Mystery Solved

By Steve Gosselin

Recently on a snowy December day when there wasn't much going on, I went through my box of tool projects. It's a box of incomplete, unloved, and sometime interesting tools. Some of the tools end up there on Sunday evening after a meeting because I don't have time mess with them .That day I pulled out a wooden ship builders bevel ,user made , out of Mahogany I think. What interested me in the first place was the tool was signed in two places with the name, Alpheus H. Brooks Elliot. It was in ink done with a neat cursive writing. Who was so proud of this tool he had to sign it twice?

I typed the name into the computer and pressed enter. I was greeted with several Brooks Elliot's as well as the" Elliot "Scottish web site. Elliot is a big clan I guess. No mention of an Alpheus though. I tried Alpheus by its self, no luck. Finally after many combinations I tried 'Alpheus H. Brooks' and was rewarded for my efforts. I was able to find an 'Alpheus H. Brooks', born in 1810, and he was listed in the 1850 census as a carpenter living in Eliot, Maine, married with two children. I contacted the Eliot historic society and found out that in the early years many people spelled the town name Elliot as well as Eliot (the correct spelling).   I also learned the in 1860 census listed Alpheus as a ships carpenter. Eliot is across the river from Portsmouth, New Hampshire and at that time was a busy ship building center.   By the 1870 census, Alpheus had remarried, having lost his first wife, and he and his son, Alpheus B. Brooks were both listed as ships carpenters.

Alpheus H. lived till 1897; he is buried in in Eliot with his second wife and two of his children. As late as the 1880 census, he was still listed as carpenter, at age 70.I never found out what the H., his middle initial stood for, oh, well.

I'm I sure that Alpheus made the 100 plus year old bevel I now own? No , only he knows but I think he made it, and if it wasn't him, some other Alpheus H. Brooks took the time to sign his name, twice. I will never know for sure, but I had a great time trying to find out