Page-Storm Drop Forge Co. Mack Axe Co. was a going concern and gave Winchester an advantage of trade preferences and immediate production. To supply Winchester Stores and dealer-agencies with tools not produced in its own factory or subsidiaries, Winchester purchased saws, squares and planes from other manufacturers, chiefly Sargent & Company of New Haven, CT, which Winchester then distributed under its own trademark.

The author has noted that most Winchester planes resemble Sargent planes, although there are some that show features that Stanley used on their planes. One of the most obvious features is the knurling on the cutter adjustment wheel: Sargent manufacture is coarse and widely spaced while Stanley manufacture is fine and closely spaced. And, Winchester bench planes are marked in three places: the body, the cutting iron and the lever cap. Also, the Winchester trademark consists of three separate lines: Winchester/Trade Mark/ Made in U.S.A.

Cutlery was one of the first products to be produced. Utilizing existing methods and equipment at New Haven and the specialized machinery and manufacturing experience of the two purchased knife companies, Winchester produced butcher knives, scissors, shears and



pocket knives. Winchester also produced knives with the Keen Kutter trademark. Those knives are marked U.S.A., not St. Louis, in the trademark. Pocket knife production ceased in January 1942 when the factory converted to war time production. Flashlights, batteries and roller skates were produced into the 1950's.



### Methods of Numbering Tools

Collectors of Winchester tools are aware of two different numbering methods for the tools. Starting in 1927, the existing four digit number was replaced by a new number prefixed by the letter "W". Winchester Simmons Co. (after their merger in 1922) used a similar series for their Keen Kutter brand, prefixed by the letter "K". Prior to 1927 the four digit number is used, and after 1927, the W-prefixed number is used. Some tools produced have no numbers on them, because the tools were marked either on the boxes they came in or had paper tags that were lost through use. Other tools have the W-prefixed number cast into the tool or stamped into the end of the handle of the tool.

During 1927, Winchester developed the "Tool Special of the Month". There are 7 of these Specials and they are all marked with the word Special and four of them also have the month stamped on them.

February: Hacksaw; July: 3" Household Screwdriver; September: 16 oz. Hammer; October: 6" Slip joint Pliers; No Month: Hatchet; 22" Hand Saw & 4" Regular Pattern Screwdriver. These are all very scarce and hardly ever seen today. This tool promotion was obviously the forerunner of the True Value Hardware Stores, "Tool Value of the Month" promotion of the present day.

### An Experiment that Failed

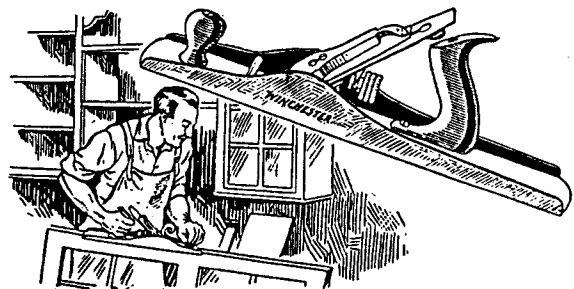
Winchester's dealer-agency method of retail operations, known as "The Winchester Store", began operation in May, 1920 and after the

merger with Simmons Hardware of ST. Louis, MO, in 1922, reached its peak in 1924-26. ( In July 1924, there were 7,584 separate items that were Winchester branded merchandise and the total number of retail dealers in 1926 reached a maximum of 6,300.) The advertising slogan " As Good As the Gun" was adopted in 1927 to describe Winchester branded hardware items so that they could be tied into national advertising and promotion. Finally, in 1927, the cutlery, sporting goods and tool lines began to return a small positive gross, the first since the new lines were added. But by then it was too late to help the company, and the recession of 1929, followed by the depression of 1930-31, cause sales to decline. The company went into receivership in January, 1931.

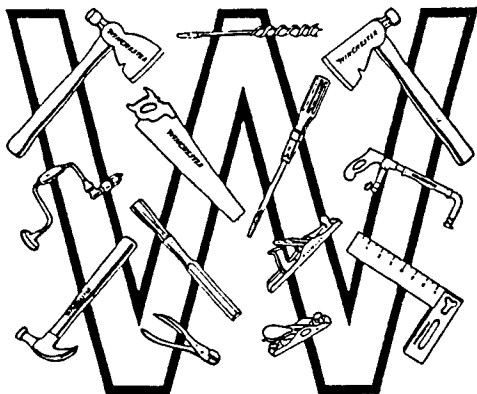
During the approximate 12 years of their experiment in the new lines, Winchester had \$44.7 million of net sales in their new lines as opposed to \$124.3 million in old line net sales (guns and ammunition). The new line sales were 36% of total net sales, however the experiment operated at such a loss that it forced receivership of the entire company. Western Cartridge Company of East Alton, IL, purchased the business in December 1931.

Simmons Hardware sold out its remaining stock of Winchester items as noted in their Catalog U of 1930. The new owners of Winchester, Western Cartridge Company, decided to continue only the production of the flashlight, battery, pocket knife and roller skate lines from the new line experiment.

A recent resurgence of the quality of Winchester products is evident in an Ohio company's reproduction of Winchester pocket knives using old patterns and numbers. These products are licensed by Winchester and are



## WINCHESTER TOOLS QUALITY GOODS



"AS GOOD AS THE GUN"

excellent quality as exemplified by the 1927 slogan-" As Good As the Gun".

### Bibliography:

1927 Winchester Product Catalog, New Haven, CT:  
"Winchester Repeating Arms Company, 1926

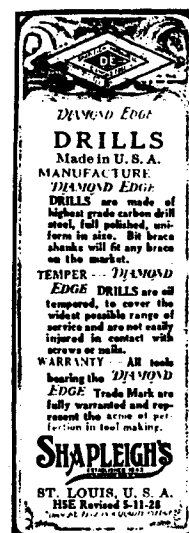
Parker, James F., The Official Price Guide To  
Collector Knives, 9th Ed., New York: Random House,  
1987

Simmons Hardware Catalog U, St. Louis, MO:  
Simmons Hardware Company, 1930

Williamson, Harold F., WINCHESTER The Gun That  
Won The West, New York; A.S. Barnes and Company,  
1952

### IN THE MAILBOX

THCKK member, C.H. Key, writes that Winchester also purchased the Hendryx Bird Cage Company, New Haven, CT, which put Winchester in the fishing tackle business in 1919-1920. Winchester reels and metal lures were patterned after Hendryx patterns. He referred our readers to Hendryx Winchester Catalogues No. 1922, 1926, 1927, 1928. He also alerted us to some "phoney" Winchester tools that he is aware of. Winchester spurs (made in Korea); wood pencils (red & green, look new); metal banks (looks old); mantel clocks (game birds on face); metal files, different sizes (stamped in California); brass metal plates (not dated on back); fishing lures (poorly stamped on thin metal). He said that he had found some early Stanley hammers that had been re-stamped.



### DIAMOND EDGE by Larry Eastley

As I sit down to write this article my mind is filled with questions about the Shapleigh Hardware Company i.e.: who started the company, how did they get started, when did they get started, and where were they located. In trying to establish these facts I've never actually tried to research it, I just eagerly read any information that I come across. Tom Basore, our president, asked us to be as factual and accurate as possible, and I will strive to comply, however as we endeavor to accomplish the task I expect our readers to not criticize our efforts but to augment it whenever and wherever it is in error or lacking in facts.

Let us begin with, who started the Shapleigh Hardware Company? Augustus Frederick Shapleigh is the individual who started the A. F. Shapleigh Hardware Co. A. F. Shapleigh was born January 10, 1810 in New Hampshire, and can trace his ancestors back to Alexander Shapleigh, who came to America in



1635, on one of his own ships named *Benediction*. Alexander Shapleigh came from Kittery Point, Devonshire, England as representative of Sir Ferdinand Gorges. Upon landing in this country, he proceeded to build the first house at what he called Kittery Point, Maine. Captain Elisha Shapleigh, grandfather of Augustus was captain of a company of New Hampshire troops in the War for Independence. Captain Richard Shapleigh, father of Augustus, was killed in a shipwreck in 1813 on a ship named *Granville*, of which he was both master and owner. Augustus was only three years of age when his father was killed and was forced to seek employment at an early age in order to provide for his own support.

At age fifteen, Augustus secured a position in a hardware store in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. However it was clear the Shapleigh family were seafaring people and Augustus yearned to follow in his father's footsteps with a life at sea. He left his position at the hardware store and spent the next three years sailing between America and Europe. He was finally persuaded by his mother and sisters to give up his sailor's life. Augustus returned to the hardware business in 1829 securing a position with the hardware house of Rodgers Brothers & Company, of Philadelphia.

This particular period in our history was one of tremendous growth and expansion, and Rodgers Brothers & Company wanted to capitalize on this opportunity. Since the expansion was toward the west, the logical place was the largest city on a major river system, which was the city of St. Louis, Missouri.

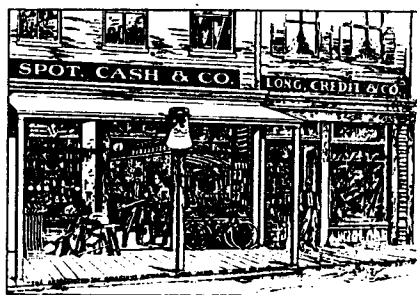
Augustus having been raised to the level of junior partner was selected to head this new branch. In 1843, he moved to St. Louis and opened the Rodger, Shapleigh & Company, located at 414 Main ST. between Locust and Vine. Thus the first hardware house to bear the family name of Shapleigh, and the beginning of over 100 continuous years of service to the hardware industry, was born.



I would like to take a few moments at this time to thank Scott Wilkerson of Greencastle, IN for sending me my first article. When I wrote the article in the first newsletter I tried to use the writing technique of Mike Kinney, the teamsters name Saunders Norvell used to write the *Gimlet* under, using a little humor and fun. Scott, your letter brought me to the realization that the people who collect this hardware are way above my intellect. Your letter was an excellent example of the knowledge that exists out there in the land of hardware collectors. I had fully intended to put your article in this issue but got carried away and will try to put it in at a later date.

Again I would like for every one who reads this to sit down and write me a letter about your favorite Shapleigh item or story. I would like for you to send me pictures of your favorite items and pictures of any catalogues from 1880 to 1960, with the intention of compiling a list of all catalogues printed by Shapleigh Hardware.

Please send to: Larry E. Eastley, RR 1• Box 65, Hardin, MO 64035. (816) 398-4617. Fax (816) 398-4617.



#### DATING THE KEEN KUTTER LOGO

by Alvin Sellens

(The following article is reprinted by permission. It first appeared in the March 1996 issue of *The Gristmill* (M-WTCA))

The Keen Kutter logo of the Simmons Hardware Company is familiar to all tool collectors and dealers, but few are able to date the several varieties of the mark. Ask any dealer to date a KK item and you will receive an answer of anywhere from 1850 to 1970.

The earliest documented form of the logo was a shield with the general appearance of illustration (a). The shield was not standardized and therefore appeared in several variations. Usually, the shield outline contained the words "E.C. Simmons" and, quite often, the word "Celebrated" was added. Just what was celebrated was not clear.

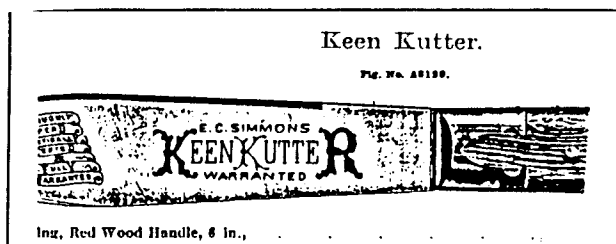


(a)

The Keen Kutter name was first used on high quality axes but was quickly extended for use on other cutting implements. The 1880 catalogue states that Keen Kutter axes were first introduced in 1866. The name, according to one of the later Simmons catalogues, was chosen as a logo in 1870. It is likely that both of these dates are correct. That is, the axes were labeled Keen Kutter in 1866, but the name was not adopted as a logo until 1870. At least two other dates have been mentioned in Simmons literature as the starting point of the KK mark; however, the 1880 statement is considered to have the most credibility because of its early date.

The shield logo was used primarily on handled edge tools such as axes and adzes, but was also used on numerous types of paper items such as invoices and postcards. The words Keen Kutter without a border were used on small items such as files, saws and cutlery. Quite often, these early marks were decorated with fanciful capital letters and filigree designs. An example of this type mark is shown in illustration (b). Sometimes the words "E.C. Simmons" appeared adjacent to the mark.

Wood chisels and plane irons bearing the Keen Kutter Rectangular Saw-Tooth emblem similar to illustration (c) was first noted in 1891 and the KK Banner mark per illustration (d) was listed in the 1895 catalogue. Plane irons and planes with the Semi-Circular Saw-Tooth logo (e) can be dated around 1900. It should be noted that the words Keen Kutter were generally written with straight block letters rather than the slanted letters used after 1904.



(b)

Starting in 1905, all other Keen Kutter marks were replaced by the famous Wedge and Bar logo. Of course, there was a minor overlap of the two marks until existing stocks had sold out. One early 1905 invoice carried both the shield and the new wedge and bar. Illustration (f) shows the mark as it was drawn on the early Simmons trademark applications. Only the words Keen Kutter appeared within the outline of the logo. Several of the early applications (1906) state that the mark had been used continuously by the company for 15 years. The words Keen Kutter used within the outline of the mark had actually been used for several years but the wedge and bar had definitely not been used in the trade literature prior to 1905. It can only be assumed that Simmons fudged the facts somewhat on the trademark applications to implement rapid approval. As a matter of interest, Simmons referred to the logo as: the words Keen Kutter and a figure of a wedge shape having three-sided projections at its sides and on which said words appear".

Illustration (g) shows the St. Louis U.S.A. mark as it appeared in the catalogues and other

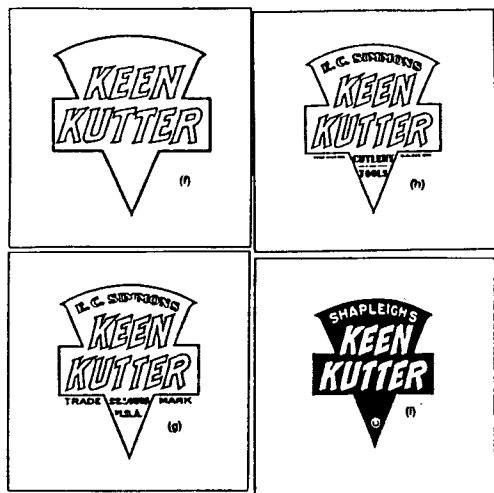
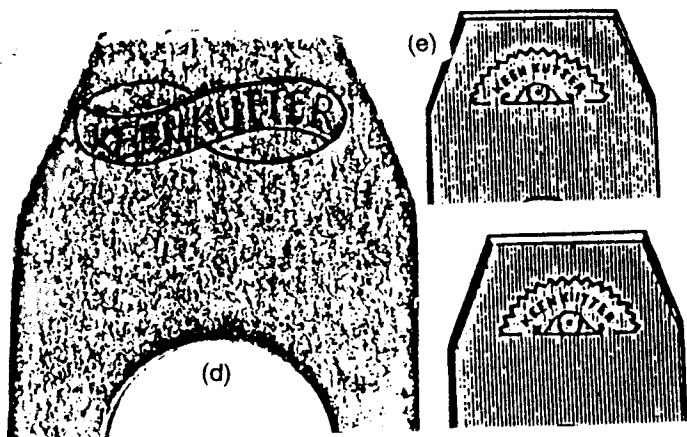
(c)



advertising literature starting in 1905. The words were changed to Cutlery & Tools, illustration (h) in 1912. That (h) mark was used for many years and was continued even after Simmons was sold to the Shapleigh Hardware Company in 1940. The last noted example of this particular mark is on a 1946 invoice.

The wedge and bar logo with just the words Keen Kutter and without any words was used throughout the period on small items where use of the more intricate logo was impractical. The words Keen Kutter without an outline were also used during this period.

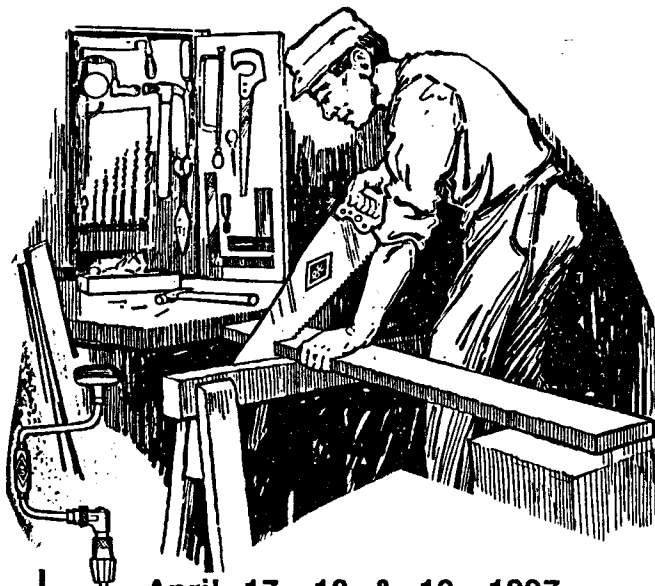
Information about Shapleigh Hardware Company for the 1940's is sparse. It is known that sometime between 1945 and 1951, the wedge and bar logo was changed to include the word Shapleigh's as shown in (j). Shapleigh went out of business about 1960. Many of the original Simmons trademark certificates were renewed by Shapleigh after 1940 and were renewed again by Val-Test Distributors Inc. after 1960.



Larry and I have discussed several ideas about future or on-going features for upcoming issues of the newsletter. The following is a brief listing of some of them. We are hoping to hear from THCKK members with contributions for these columns as well as suggestions for others.

1. Member's Favorite: Pictures of various members' favorite or most unusual pieces in their collections etc.
2. Great Finds and/ or The One That Got Away
3. Stories and Anecdotes about members collecting experiences
4. Hardware Stores Still in Operation. Family owned, etc. that started out as Keen Kutter, Diamond Edge or Winchester Stores and are still doing business today. Such as Mike Weinzen's in Gladsbrook, IA.
5. On the Road: Pictures from around the country of old Hardware Store buildings still standing, such as the Keen Kutter clock tower in Wichita, KS.
6. Featured Members: Interviews, etc. from THCKK members. Getting to know each other better.
7. A photo page of various hardware company-related postcards, tradecards, promotions and advertising
8. Book Reviews
9. Mailbox; Toasts & Tidbits
10. Patent Information, Variations, Oddities, etc.
11. Fakes, Fantasies & Reproduction Alerts

## Upcoming Events of Possible Interest to our Members



### April 17, 18 & 19, 1997 Southwest Tool Collectors Assn. Spring Meet\*

Best Western Red Coach Inn  
Wichita, KS (316) 832-9387  
(SWTCA Members Only)

### APRIL 18 & 19, 1997 Missouri Valley Wrench Club Spring Meet\*

Best Western Red Coach Inn  
Wichita, KS (316) 832-9387  
(MVWC Members Only)  
\*Reservations due by April 11.

\* This is a combined meet. Visiting will be reciprocal between the separate trading rooms. Must be members. Security provided. Special requests made for KK, DE, Winchester, Snap-On.

ANTIQUE TOOLS AUCTION  
FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1997, 7:30 PM.  
Estate Of Ralph Jordan, Russell, KS.  
Red Coah In, 53rd St. North & I-35  
(Not A Public Auction, For Members Of SWTCA & MVWC ONLY.) For more information on these events & how to join these two interesting organizations, contact: Emery L. Goad, 724 N. Main, Wichita, KS 67203 (316)267-1356

# TOOL MEET TODAY

OPEN 9-5

Now You Take  
Hon, I'll Scout Out  
ONE SIDE. ~~Remember~~  
THE OTHER. ~~Remember~~  
STAY CALM! DON'T  
ACT TOO INTERESTED.  
PLAY IT REAL COOL!!

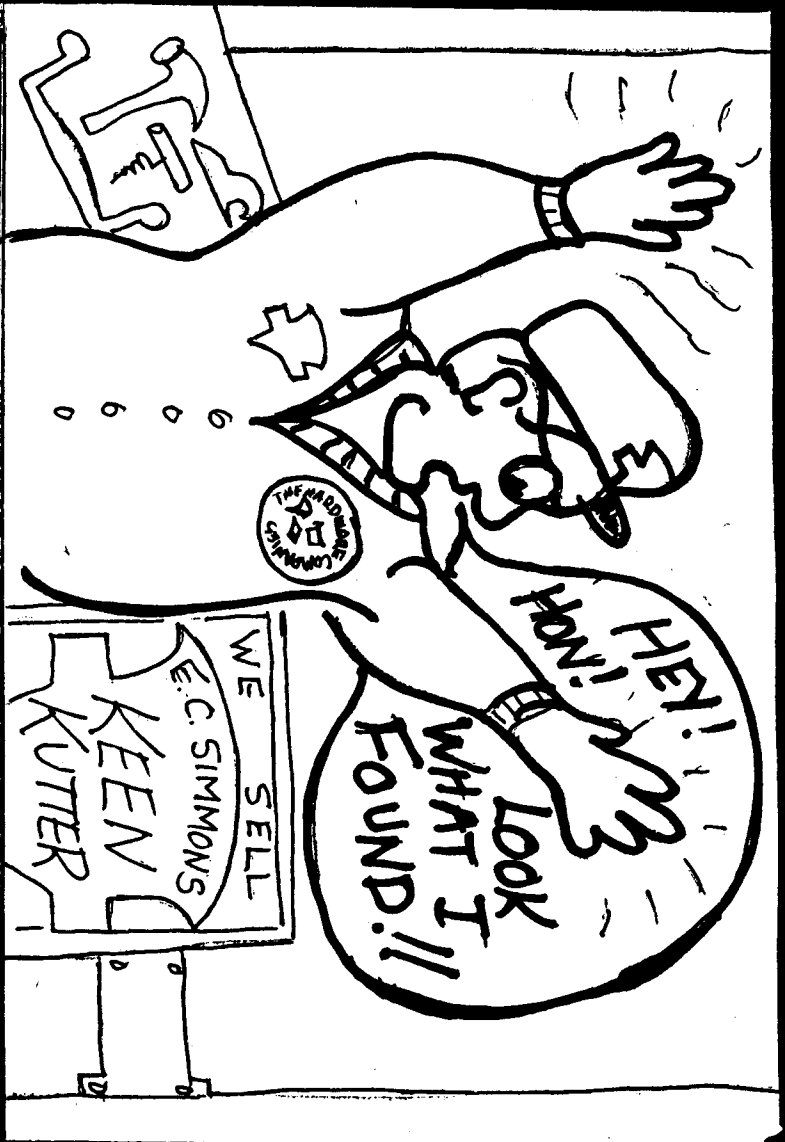
Well,  
Here We Go  
AGAIN!!

OK,  
Dear...

I'll TRY TO BARGAIN.  
~~Remember!~~ Don't  
GET ALL EXCITED!

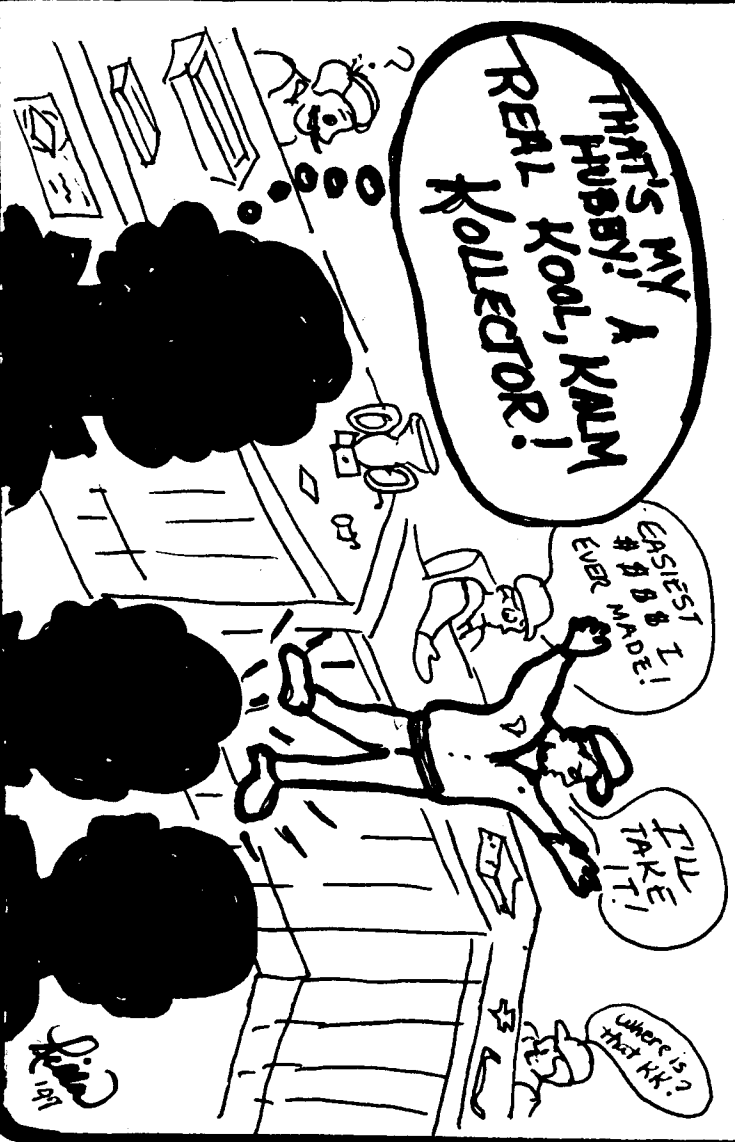


PRICE GUIDE



HEN! M3  
Look  
WHAT I  
FOUND!!

WE SELL  
E.C. SIMMONS  
KEEN  
KUTTER



THAT'S MY A KALM  
HUBBY! KALM  
REAL KOLLECTOR!

EASIEST  
\$ \$ \$ \$ \$  
EVER MADE!

I'll  
TAKE!

Where is?  
That KK?

KEEN