

2010 East Coast Meeting Report by Paul McConnell



On Saturday, 6 November, Oughtred Society members and their guests attended the 2010 Fall Meeting held at the Wingate in Vineland, New Jersey. A total of sixteen people attended.

The morning passed quickly as members set out their exhibits and auction items, sipped coffee, caught up with their friends' latest projects and discoveries, and welcomed several first-time attendees.

After socializing for a while, each member was given an opportunity to inform the group about the items they chose to display.

Frank Adorney dazzled the crowd with his "Hudson 8" slide rule prototypes - the original "Deci-Lon" slide rule examples that Frank constructed by hand. Frank, a graduate of the

U.S. Naval Academy, was assigned there as part of the Athletic Department. During that time, James Bland, Professor of Mathematics at the Academy and formerly one of Frank's professors, was designing the "Hudson 8" rule. He asked Frank to make the prototypes for him. Clark McCoy told Frank's story in his article about the "Hudson 8" in the Fall 2010 issue of the JOS. It was nice to see the artifacts up close.



Stefan Burr described his assortment of cardboard slide rules, often called "slide charts".

Bruce Babcock's display featured two automatic integrating steam engine indicators. The engine indicator was the first instrument to present information in a graphical format. Analysis of an indicator diagram included measuring with a planimeter the area bounded by the line drawn during the reading. The automatic integrating indicator included a built-in planimeter that showed the area in numerical form. Bruce also presented a wide variety of slide rules all made from metal.

Michael Frey brought his collection of K & E slide rules. He also displayed a poster he created that charts K & E model lines throughout

the company's history. The poster received a lot of attention during the course of the day.



Louis Gotlib brought an assortment of rules that included a nice group of chemical slide rules and chemical calculators.

David Ingram displayed a large assortment of slide rules made especially for surveyors. He also brought a replica of a puzzling circular rule from the W. & L. E. Gurley company.

Paul McConnell described three mechanisms that represent what he called "extinct branches on the tree of information technology": the Linotype distributor for sorting matrices, a unique gearing scheme used in NCR cash registers, and a family of pneumatic logic devices. He also brought "The Slide Rules of 2010", showing this year's harvest from the flea markets.

Bob Otnes discussion is unavailable.



Ted and Fay Palen offered a variety of rules and books for sale. Ted also shared his observations about the ups and downs of slide rule availability at sales, flea markets and antique shows.

Conrad Schure presented a splendid assortment of ivory rules and sectors, including an English rule apparently made for a ship's captain.

Bill Stanley brought an assortment of favorites, including slide rules for the nuclear industry.

Carl Strange also showed some of his favorites, and offered a tip for restoring the clarity and shine to plastic cursors that have become "frosted" from a lifetime of abrasion.

Bill Wheeler presented a selection of the wooden duplex display cases he creates, as described in his article in the Fall 2010 issue of the JOS. Each case is designed to house a particular set of rules, and is made from wood with special history, such as a tree that was brought down by a tornado. Bill even brought a few boards still edged with the original tree bark.



After "Show-and-Tell" the group was given a last chance to survey the auction items, then adjourned for lunch.

Upon returning to the conference room, Bob Otnes and Conrad Schure offered an insight into what members might expect to experience at the International Meeting in 2011. Among other things, Bob emphasized the need to get papers in soon, since the publishing deadline for the IM2011 book is near.

Members' concerns included finding lodging in the Boston area.

Other IM2011 topics include:

Dates (Friday, 23 September through Sunday, 25 September 2011)
International scope
Description of venue and typical day's agenda
Entertainment for spouses
Lulu as a repository and distribution medium for papers
Tom Wyman is contact for papers
Tour of the Harvard Collection of Scientific Instruments



Next, members enhanced their collections with the auction and swap session.

After everyone had filled their bags and emptied their wallets, the room was vacated as some folks headed for home and others departed to visit the Wheaton Museum of American Glass. Those touring the Wheaton Museum were rewarded with a special treat: the electrical power failed, so we had a tour illuminated by windowlight and flashlight. Surely, an experience to be remembered!

A few members enjoyed dinner at the Saigon Restaurant before returning to their lodging. Sunday morning breakfast allowed a final period of conversation before the last few members headed for home.

