

Nathan Robertson

Jackpine Forge

My fascination with tools started sometime around the age of 5 when my parents gave me a set of real woodworking tools. A box of band-aids was soon to follow.. When I was 13 I started working as a carpenter with my father and spent the next 27 years in the trade, running my own business for 20 of those years. Blacksmithing became part of my life when a friend urged me to join a local group back in early 1998. Tools still were my biggest interest and by the following year I had a 50 lb Little Giant and the start of a metal shop. In 2000 I started making hammers to finance my new “hobby” but within two years it was a second full time business. I even spent a year doing a set of large gates for the St. Paul Cathedral in St. Paul Minnesota. In the fall of 2012 I got tired of the constant juggling and I finally hung up my carpenters tool belt and now concentrate solely on toolmaking and other forging. As of late October 2014 I've forged just shy of 4200 hammers of all types and sizes and hundreds of other tools. I've also taught classes all over the country and have no idea the numbers of students I've taught. My main interest anymore is flat die forging and tooling with power hammers and I've been fortunate enough to glean information over the years from smiths like Clifton Ralph, Bob Bergman, Steve Parker, and Phil Cox. I truly believe that I learn something every time I work a piece of hot steel whether by hand or in the power hammer though I'll never know it all. I'm just happy to be able to share the little bit I do know and pass on what has been taught to me.

I'm especially excited to be demonstrating for BAM as I've been attending BAM conferences for years and have made so many good friends at them. This will actually be my 10th conference. For my demo I plan to cover tool design, making drifts, 8-9 ways of putting holes in handled tools (and finishing those tools), some power hammer tooling, some hot plate bowl raising, stamping, and some simpler quick and dirty projects to break up the monotony. I may not get through all of it but I'll try my best. I plan to have three projects in the forge at all times throughout the demo. I'll likely have a few things I don't even know how to do yet since I'm always trying new things.