

STANLEY “LIBERTY BELL” PLANE TYPE STUDY

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This study version updates and replaces that of September 2008.

The starting point for this type study is the information in John Walter's book, *Antique & Collectible STANLEY TOOLS*. I have cast it in the more usual type study format used by Roger K. Smith. The Liberty Bell type points closely parallel those of the Bailey-Stanley planes and those type studies should be reviewed by the reader. I have retained the letter designations of illustrations which are in common with Bailey-Stanley plane type studies.

“Liberty Bell” is a contemporary name given these planes by collectors. Period Stanley catalogs refer to these planes as the Stanley Adjustable Plane. The Liberty Bell design commemorates the Centennial Celebration of American Independence and was introduced by Stanley at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. Stanley made the Liberty Bell plane in five wood bottom with metal frame models, numbers; 122, 127, 129, 132 and 135. Two metallic models, numbers; 104 and 105 were also made. Model numbers prefixed with “1” correspond to Bailey-Stanley wood bottom models and with “10” to Bailey-Stanley iron models.

The most unique feature of these planes is the screw-down lever cap with a cast Liberty Bell emblem enclosing the numerals “76”. These castings vary considerably in quality and definition. The lever cap engages a cross bar on the frame with either one or two pair of notches, or a ramp. Another unique feature is the compound-lever cutter depth adjuster, with a two-piece cutter spur that engages the levers. This feature is the Traut & Richards 4/18/1876 patent. These planes have neither adjustable frogs nor lateral adjusters, as found in Bailey-Stanley models.

The toe trademark stamps used on types 1 and 2 Liberty Bell wood bottom planes are likely the same ones used on corresponding Bailey-Stanley wood bottom planes. The prefixed “1” in the model numbers has been hand-stamped and is of different font, size and alignment.

The production of these planes was deeply resented by Leonard Bailey. He sued Stanley, claiming the lower priced Liberty Bells were competing against the Bailey line licensed to Stanley. Bailey lost the suit and Stanley sold these planes for approximately 42 years, discontinuing them in 1918. Several companies, Union Manufacturing Co. and Ohio Tool among them, made close knock-offs of the Liberty Bell models after Stanley patents expired.

Many collectors consider early examples of the Stanley model 120 block plane to be part of the Liberty Bell series. Though lacking the Liberty Bell lever cap design, Type 1 and early Type 2 block planes have the compound-lever cutter adjuster. The star cast in the cap nicely compliments the Liberty Bell. See References for studies of these planes.

The “S” and “B” casting marks seen on a variety of Stanley planes are assumed to be associated with outsourced foundries which have not been identified. Union Manufacturing Co. is known to have made castings for Stanley and may have used the “S” mark to identify its customer. The switch from “S” to “B” occurred about 1899. Stanley purchased the Bridgewater Iron Works in 1899. This could be the source of “B” casting marks. I have no supporting data for this supposition. It is only an observation of patterns found in the literature.

This study serves only to date the various planes and may be considered accurate to within a few years. Left-over parts from building one type plane were often used in the next type plane, thus blurring the type distinction. No truly functional changes occurred in the Liberty Bell line, with the possible exception of the Schade 4/19/1892 cutter/cap iron patent.

WOOD BOTTOM MODELS

The wood bottom Liberty Bell planes all have bottoms, totes and knobs of beech. They approximately follow the Bailey-Stanley wood bottom planes in terms of the features that differentiate the types.

TYPE 1. 1876 to 1886

- A. Trademark stamped on cutter
- I. Trademark stamped on toe and the “1” in the model number mismatches other numerals
- L1. Cast cap screw, Japanned, 13/16” diameter
- B. Lever cap has plain, ribbed back
- C. Cutter spur is attached to **cutter** with a round, slotted nut
- * Model 122 has frame sides ending in sharp curve

TYPE 2. 1886 to 1891

- All features of TYPE 1 except:
- G. Trademark, or A trademark, stamped on cuttter
- N. Trademark stamped on toe and the “1” in the model number still mismatches other numerals

TYPE 3. 1892 to 1899

- All features of TYPE 2 except:
- Q. Trademark on cutter
- * 4/19/1892 patent cutter
- * The “1” in the model number on the toe now matches other numerals
- * Some models have “S” cast on underside of frame
- D. Lever cap now has hex pattern ribs and “S” cast on back
- M. Cutter spur now attached to **cap iron** with hex nut

TYPE 3A. 1900 to 1904

- All features of TYPE 3 except:
- * May have “B” cast on top of frame behind cutter, model 122 inside frame heel
- L2. May have plated, cast lever cap screw with “STANLEY”, 3/4” diameter
- * May have “B” cast on back of lever cap
- * Model 122 frame sides extended fore and aft in smooth curve

TYPE 4. 1905 to 1909

- All features of TYPE 3A except:
- T. Trademark on cutter

TYPE 4A. 1909 Model 122 only

- All features of TYPE 3A except:
- O. Trademark on cutter
- * Pre- 4/19/1892 patent style cutter, extra-wide 7/16” slot
- * No marking on toe
- * “B” cast mark inside frame heel and back of lever cap
- L3. Plated, cast lever cap screw, 1” diameter
- * Frame sides extended fore and aft in smooth curve

TYPE 5. 1910 to 1918

- All features of TYPE 4 except:
- V. Trademark on cutter
- L4. Machined lever cap screw, 5/8” diameter

METALLIC MODELS

The metallic Liberty Bell planes have a cast iron core, with integral frog and adjuster, riveted to a sheet steel body. This is the Traut & Richards 10/5/1875 patent. Although the steel body is strong, it has a tendency to oxidize and many examples are found heavily rusted and pitted. These planes all have rosewood totes and knobs. The adjusting lever operates in the opposite direction to that of the wood bottom Liberty Bells. Lowering the lever advances the cutter. Lever caps are not interchangeable with the wood bottom types. There are no model numbers marked on these planes. These planes approximately follow the Bailey-Stanley iron planes in terms of the features that differentiate the types.

TYPE 1. 1876 to 1891

- A. Trademark or G trademark on cutter
- E. Side of plane stamped with 10/5/1875 patent
- L1. Cast lever cap screw, Japanned, 13/16" diameter
- C. Spur is attached to **cutter** with a round, slotted nut

TYPE 2. 1892 to 1899

All features of TYPE 1 except:

- Q. Trademark on cutter
- * 4/19/1892 patent cutter
- F. Lever cap has elongated hex pattern ribs and "S" cast on back
- M. Cutter spur now attached to **cap iron** with hex nut,

TYPE 2A. 1900 to 1904

All features of TYPE 2 except:

- * May have "B" cast on back of lever cap

TYPE 3. 1905 to 1909

All features of TYPE 2A except:

- T. Trademark on cutter
- * 10/5/1875 patent mark removed from side of plane
- L2. Cast, plated lever cap screw with "STANLEY", 3/4" diameter

TYPE 4. 1910 to 1918

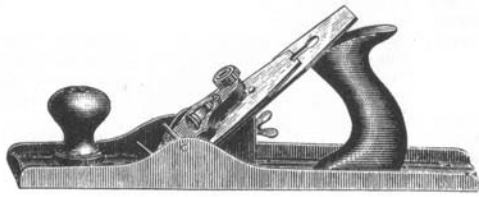
All features of TYPE 3 except:

- V. Trademark on cutter
- L4. Machined lever cap screw, 5/8" diameter added in 1911

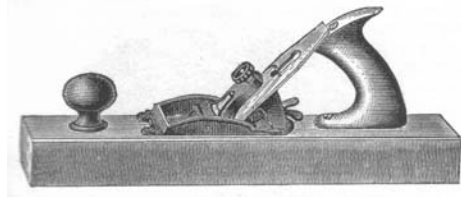
VARIANT

While the Type 4A model 122 plane might currently be the most commonly found Liberty Bell plane, it may be considered an anomaly. There is no marking on the toe; the L3 lever cap screw is only found on this plane; and after 17 years, a pre- 4/19/92 patent cutter is used.

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Number 105



Number 127

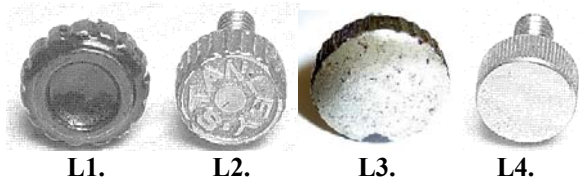
Cutter Trademarks



Toe & Body Trademarks



Lever Cap Screws



L1.

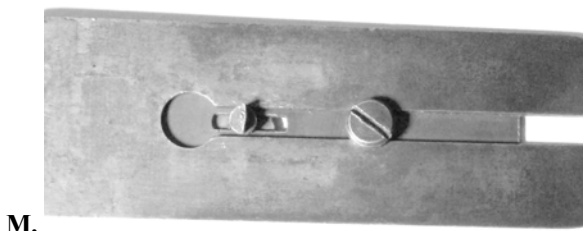
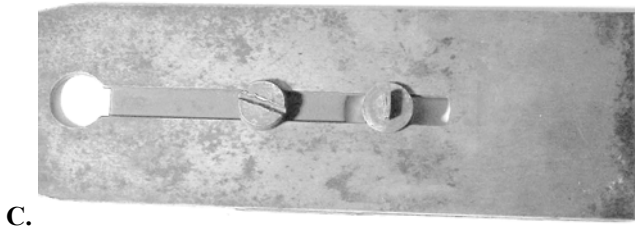
L2.

L3.

L4.

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Lever Caps and Cutters



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References

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