

## Pappy's Tools

By Sam Seabright

It shattered when I dropped it. I almost cried.

High on a ladder while scraping paint, I dropped the old scraper and it fell on the concrete and shattered. My grandfather made this tool and many others like it, with care and workmanship rarely seen today.

Heinrich Siebrecht, "Pappy" to me, was a blacksmith from Hanover, Germany, who plied his skilled trade with pride and expertise. He crafted picks, hammers, and augers under contract with U. S. Steel for coal mines in Boggs Run. He could make just about anything, including horseshoes, but he refused to do "a farrier's job." He came to America to start a new life, a family, and a business. He had many talents, and built two homes and a blacksmith shop on the hillside by the creek.



I often watched him and dad hammer hot steel while I caught sparks in my crib. When I was big enough, I turned the blower crank on the forge. This is how he made the scraper: after forging raw steel to glowing red, he hammered and formed it, punched two holes, then filed the blade to a keen sharpness. Next he reheated the tool to dull red, plunged it into oil, and withdrew it at a precise rate, forming a moving "blue line" of crystallized steel—extremely hard and durable, but brittle as glass. Good thing he made two, because I still use the other scraper. Over all those years, it never lost its keen edge.

In a similar way he made garden tools, hinges, latches, chains, chisels, tongs, and crowbars. And he was just as tough, durable, -and sharp- as the tools he made. Each tool required different metallurgical and mechanical processes to produce the right ductility, strength, hardness, and other properties. I'm sure that observing these processes is one reason why I became an engineer.

Dad sold most of Pappy's tools but I saved some and still use them. When Pappy passed on I was shattered, and I cried.