



AT WORK

PRECISION MEASUREMENTS MATTERED

Because 3D printing was not an option.

BY JOSEPH F. SADLOW • NORTH READING, MA

At the Wensley Pattern Works in Lynn, Massachusetts, in the early 1920s, workers dressed neatly, often wearing white shirts, ties and suspenders. The workshop was organized with overhead belt drives and visible, rather haphazard electrical wiring.

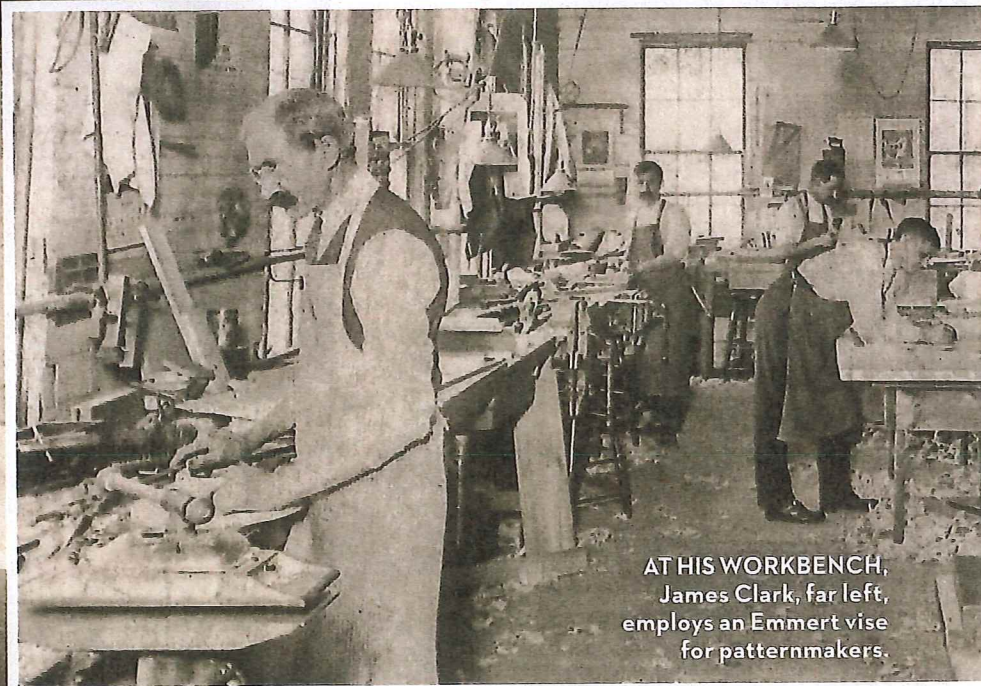
Everyone had access to the tools needed for the work. Dozens of parallel clamps hung from walls or from center posts. The sprinkler system was overhead, and telephone bells

were situated on the walls or on overhead beams. Prized Emmert vises were fitted to most of the workbenches, which had tool chests underneath.

Years later, I owned and operated the shop from 1970 to 1976 and employed four people. We made patterns for aluminum, brass and cast-iron castings. One of the patterns was for an 8-foot-diameter door that fit a tubular kiln. When a fire destroyed the building, I was forced to close the shop.



WENSLEY PATTERN WORKS in Lynn, MA, made patterns for nearby General Electric and other customers. Photos of the shop were taken in 1925.



AT HIS WORKBENCH, James Clark, far left, employs an Emmert vise for patternmakers.

But I still enjoy reminiscing about the old-time patternmakers who fabricated complicated designs and models aided only by a few antiquated machines and their skilled handcraftsmanship. It's like night and day compared to modern-day shops.

Today, computer-aided design and numerous other manufacturing processes such as die casting, injection molding, thermoforming and 3D printing have replaced the pattern shops of bygone days.

At 92, I believe that the old-time patternmakers should be remembered and held in high esteem for their wonderful craftsmanship and the inestimable contributions they made to everyday life. ●

DIAGRAM: WWW.USPTO.GOV

(No Model.)

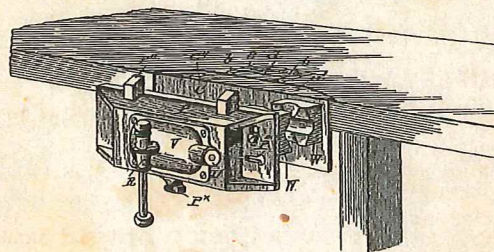
J. F. EMMERT.
BENCH VISE.

8 Sheets—Sheet 1.

No. 457,710.

Patented Aug. 11, 1891.

Fig. 1.



THE IRON HAND



- On Aug. 11, 1891, Joseph F. Emmert received a patent for his bench vise.
- Unlike other vises, the Emmert rotates in any direction, and its jaws pivot.
- Early woodworkers, toolmakers and machinists found Emmert vises essential to their job functions.
- Today, used Emmert patternmaker's vises can be found starting at \$350.

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