

# Garrattsville Manufacturing Company

by James Mau

**In the mid 1800s the industrialization of America began to spread out into the rural communities of the eastern states. In New York, supplies of iron, talented craftsmen, and water for a bountiful power supply were available.**

Several hammer factories also started in New York State in the mid-1800s. David Maydole started the Maydole Hammer Factory in 1847 in Norwich, New York. Sixty two miles north of Norwich, in Little Falls, NY, blacksmith Henry Cheney started his hammer factory in 1845. Thirty three miles east of Norwich, in 1842 Victory Jackson Warren started the Garrattsville Manufacturing Company. Records from 1850s list other New York hammer companies. The surge in hammer production at this time was probably due to a change in carpentry construction technique. Building construction was changing from timber frame method to stick framing. The new framing system resulted in a need for carpentry hammers.

The subject of this article is the Garrattsville Manufacturing Company. This company had a short life compared to other hammer companies. It would not have much significance to tool collectors except for the fact that Garrattsville Manufacturing Company made the Solomon Anderson curved claw hammer. The design of the Anderson hammer with its hooped claw that swoops down around the hammer handle has made the tool extremely popular with hammer collectors and other tool collectors. Sale prices for this hammer have been estimated in recent tool auctions to be in excess of \$1200.<sup>1</sup>

Research for this hammer factory has been difficult. The time span from the factory's opening to its closing was a mere thirteen years. Not much time for historical events to be recorded. The most remarkable aspect of its existence was that it created over one hundred jobs in the small community of Garrattsville. Sources of information for this article were: Census Reports, a 1987 self-published book *Garrattsville A History*<sup>2</sup> by Garrattsville native Rosalie Smith, 1850 memoirs of a Society of Friends member that were republished by a relative of the original author in 1912<sup>3</sup>, U.S. Patent Files, and old maps of Garrattsville, NY. Two documents found in libraries in Washington, DC aided in the research for this article.

The founder of the Garrattsville Manufacturing Company was Victory Jackson Warren. According to the book *Garrattsville A History* Mr. Warren had come to the village in the early 1840s to build the Methodist Church. After the church was completed in 1841, Victory Warren acquired a saw mill on the northwest section of Garrattsville. Warren, according to Smith in her Garrattsville history book, enlarged the

building and put in machinery for a hammer factory. The water supply for the mill was two ponds on Trout Creek. The water supply turned out to be insufficient for the hammer mill so Warren relocated his factory on Butternut Creek at a location south east of the outskirts of Garrattsville. Smith claims that even today, the perimeters of the Butternut Creek pond are still distinguishable. The manufacturing company on Butternut Creek made forks, mops, and hammers. However, when reading the commentary of the Garrattsville town folks it was usually referred to as "The Hammer Factory". A "List of Prices of V.J. Warrens Goods, Manufactured by the Garrattsville Manufacturing Co."<sup>4</sup> was discovered in the files at the National Museum of American History's Library in Washington, DC. Figure #1 is a reduction of the 8" x 12" original of this single sheet flyer. This document listed 21 styles of hay or manure forks, 12 styles of nail hammers, 3 riveting hammers, 4 blacksmiths' and machinists' hammers, 3 chipping hammers, and 2 patent mops. In the offering of nail hammers there was one listing of C S (cast steel) Anderson's Patent. Victory Warren must have thought highly of the Anderson hammer because of the 22 styles of hammers on the price list only the Anderson hammer was distinguished in the listing with the name of the inventor and reference to its patent.

Smith states in her Garrattsville book that the products that were produced in Warren's factory were taken by horse team to the Empire Railway Station in Ilion, the nearest station at the time. The teamster would return to Garrattsville with a load of raw steel. The round trip took three days.<sup>5</sup>

The Anderson hammer was patented with a utility Patent #4,155 to Solomon Anderson on August 20, 1845. Determining where the hammer was produced has been a mystery to many collectors. Solomon Anderson's address listed in the patent was West Burlington, NY. Possible manufactures for the hammer might have been Henry Cheney's hammer factory that was only 70 miles north of West Burlington. The Maydole Hammer Co. in Norwich, NY was 28 miles southwest of West Burlington. The obscure Garrattsville factory was not known to many of today's researchers. Garrattsville and West Burlington are only five miles apart.

The 1850 U.S. Census lists Solomon Anderson as a New Lisbon (Garrattsville) resident. The 1860 Census has him residing in West Burlington, NY. Solomon Anderson also received Patent #77439 for a saw on May 5, 1868. His residence listed on that patent was West Burlington, NY. Anderson is not shown as a resident of either West Burlington or New Lisbon in the 1840 Census records. Solomon had a twin brother Homer who at the time of the 1850 census lived in Garrattsville. It is likely that West Burlington was

Solomon's home, but that he relocated to Garrattsville during the industrial rush caused by the hammer factory.

The Anderson hammer was unique in appearance. (See figure 2.) Prior to this design the hammer handle was the weakest part of a hammer when it was used for pulling nails. Broken handles were often replaced with a new handle that was carved by the carpenter in his "off hours". The metal reinforcement of the handle would appear to be a solution to reduce the broken handle fault. Such was not the case. The narrow metal strip that wrapped around the handle often broke in hard use and the metal strip was not easily replaced. Examples are often found of used Anderson hammers with wear indicating that the hammer had considerable use after the broken strap had been removed. (See figure 3). Figure 2 shows two sizes of the wrap-around claw hammer. The heads were round or sometimes hexagonal. The hammer heads were marked "S. Anderson Patent 1845". It was stated in Sandor Nagyza-

lancy's book, page 72, that there were six different sizes of the Anderson hammer made.<sup>6</sup>

The hammer had popularity on the east coast, but it also had some international exposure. An original issue of an 1855

**LIST OF PRICES**  
OF  
**V. J. WARREN'S GOODS,**  
MANUFACTURED BY THE  
**GARRATTSVILLE MANUFACTURING CO., OTSEGO COUNTY, NEW YORK.**

<b>4 TIME MANURE FORKS.</b>	
No. 1. C. S., 2d Growth H., R. T.	\$9 00
" 2. C. S., 1st " " R. T.	8 50
" 3. G. S., " " " R. T.	8 00
" 4. G. S., " " " R. T.	7 00
" 5. G. S., " " " D. T.	8 00
" 6. G. S., " " " D. T.	7 25
" 7. G. S., " " " D. T.	6 00
<b>3 TIME HAY FORKS.</b>	
No. 8. R. T. C. S., 2d Growth H.	\$7 00
" 9. R. T. C. S., 1st " "	6 50
" 10. R. T. G. S., " " "	6 00
" 11. R. T. G. S., " " "	5 50
" 12. D. T. G. S., " " "	5 00
" 13. D. T. G. S., " " "	5 00
" 14. D. T. G. S., " " "	4 75
<b>2 TIME HAY FORKS.</b>	
No. 15. R. T. C. S., 2d Growth H.	\$6 00
" 16. R. T. C. S., 1st " "	5 00
" 17. R. T. G. S., " " "	4 50
" 18. R. T. G. S., " " "	4 50
" 19. R. T. G. S., " " "	4 00
" 20. R. T. G. S., " " "	3 50
" 21. R. T. G. S., " " Boys'	2 50
<b>NAIL HAMMERS.</b>	
No. 1. C. S. Adze Eye,	\$9 00
" 2. C. S. " "	8 50
" 3. C. S. Claw,	6 00
" 4. C. S. " "	5 00
" 5. C. S. Bench,	5 00
" 6. C. S. Large Octagon,	3 00
" 7. C. S. Anderson's Patent,	7 00
" 8. C. S. Horse Shoeing,	6 00
" 9. C. S. Bush,	3 50
" 10. Steel Faced and Claw,	3 25
" 11. " " " "	3 25
" 12. C. S. Carpet,	2 00
<b>RIVETING HAMMERS.</b>	
No. 13. C. S.,	\$4 75
" 14. C. S.,	4 25
" 15. C. S.,	3 75
<b>BLACKSMITHS' AND MACHINISTS' HAMMERS.</b>	
No. 16. C. S.,	\$18 00
" 17. C. S.,	18 00
" 18. Steel Faced and Fancy,	18 00
" 19. " " " "	14 00
<b>CHIPPING HAMMERS.</b>	
No. 20. C. S.,	\$8 00
" 21. C. S.,	7 25
" 22. C. S.,	6 25
<b>PATENT HOOPS.</b>	
No. 1.	2 75
" 2.	2 50

Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 2



Figure 3



Spanish language catalog believed to be intended to market Central and South American hardware enterprises was discovered in the Library of Congress book holdings. The title of this document translates to: A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOG OF AN AMERICAN HARDWARE STORE, Tools – Instruments MACHINES AND OTHER ARTICLES, THAT ARE FOUND ON SALE AT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JOSE' H. ADAMS, ARCHITECT AGENT, 242 PEARL STREET, NEW YORK 1855.<sup>7</sup> Item number 54 on page 16 of this catalog has a picture of an Anderson hammer with a caption translated as: “Hammer, Patented Nail Anderson, Style”.

A newspaper series “Garrattsville and Its People in the Long Ago”<sup>8</sup> was published in The Morris Chronicle beginning March 27, 1912. In the fourth issue of this series the author reminisced about the Garrattsville Hammer Factory in the 1850s. Victory Warren’s success with his new hammer factory was discussed. The article describes how Warren built a big shop and a monstrous wheel. Warren hired a lot of workmen, built a boarding house for workers, and had things to his liking so long as he could get other people’s money to do it with. According to this Globe article investors became distrustful of Warren, and they wanted some return on their loans to him. Warren either could not or would not heed their demands. On January 22, 1855 Victory Warren acknowledged in court documents<sup>9</sup> that he could not pay his indebtedness, and he listed a distribution of his property and effects among his creditors.

The hammer mill was included in this deposition, but there is not any information as to whether hammer production was resumed. A map dated 1856 shows a fork factory on

the Warren site.<sup>10</sup> A map from 1868 shows no factory at the Warren site.<sup>11</sup>

Warren and his family left New York and immigrated to Canada. Not much information has been found concerning the Warren family in Canada. It is known that the remains of Victory Jackson Warren and his wife Lucinda Kellogg Warren are buried in Belleville Plot L in Sidney Township, Hastings County, of Ontario Canada.

1. Bown Tool Auctions, 27 Ficket Road, Pownal, ME 04069. Sale listing 44th International Antique Tool Sale & Auction Mar.28-29, 2014. B440 Patented Hammer.
2. Smith, Rosalie, Garrattsville A History, self published, 1985.
3. “Garrattsville and Its People In the Long Ago” The Morris Chronicle March 27, 1912; 4th issue. Reprint of 1850 articles.
4. “A List of Prices Garrattsville Mfg. Co.” one sided; est. 1850. National Museum of American History – Washington, DC.
5. Smith, Rosalie, Garrattsville A History, self published, 1985.p.114
6. Nagyszalanczy, Sandor The Art Of Fine Tools, Taunton Press, Newtown, CT; ISBN 1-56158-361 Paperback, 1998. P.72.
7. CATALOGO DESCRIPTIVO DE FERRETERIA AMERICANA Herramientas, MAQUINAS Y OTROS ARTICULOS,QUE SE HALLAN DE VENTA En La Grasa de JOSE' H. ADAMS, AGENTE DE LOS FABRICANTES, 242 CALLE DE PEARL-NUEVA – YORK.1855.
8. “Garrattsville and Its People In the Long Ago” The Morris Chronicle March 27, 1912; 4th issue. Reprint of 1850 articles.
9. Grantee Index Otsego County Building, Cooperstown, NY. 103 39; 104 1; 109 284 Land records Liber 103Pp. 39-40
10. A map dated 1856 from map files in New Lisbon Historian's files. Source references not available.
11. Map of Garrattsville from 1868 Beer's Atlas of Otsego County.

I would like to express my appreciation to Virginia A. Schoradt, Historian, Town of New Lisbon, New York for locating and sharing many of the Garrattsville references that were used in this article.

## Together again

by Dave Christen

Around 1972, I bought at an auction an empty toolbox. It was native walnut brass bound with S. C. HELMS in brass tacks on the lid. From the looks of it, probably 1870-1880. It was not top of the line but one that most of us would be happy to have. Samuel Cotton Helms was born in 1854 at Lima IA. About five miles from where I live.

Over the next 20 years, I filled it with period tools from the area. About ten years ago I gave up looking for a level that fit the space for a level. So I had one made.



Just before Christmas 2014, I was going through my saws separating the wheat from the chafe. I happened to catch



a glimpse of dots on the handle of a saw I had handled many times. After getting better light, I saw S C Helms on the other side S.H. After cleaning it up, I discovered it was a Disston No. 8 from the late 1870s.

What a thrill. After 40 years I united a tool to the toolbox.