

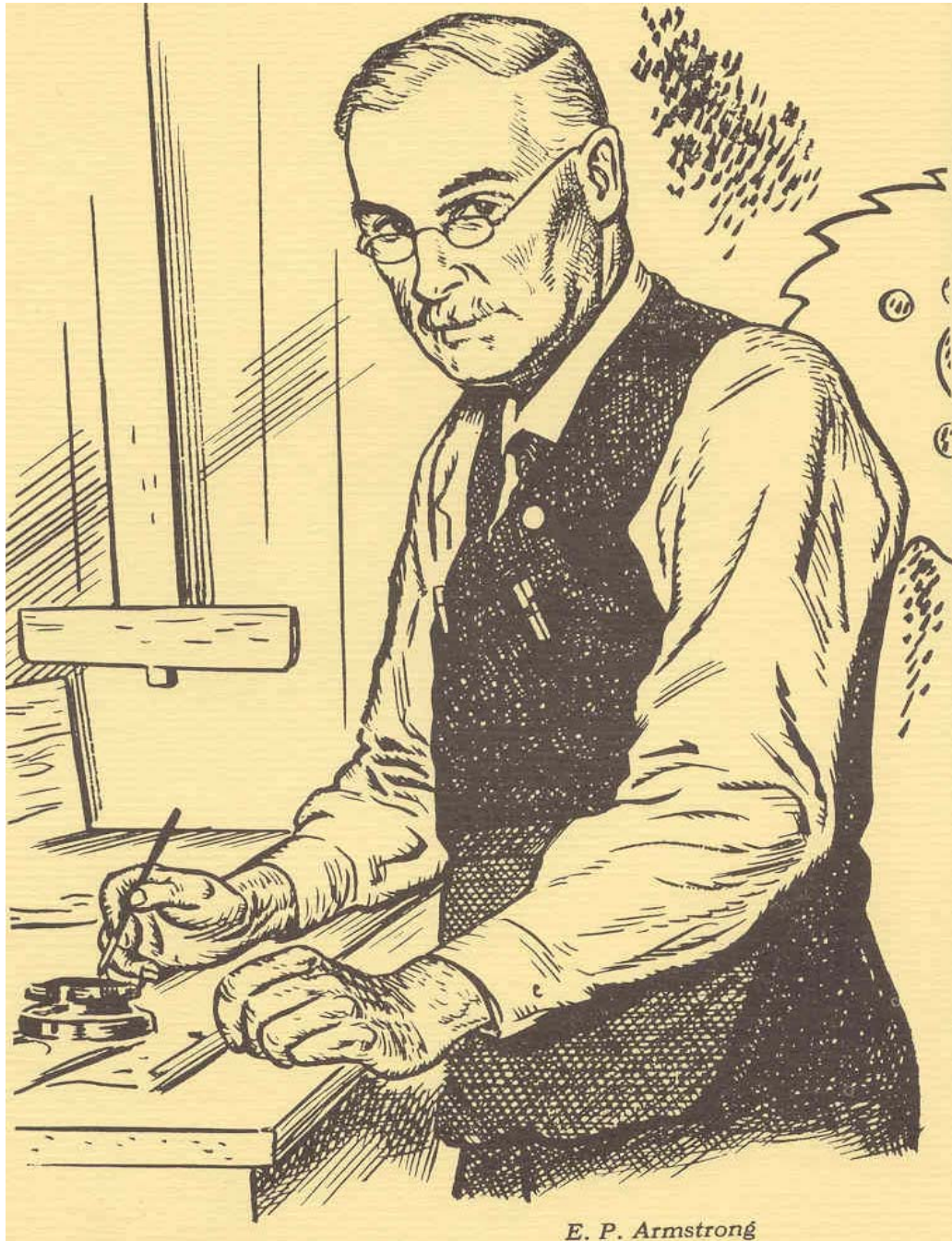


“CODE OF THE FILING ROOM”

By E. P. Armstrong

**Copyright - Armstrong Manufacturing Co.
Portland, Oregon USA**

**[Http://www.armstrongblue.com](http://www.armstrongblue.com),
All rights reserved Used by permission**



Mr. E.P. Armstrong, along with being a skilled saw filer, wrote the “Code of The Filing Room” shortly after the turn of the century. He wrote a series of booklets on saw filing and a monthly column on saw filing for an international sawmill magazine. He also wrote every word of the Saw Engineer magazine into the 1940s (the first few issues were published under the title “The North American Filer”). And he did this all in his spare time.

The BC Saw Filer’s Association believes that his comments and insights of nearly 100 years ago are still valid and helpful to filers today. So we are reprinting them, with permission from the company that Mr. Armstrong founded a century ago and that still bears his name, for another generation of filers.

1-LEARN TO LOVE YOUR WORK.

The person who makes the best filer is the person who likes the work and is able to learn it and master it in all its features. To do that , requires that they be gifted with far more than the ordinary number of prominent characteristics. They need to be strong in mechanical insight, able to carry out what they analyze, must be clever with their hands, willing to do more than their share, strong in self-criticism and slow to blame others, have a high degree of tact in managing others, constance, decision, honesty, loyalty to duty, and everlasting staying qualities.

The person who represents these twelve characteristics , to even a reasonable degree, is an exceedingly hard person to find.

2. DON'T HOLD YOUR JOB IN CONTEMPT

Avoid contempt for the filing trade, for if you are working at it and are reasonably fitted for it and avail yourself of the fine opportunities within your reach connected with it. It is a fine occupation and is giving you your income. Honor it highly.

3-PICK PEOPLE WHO ARE FIT.

If you have a helper and they develop an ambition to become a filer, stop and analyze them right there. If you see they don't represent the combination that can make a reasonably competent filer, advise them to take up some other occupation. Thus avoid the handicap of wasting their life in a channel for which they are not fitted and at the same time, avoid inflicting the industry with a misfit for such an important position.

4- Help boost your trade

Lend your influence towards introducing better methods, tools and machines into other mills as well as your own. Next week you may find yourself in one of them and then the better conditions will help you. For any one of a dozen reasons, things over which you have no control, may cause you to change jobs sooner than you expected.

5-REMEMBER YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES.

Keep in mind that your job is a responsible one and that most of the money you receive for it is paid to you to insure your employer that he will always have good running saws. His interests are otherwise being carefully looked after without any detail watching on his part, and only a small part of your pay is for the actual manual work you do.

6-RESPONSIBILITY BEFORE PRIVILEGE.

Think of the responsibilities your own position imposes upon you rather than the privileges it offers, for you can only fully realize and enjoy the privileges by rightfully minding the responsibilities. Don't do like most politicians by putting the privileges of the job first and lose sight of the responsibilities.

7 The long effort is what counts.

If you build for today only when tomorrow comes you will still be at the beginning. Do your best for today and also build for tomorrow. In that way your tomorrow will be easier.

8 Help Self By Helping Your Trade.

To help yourself, help your trade in a broad way. It is like saving for a rainy day—it will help you when you need it. You never can tell when your fortunes may change. Anyone of a hundred different things over which you have no control may happen and then your far-sightedness may prove of great value.

9-TAKE A HELPERS JOB RATHER THAN REMAIN IDLE.

If you are unemployed and can get on as a helper, do all you can to promote the interests of the filer you are helping. The management may remember you if they get in the market for a filer later on. Practicing loyalty to your associates builds up your character and makes you lasting friends, and we all need friends.

10-USE IDLE FILERS RATHER THAN NEW MEN AS HELPERS.

If you need a helper and can engage a regular filer who happens to be unemployed and who is willing to work for a while at helper's wages (for that is better than being idle) do so. You are helping a fellow craftsman and perhaps he can relieve you of some duties that a less experienced man could not.

11- TEACHES YOUR "CUSTOMER" WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR HIM. .

Serving people who have little actual knowledge of the details of your work involves extra responsibility. The man who has the "say" is likely not to have the "know" so you may have to treat him better than otherwise, without him knowing it, and make him content by the satisfactory results you attain. As long as he doesn't understand the detail, and you do, all you can depend on is to get results that please him and that is nearly impossible to do if you arouse his antagonism. You must do it without arousing his antagonism and that is where a lot of the responsibility comes in. Responsible jobs are high priced jobs.

12- THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW HOW HAVE ALWAYS ASSOCIATED A LITTLE MYSTERY WITH SAW DOC- TORING.

A saw maker is one thing, but a saw "doctor" or filer, in all that it implies, is an entirely different thing. It takes a many-sided man to fill some positions, and filing is one of these. To follow saw filing is a business that requires a high degree of mechanical skill and practice in the actual work. More than that, it requires the correct amount of practice and skill in handling the human element which enters in, so you should wise up on the latter at every opportunity. It is on that point that most filers fall down.

13-REMEMBER THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD.

This applies in many ways. Just to fight in a "roughneck" way, without any definite plan of action or manner of letting the other fellow understand what it is all about, is rather poor stuff. Better get your orders recorded in a duplicating order book and reduce your request to clearly stated writing in which you point out the advantages of your idea. In short, if the other fellow does not know, there is no use in fighting blindly. Enlighten him peaceably if you can. It will get both you and him further.

14-WRITE AND DATE ALL REQUESTS AND ORDERS AND ALSO DATE RECEIPT OF GOODS ON THE LEAF LEFT IN YOUR ORDER BOOK.

In making requests from the office, and especially in ordering repairs or equipment, WRITE your order or request to the superintendent or office and keep a carbon copy. This will protect you and the owner from misunderstanding and in case of error places the blame where it belongs.

15-PROCURE AND PRESERVE ALL THE DATA POSSIBLE CONNECTED WITH FILING ROOM EQUIPMENT.

A competent foreman of a department in an industry gathers and preserves all the data relative to tools and equipment used under him, as well as over him, so as to easily handle problems in hand and be prepared for others that may come with promotion. A filer is foreman of an important department and although his department may need no equipment now he should take advantage of every opportunity to know what is available of all makes. What can be done with each so that at any future time, if need arises, he may know what will serve his and his employer's interests the best.

16-LEARN BY THE OTHER FELLOW'S MISTAKES AS WELL AS YOUR OWN.

When you see others fail, find out the cause of their failure and avoid falling into the same error yourself.

17-YOU NEED THE OTHER FELLOW'S HELP.

It is not enough that you only keep your own name in the Armstrong Saw Engineer list because if you were the only man in it, it would be of no special benefit to you. Its value to you is in the fact that other names are there in large numbers and that the people who make it available for your good are engaged in activities which enable them to gather much real information and pass it out to you whenever the need may arise. It is directly to your interests to get other filers into this service letter list to fill up the places of those dropping out by death, retirement, etc., so that the field of information shall always be as large as possible. Ask every filer you know whether or not he is in the list, and if not send his name and address in at once.

18-LET THE OTHER FELLOW HELP YOU.

People who operate manufacturing machine shops use taps, dies, milling cutters, electric furnaces, pyrometers, motors, transformers, micrometers, and a host of other highly developed tools and appliances. These have been so highly developed that their make and use is a specialty in themselves. Shops which have developed their own products (which they make) understand all the "ins and outs" of their use, but they do not always know as much about a lot of the devices they use in their shops as the people do who make them. The most successful shops freely ask the makers of these specialties to coach them in their use, as well as the selection of the proper sizes, styles, etc., for a certain piece of work.

Filers and mill people should do the same by putting their problems in the use and selection of filing room equipment, etc., up to the people who make it. It is their business to be able to give such coaches in a highly advantageous way. If they cannot they are not on to their job. To ask and get information on these problems will pay you the biggest dividends of any expenditure of time and money ever used. As it costs but the postage and time to write a letter.

19-BE LOYAL TO YOUR JOB, YOURSELF AND YOUR EMPLOYER'S INTERESTS.

Keep free from prejudice in favor of one make of supplies or equipment as against another, because of who makes them. Seek, use and boost for the best all the time, regardless of who makes it. In that way, every maker is put on his mettle to keep up with the race and produce the best. Never become "married" to anyone make of goods except as the merit of the goods themselves attract you.

20-OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES.

The biggest half of overcoming difficulties is learning the cause. You may have to experiment to do it, say, like the drug doctor. Try one-thing and watch results, leaving all other things untouched. If no benefit appears, put that point back where it was and try some other change. You may get on to the cause and the remedy at the same time by the process.

21-ANYTHING WORTH DOING IS WORTH DOING WELL.

There is far more pleasure in doing a thing right than otherwise. This applies, not only to actual work but also to your attitude and dealings toward associates.

22-DO NOT KNOW IT ALL.

Never close your mind to information; for just as sure as you do you stop advancing. Keep your mind in a receptive mood all the time. Then you will never be troubled with a "swelled head". "Swelled heads" are a handicap to any man.

23-HIGHLY SCIENTIFIC WORK.

There are a lot of features in mill saw work as commonly performed, that waste from 25 per cent to 75 per cent of a filer's time, saw steel, emery wheels, files, and produce defective results. The average man got to his present stage of development by his own personal efforts of struggling along at the work until he could finally just get by, and he is so thankful for even that amount of success that he is mighty shy of trying any other way. Under the conditions of the trade that has prevailed in the past he is absolutely justified in that attitude, because there was no place he could turn to get reliable information on any point.

Any of these several fine points have baffled hundreds of high-class men over a greater part of their lives. It is no discredit for any man to seek help on the fine points if he feels there is an appropriate place he can inquire of which he thinks can furnish the information.

All occupations that contain hidden principles are not usually fully unraveled by anyone person, by his own efforts, in a lifetime, but these represent the life work and finding; of many men, so that, to be well equipped and qualified, he should, from the nature of things, acquire knowledge of the whole lot as well as his own. Get and Keep your name in the Armstrong Saw Engineer List.

24-MECHANICAL SCIENCE IS CONSISTENT.

Mechanical principles are scientific harmony. If a machine, tool, or saw is not performing right, there is mechanical inconsistency somewhere connected with it. If you cannot discover the true cause, sometimes a temporary makeshift may give relief; by throwing some feature out of mechanical balance to partially counteract the first difficulty. That appears to be the practice of the drug doctors on the human system, but they bury their mistakes sometimes while you cannot. It is best never to stop searching for mechanical truths to enable you to get the same correct and harmonious scientific solution and get real results, but in the meantime use any makeshift you can to keep going.

25-STAND TO YOUR INTERESTS.

An individual usually promotes his own interests from instinct, as a single unit. In olden times people considered others in like occupations as rivals and competitors, avoided any communication with them as deadly enemies. Enlightenment and progress has taught people that the world is large enough for wholesome rivalry without strife and that wholesome recognition of common interests is highly beneficial whenever it can be brought into action.

There have been three outstanding handicaps to filing trade:

First- A great majority of filers have been handicapped from a lack of knowledge in the fine points of the trade, which often amounts to 80 per cent of the trade in work and results. Keeping your name on the mailing list for the Armstrong Saw Engineer connects

you with thousands of your fellow artisans and assists you to fully master your trade.

Second-Filing room machinery, tools, and supplies, have too often been designed and made by people with poor authority in the use of them, and such goods have too often been badly wanting in correct design to properly fill the needs. It is your job to select stuff ~ properly suited to the requirements.

Third- Too often owners and manager do not know from their own knowledge which machinery, tools and supplies are best for the saw end of their business. They are persuaded to buy stuff not suited for most new mills, when no filer is on the job yet to coach them, and in too many old mills the filer is not given credit for knowing which is best. It is your job to educate the man you work for, as well as yourself, and show him by actual results, which is the best for them to buy. You can best do this by working in conjunction with your fellow filers everywhere who report actual results gotten with certain machines, tools and supplies. You get this connection through the Armstrong Engineer.

26-KEEP IN CLOSE COMMUNICATION WITH THE HEAD- QUARTERS FOR "FILERS SERVICE".

There is only one known place in the lumber world that devotes special effort to dispense reliable and definite information on the troublesome problems in the care of mill saws, and that is the office of the Armstrong Manufacturing Company, Portland, Oregon. They do this by mailing the Armstrong Saw Engineer without charge to anyone interested. Giving reliable information on the general condition of their trade as a whole, together with other features. All it costs the filers is to simply get their name and address in the service letter list of the above company and notify them of any change in address in case they move. That is the very least possible cost that could be arranged, and in proportion to the returns it is the most one-sided deal ever heard of -with the filer on the long end. Any filer who will not take the thought to keep his correct address on file there must have a very peculiar idea of his own interest.

27-DON'T QUARREL WITH THE SAWYER.

Practice the feeling that you are fixing saws for the company and not for the sawyer. At the same time remember that his job is very confining and to some temperaments it undoubtedly becomes very monotonous at times, so don't be fussy with him if he causes you a little unnecessary work once in awhile unintentionally. .

28-PROTECT YOURSELF.

Self-protection is the first law of nature, so that is among your first duties; but remember, you could not possibly enjoy the conveniences, comforts pleasures and privileges that you do if you were alone in the world. It is the presence of others, which makes all these things possible. You are but a part of the whole, and, as the whole is greater than any of its parts, you, being a part only, must make yourself fit in with the rest if you expect to realize the most there is in life.