

# MADE OF STEEL

Photographs and text of machine shops, garages, and the men who work with steel.

About  
*Made of Steel*

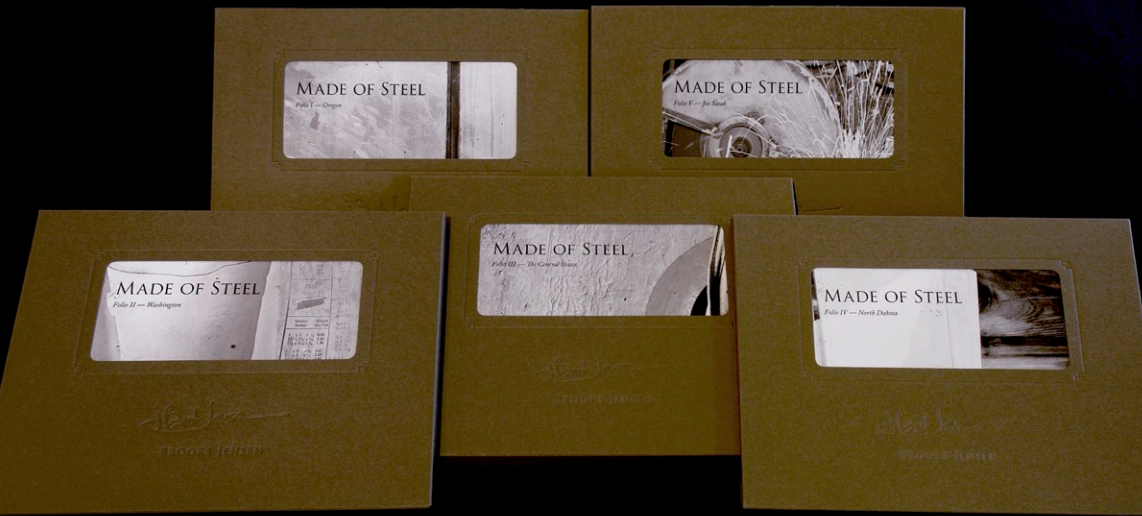
*Folio I  
Oregon*

*Folio II  
Washington*

*Folio III  
The Central States*

*Folio IV  
North Dakota*

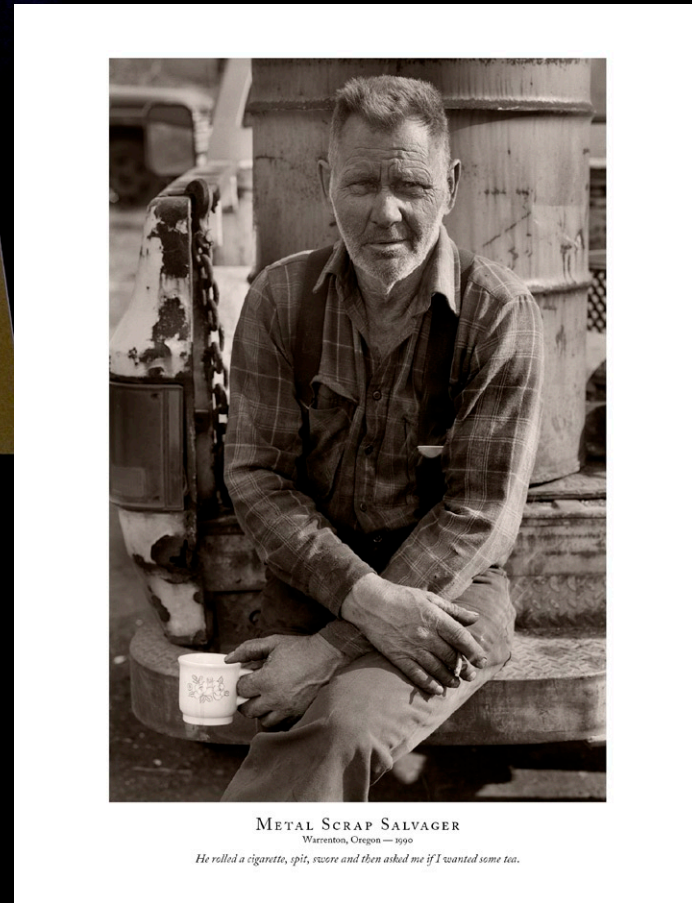
*Folio V  
Joe Sasak*



## A Completely New, 3rd Edition of the *Made of Steel* Folios

This third edition represents a complete rework of the entire *Made of Steel* project. All images in this edition were produced from scratch, beginning with high resolution scans of the original negatives, or from digital camera originals. As such, every image is a new rendition. This Third Edition consists of five separate folios — *Oregon*; *Washington*; *The Central States*; *North Dakota*; and *Joe Sasak*. Each of the five folios contains twelve images, except the *Joe Sasak* folio which contains eleven images and one additional image on the introduction page. Simultaneous to these folios, an exhibition set of the entire body of work — consisting of all 84 images in the project — was produced in the summer of 2007.

The *Made of Steel* work has been produced in two previous folio editions. The original folios were a set of three, produced in 1993 as brown-toned, gelatin silver prints with a laserjet text signature in each. The three folios were *The Portraits*, *The Tools*, and *The Shops*. Each folio included five images. Twenty sets were produced of this edition. The second folio version was published in 2003 as a *LensWork Special Editions Folio*. This edition was produced as warm-toned, gelatin silver prints printed from 425-line screen digital negatives. These negatives were scanned from original gelatin silver prints. This single-folio edition included twenty images and totalled of 34 copies.



This project combines image and text. Each photograph shares the page with a quote from our conversations or an anecdote about the subject.



8x10½" Finished size, 12 images

# MADE OF STEEL

## Folio I — Oregon

The Made of Steel Project

This folio includes the twelve images you see here, plus a single-fold signature that includes the story of the original inspiration for this project. My grandfather, John Shaker, was one of these old guys – a machine shop guy – and I remember him in his shop from my earliest youth. The text includes the story of “Two-bit Johnny” along with two professional photographs he had made in 1941 of himself and his employees. I’d never seen these photographs, but somehow the two negatives were preserved in the family archives. I inherited these two 5x7 negatives and scanned them for this project.

Photographs and text of machine shops, garages, and the men who work with steel. This project combines image and text. Each photograph shares the page with a quote from our conversations or an anecdote about the subject.

Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

The images from *Made of Steel, Folio I - Oregon* are some of the earliest from this project. All of these images, save one, are from new scans of the original 2¼x3¼ film negatives. *Brooms & Shovels* is from a 5x7" negative I made in 1986 when I owned a large 5x7" camera for about a week – and then immediately sold and was glad to have done with it. I have never printed it – for the simple reason that I didn't own an enlarger that could print such large negatives.

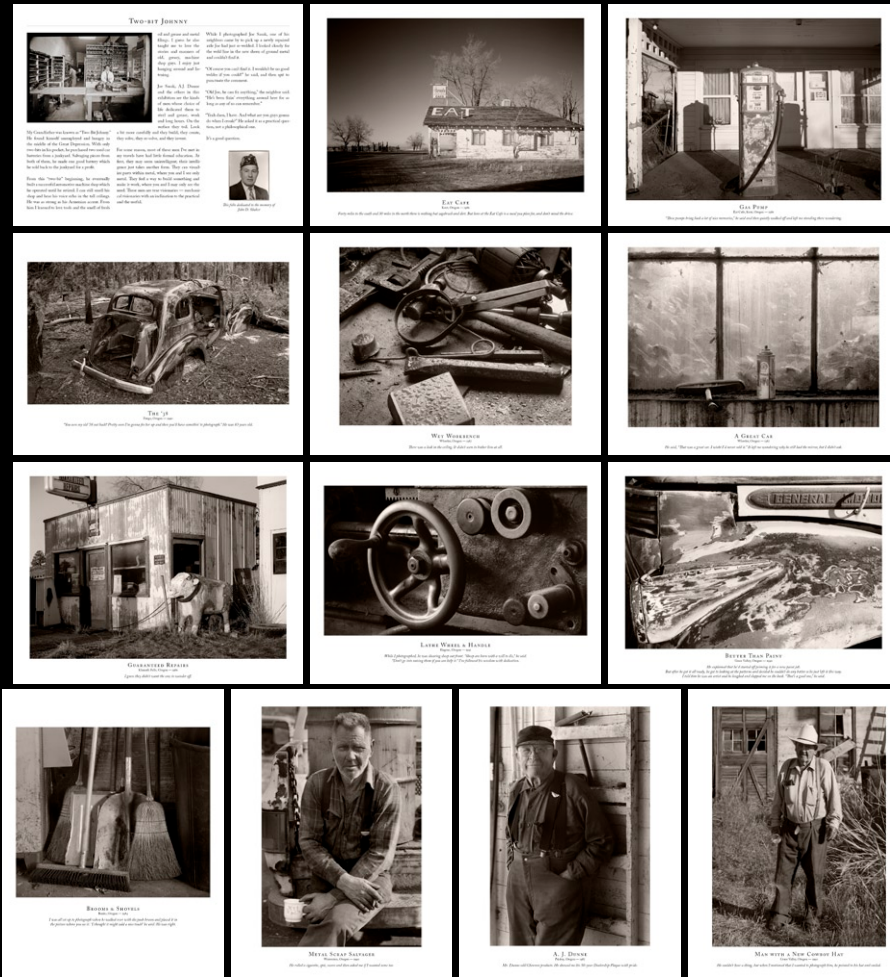
There are five folios in the *Made of Steel* series divided by region – Oregon, Washington, The Central States, North Dakota, and Joe Sasak.

Single Folio Price  
**\$145**  
(plus shipping & handling)

[Purchase this folio online](#)

All Five Folios, Save \$100  
**\$625**  
(plus shipping & handling)

[Purchase all five folios online](#)



Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak

# MADE OF STEEL

*Folio I*  
*Oregon*

by  
Brooks Jensen

Brooks Jensen Arts  
2007

*Folio I*  
*Oregon*  
(more) ▶

*Folio II*  
*Washington*

*Folio III*  
*The Central States*

*Folio IV*  
*North Dakota*

*Folio V*  
*Joe Sasaki*



## TWO-BIT JOHNNY



My Grandfather was known as “Two-Bit Johnny.” He found himself unemployed and hungry in the middle of the Great Depression. With only two-bits in his pocket, he purchased two used car batteries from a junkyard. Salvaging pieces from both of them, he made one good battery which he sold back to the junkyard for a profit.

From this “two-bit” beginning, he eventually built a successful automotive machine shop which he operated until he retired. I can still smell his shop and hear his voice echo in the tall ceilings. He was as strong as his Armenian accent. From him I learned to love tools and the smell of fresh

oil and grease and metal filings. I guess he also taught me to love the stories and manners of old, greasy, machine shop guys. I enjoy just hanging around and listening.

Joe Sasak, A.J. Dunne and the others in this exhibition are the kinds of men whose choice of life dedicated them to steel and grease, work and long hours. On the surface they toil. Look

a bit more carefully and they build, they create, they solve, they re-solve, and they invent.

For some reason, most of these men I’ve met in my travels have had little formal education. At first, they may seem unintelligent; their intelligence just takes another form. They can visualize parts within metal, where you and I see only metal. They feel a way to build something and make it work, where you and I may only see the need. These men are true visionaries — mechanical visionaries with an inclination to the practical and the useful.

While I photographed Joe Sasak, one of his neighbors came by to pick up a newly repaired axle Joe had just re-welded. I looked closely for the weld line in the new sheen of ground metal and couldn’t find it.

“Of course you can’t find it. I wouldn’t be no good welder if you could!” he said, and then spit to punctuate the comment.

“Old Joe, he can fix anything,” the neighbor said. “He’s been fixin’ everything around here for as long as any of us can remember.”

“Yeah darn, I have. And what are you guys gonna do when I croak?” He asked it as a practical question, not a philosophical one.

It’s a good question.



*This folio dedicated to the memory of  
John D. Shaker*

Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



EAT CAFE  
Kent, Oregon — 1986

*Forty miles to the south and 30 miles to the north there is nothing but sagebrush and dirt. But here at the Eat Cafe is a meal you plan for, and don't mind the drive.*

Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



### GAS PUMP

Eat Cafe, Kent, Oregon — 1986

*"These pumps bring back a lot of nice memories," he said and then quietly walked off and left me standing there wondering.*



Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



THE '38

Fuego, Oregon — 1990

*"You seen my old '38 out back? Pretty soon I'm gonna fix her up and then you'll have somethin' to photograph." He was 83 years old.*



Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



### WET WORKBENCH

Wheeler, Oregon — 1987

*There was a leak in the ceiling. It didn't seem to bother him at all.*



Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



A GREAT CAR

Wheeler, Oregon — 1987

*He said, "That was a great car. I wisht I'd never sold it." It left me wondering why he still had the mirror, but I didn't ask.*



Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



GUARANTEED REPAIRS

Klamath Falls, Oregon — 1986

*I guess they didn't want the cow to wander off.*



Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



### LATHE WHEEL & HANDLE

Eugene, Oregon — 1991

*While I photographed, he was shearing sheep out front. "Sheep are born with a will to die," he said.  
"Don't go into raising them if you can help it." I've followed his wisdom with dedication.*



Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



### BETTER THAN PAINT

Grass Valley, Oregon — 1990

*He explained that he'd started off priming it for a new paint job.  
But after he got it all ready, he got to looking at the patterns and decided he couldn't do any better so he just left it this way.  
I told him he was an artist and he laughed and slapped me on the back. "That's a good one," he said.*

Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



### BROOMS & SHOVELS

Banks, Oregon — 1989

*I was all set up to photograph when he walked over with the push broom and placed it in the picture where you see it. "I thought it might add a nice touch" he said. He was right.*



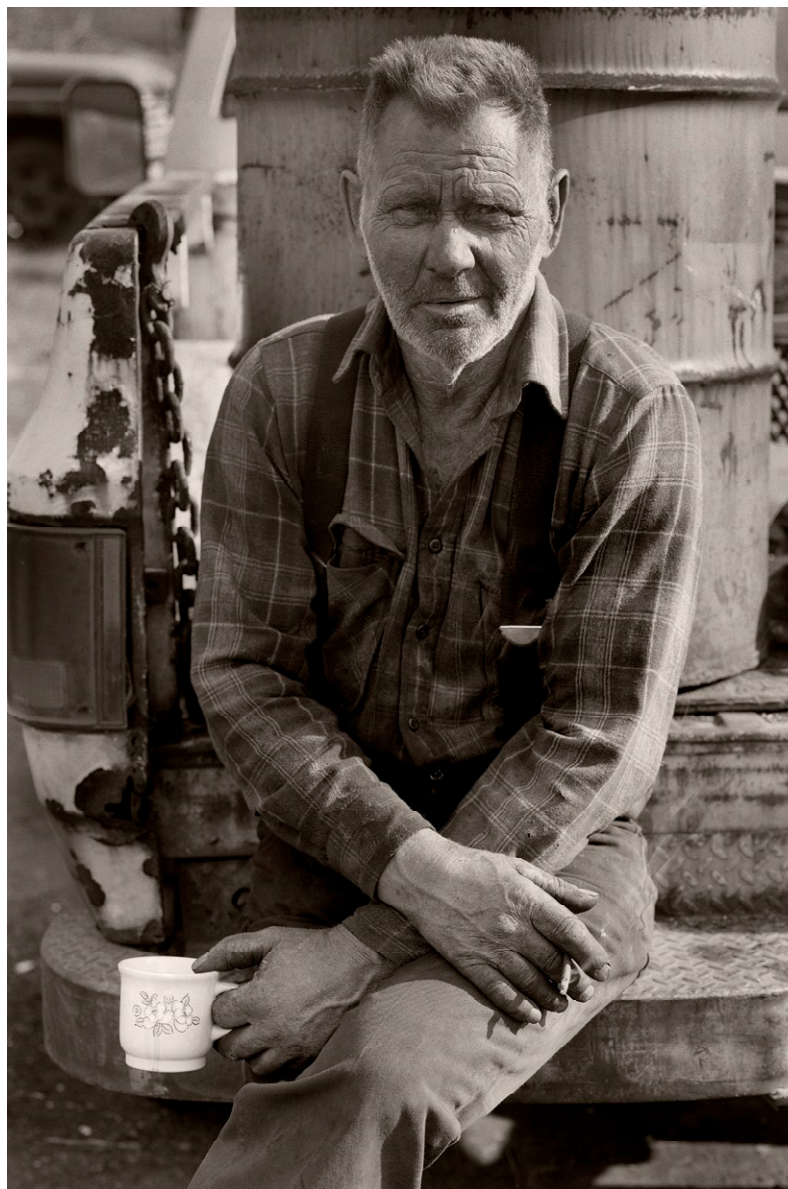
Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



METAL SCRAP SALVAGER

Warrenton, Oregon — 1990

*He rolled a cigarette, spit, swore and then asked me if I wanted some tea.*

Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



A. J. DUNNE  
Paisley, Oregon — 1987

*Mr. Dunne sold Chevron products. He showed me his 50-year Dealership Plaque with pride.*



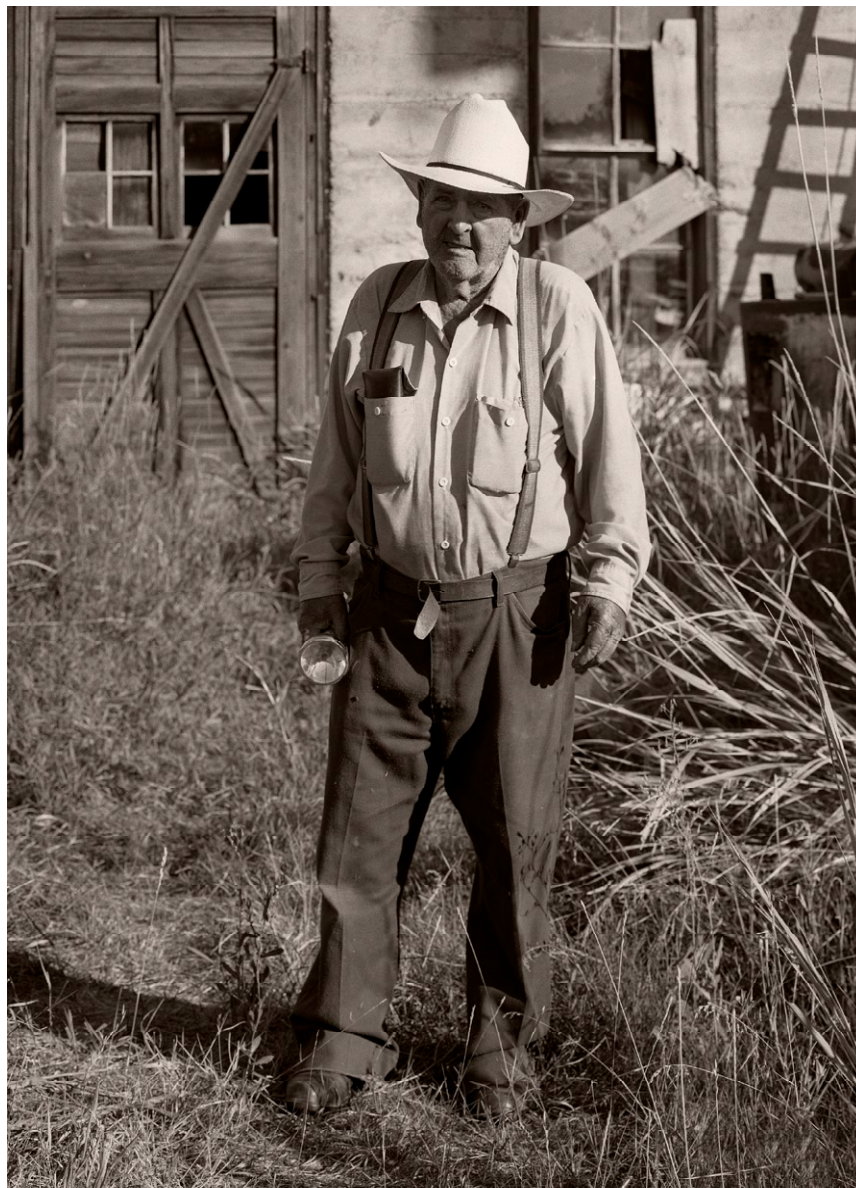
Folio I  
Oregon  
(more) ▶

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



MAN WITH A NEW COWBOY HAT  
Grass Valley, Oregon — 1990

*He couldn't hear a thing, but when I motioned that I wanted to photograph him, he pointed to his hat and smiled.*



## COLOPHON

*Made of Steel*  
*Folio I – Oregon*  
by Brooks Jensen  
Third Edition  
First Printing, October 2007  
Numbers 1-50 reserved for complete sets  
This folio is

All images and text © 2007 Brooks Jensen  
Published and produced by  
Brooks Jensen Arts  
Anacortes, Washington, USA



The twelve images and text signature in this folio were printed on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gm/m<sup>2</sup> archival paper using Epson Ultrachrome archival pigment inks. Each image has been created by the photographer, produced to archival, museum standards.

The folio cover was debossed with the Trajan Pro typeface into Gilbert Oxford 100lb acid-free cover paper. The text pages were printed using Adobe's Caslon Pro and Trajan Pro typefaces.

Creative work with the images, layout, and design completed in June-September 2007.



## *Made of Steel – Folio I, Oregon*

### List of Prints

*Metal Scrap Salvager, Warrenton, Oregon, 1990*  
*Eat Cafe, Grass Valley, Oregon, 1986*  
*Gas Pump, Grass Valley, Oregon, 1986*  
*The '38, Fuego, Oregon, 1990*  
*Wet Workbench, Wheeler, Oregon, 1987*  
*A Great Car, Wheeler, Oregon, 1987*  
*Guaranteed Repairs, Klamath Falls, Oregon, 1986*  
*A. J. Dunne, Paisley, Oregon, 1987*  
*Man with a New Cowboy Hat, Grass Valley, Oregon, 1986*  
*Lathe Wheel & Handle, Eugene, Oregon, 1991*  
*Better Than Paint, Grass Valley, Oregon, 1990*  
*Brooms & Shovels, Banks, Oregon, 1989*

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Folio I  
Oregon  
(End of Folio I)

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



8x10½" Finished size, 12 images

# MADE OF STEEL

## Folio II — Washington

The Made of Steel Project

The first image from this project was *Dollar's Garage*. It is still one of my favorites. If Mr. Dollar had not allowed me to photograph in his garage, I wonder if any of the other photographs would have ever been made. Three of these photographs are from a machine shop in Hockinson, Washington. I was just driving around, looking for landscape photographs when I stumbled across this shop in the small town. I photographed there all day and we talked of his business and of my grandfather's shop. He knew of the tool my grandfather had invented and even used it back in the 1950s. It was a great photo session. I only wish he would have allowed me to make his portrait.

The images from *Made of Steel, Folio II - Washington* are all from new scans of the original 2¼x3¼ film negatives. The image *Seattle Junkyard* is included in this project for the first time. The negative has some substantial flaws which prevented me from using it in the past. Now, through some painstaking Photo-shop work, I have been able to repair the flaws and use it for the first time.

There are five folios in the *Made of Steel* series divided by region – Oregon, Washington, The Central States, North Dakota, and Joe Sasak.

Single Folio Price

**\$145**

(plus shipping & handling)

[Purchase this folio online](#)

All Five Folios, Save \$100

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Folio I  
Oregon

Folio II  
Washington  
(more) ▶

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



# MADE OF STEEL

*Folio II*  
*Washington*

by  
Brooks Jensen

Brooks Jensen Arts  
2007

*Folio I*  
*Oregon*

*Folio II*  
*Washington*  
(more) ▶

*Folio III*  
*The Central States*

*Folio IV*  
*North Dakota*

*Folio V*  
*Joe Sajak*



**BOLTS, OIL & COFFEE CUP RING**

Wes Gibson's Garage, Thorp, Washington — 1988

*"Coffee and oil," he proposed, "Two of the most important fluids of life."*



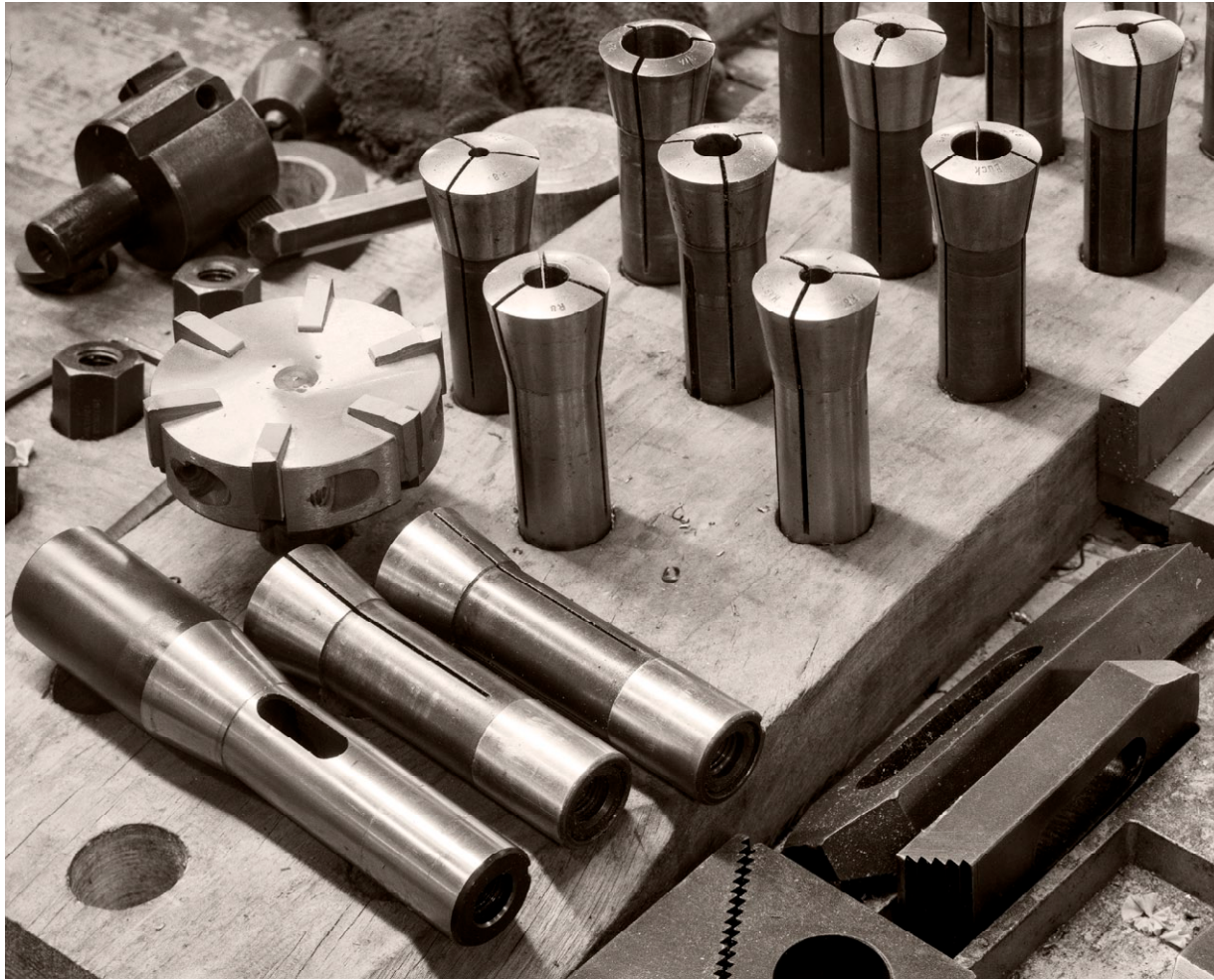


### CARDBOARD WORKBENCH

Hockinson, Washington — 1987

*"Of course, it goes without saying that they don't make nothin' like they used to. A guy could fix the old stuff. Nowadays, ya can't fix nuthin'.  
Ya just throw it away. The kids can't even fix the old stuff. Wadda they gonna do when I croak?"*





## CHUCKS

Ellensburg, Washington — 1986

*I walked up with all my photo gear in hand. "What's your name?" he asked. "Brooks," I said, "What's yours?" He said "Chuck." Without thinking I asked "Do you mind if I photograph your chucks, Chuck?" We looked at each other and both started to laugh.*





FLAG & LOST LICENSE PLATE

Wes Gibson's Garage, Thorp, Washington — 1988

*"My Dad and I are rebuilding a diesel out back. I'm gonna be a trucker when I grow up, too." Wes smiled and ruffed the boy's hair.*





“PENSIVE MOOD” CALENDAR

Hockinson, Washington — 1987

*It says, “Lift Here.” Her clothes are painted on a plastic overlay.*





SCRATCH PAD  
Hockinson, Washington — 1987

*"They used to give me them conversion charts there for free. Not any more. Now I gotta pay for 'em little shits so I just use my noodle and figure it out for myself. That'll learn 'em."*





SEATTLE JUNKYARD  
Seattle, Washington — 1986

*I asked him if he owned the place. "No, but I'd sure like to. The owner's gone right now. I'm just hanging out here 'cuz I like it."*





STANDING DRILL BITS

Ellensburg, Washington — 1986

*Two weeks after I photographed this metal shop, it burned to the ground. Welding sparks splattered on the wooden floor, they said.*



### THREE DRILLS

Hockinson, Washington — 1987

*He advised that a good drill would last me a lifetime. I suspect he was right.*





DOLLAR'S GARAGE

Port Townsend, Washington — 1982

*Mr. Dollar passed away in 1986. It's now a kite store with an ice cream counter. The new owner moved a counter and showed me a stain in his carpet in the shape of a tire track that's oozed up from the cement floor underneath.*



SHELL PREMIUM  
Battleground, Washington — 1990

*"Everybody's got their favorite, I guess. Me, I like Shell and Chevy's. My brother's a Ford and Richfield man.  
But then, he chew's Red Man, too. He never did know nutbin'."*

The Made of  
Steel Project

Folio I  
Oregon

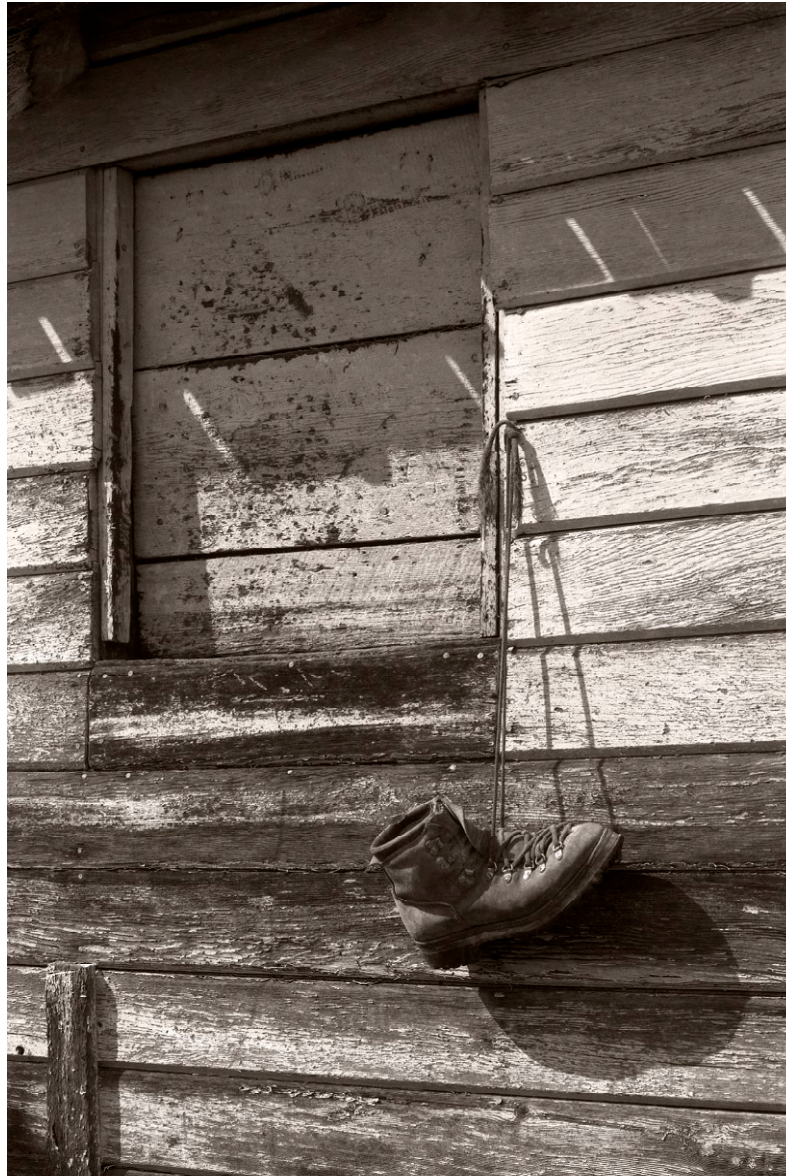
Folio II  
Washington  
(more) ▶

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak





THE LOST BOOT

Roslyn, Washington — 1988

*"One of these days I'll find the other one," he said. Then there was a long pause. "I mighta left it at the tavern."*

## COLOPHON

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*Folio II – Washington*  
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Third Edition  
First Printing, October 2007  
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## *Made of Steel – Folio II, Washington*

### List of Prints

*Seattle Junkyard, Seattle, Washington, 1986*  
*"Pensive Mood" Calendar, Hockinson, Washington, 1987*  
*Bolts, Oil & Coffee Cup Ring, Thorp, Washington, 1988*  
*Cardboard Workbench, Hockinson, Washington, 1987*  
*Dollar's Garage, Port Townsend, Washington, 1982*  
*Scratch Pad, Hockinson, Washington, 1987*  
*Standing Drill Bits, Ellensburg, Washington, 1986*  
*Three Drills, Hockinson, Washington, 1987*  
*Shell Premium, Vancouver, Washington, 1990*  
*Flag & Lost License Plate, Thorp, Washington, 1988*  
*Chuck, Ellensburg, Washington, 1986*  
*The Lost Boot, Roslyn, Washington, 1988*

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Oregon

Folio II  
Washington  
(End of Folio II)

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak





8x10½" Finished size, 12 images

# MADE OF STEEL

## Folio III — The Central States

In the 1980s, my consulting work involved extensive travel throughout the U.S. Often, I'd have a speaking engagement on Friday in one state and another on Monday in a different state. It seemed silly to fly home to Oregon only to immediately get back on an airplane after only one night home. Instead, I'd just stay out the weekend and travel the two-lane highways looking for small towns and the garages, machine shops, and men I'd find there. I'd explain my project and the guys were always very willing to let me make photographs in their shops. I'd sometimes get a funny look when I pulled out my view camera from the trunk of the rental car, but no one ever denied me access to photograph.

Eight of the twelve images from *Made of Steel, Folio III - The Central States* are from the back roads of Texas – in the small towns in a triangle between Houston, the Gulf, and Dallas. Two are from the Sedalia Garage in Sedalia, Indiana, and one from Kansas. All of these images are from new scans of the original 2¼x3¼ film negatives.

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The Made of Steel Project

Folio I  
Oregon

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Washington

Folio III  
The Central States  
(more) ▶

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak

# MADE OF STEEL

*Folio III*  
*The Central States*

by  
Brooks Jensen

Brooks Jensen Arts  
2007

*Folio I*  
*Oregon*

*Folio II*  
*Washington*

*Folio III*  
*The Central States*  
*(more)* ▶

*Folio IV*  
*North Dakota*

*Folio V*  
*Joe Sasaki*





## BOLT BINS

Hallettsville, Texas — 1988

*A customer came in and asked for a 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>32</sub>" hex nut. He walked over and, without looking, pulled out a drawer and handed over the nut — first drawer, first time.*





CASH REGISTER  
Sedalia, Indiana — 1989

*He looked like Custer with long, flowing white hair and moustache. The register was empty. He kept all the money in his pocket.*





## GEARS

Richter's Garage, Yoakum, Texas — 1994

*He said, "There ain't nothin' to takin' 'em apart." Then he looked at me from the corner of his eye and smiled a knowing smile.*





PEPSI BOTTLES

Sedalia Garage, Sedalia, Indiana — 1989

*He said he preferred the taste of Pepsi rather than beer, a good pie rather than a hot romance, and clean socks every week. He was 96 years old. Who was I to argue?*





### THREE CHAIRS

Texaco Station, Walnut Springs, Texas — 1990

*"Most of the boys are retired now and they just like to come down and watch and shoot the breeze. I kinda like it."*

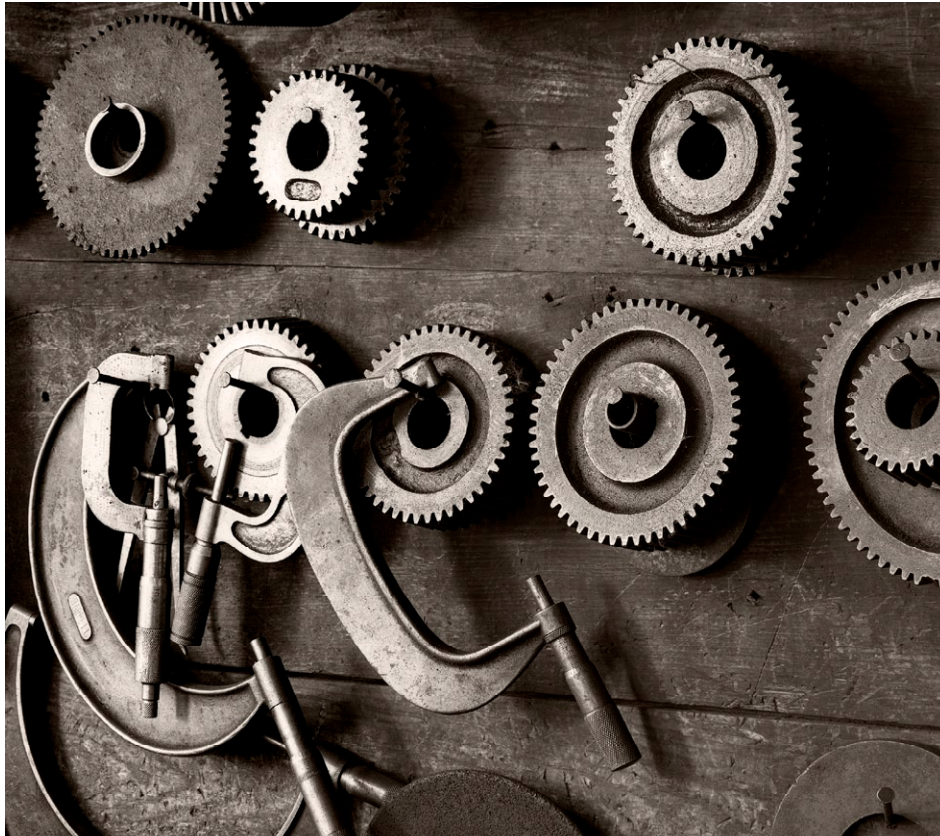


VERNON BARROW & GRANDSON

Denison, Kansas — 1989

*As we talked, Paul Harvey spoke on the radio. Every commercial, he'd say to his grandson how much he liked "Mr. Harvey." I called him Mr. Barrow and he seemed to like that.*





CALIPERS & GEARS

Hallettsville, Texas — 1988

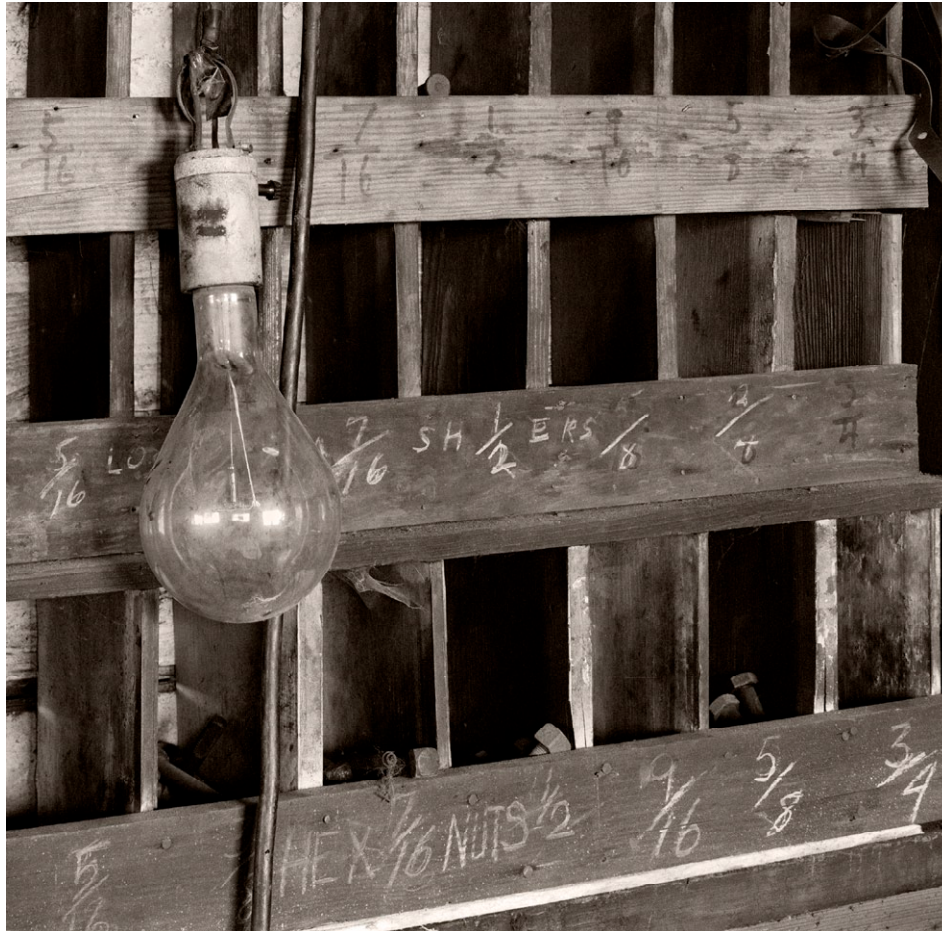
*I spent several hours photographing there and during the whole time an unlit cigar never left his mouth — even during the long story of his war years in the Pacific.*



KEROSENE LAMP  
Yoakum, Texas — 1990

*It is so easy to forget that many of these guys were born before there were cars  
— or before there was electricity.*





LIGHT FOR THE BOLT BINS

Yoakum, Texas — 1994

*He was out on a call, fixing a flat tire. His mother gave me permission to photograph, but he was suspicious of me when he came back. He said he thought I might be from the Government, and then asked me to leave.*



WORK APRON  
Sedalia, Indiana — 1989

*It was a present from his wife. She had fits getting the grease out of his overalls. She died in 1949.*





FELIX MUÑOZ

Cuero, Texas — 1988

*He drank a Dr. Pepper and rubbed bacon on a rusty, black bean pot as we talked.*

The Made of  
Steel Project

Folio I  
Oregon

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States  
(more) ▶

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



TEXACO STATION & REPAIR

Walnut Springs, Texas — 1990

*He spent about 20 minutes on each gas fill-up, talking and gossiping. He'd known everybody in town all his life.*



## COLOPHON

*Made of Steel*  
*Folio III – Central States*  
by Brooks Jensen  
Third Edition  
First Printing, October 2007  
Numbers 1-50 reserved for complete sets  
This folio is

All images and text © 2007 Brooks Jensen  
Published and produced by  
Brooks Jensen Arts  
Anacortes, Washington, USA



The twelve images and text signature in this folio were printed on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gm/m<sup>2</sup> archival paper using Epson Ultrachrome archival pigment inks. Each image has been created by the photographer, produced to archival, museum standards.

The folio cover was debossed with the Trajan Pro typeface into Gilbert Oxford 100lb acid-free cover paper. The text pages were printed using Adobe's Caslon Pro and Trajan Pro typefaces.

Creative work with the images, layout, and design completed in June-September 2007.



## *Made of Steel – Folio III, Central States*

### List of Prints

*Felix Muñoz, Cuero, Texas, 1988*  
*Gears, Yoakum, Texas, 1994*  
*Kerosene Lamp, Yoakum, Texas, 1990*  
*Light for the Bolt Bins, Yoakum, Texas, 1994*  
*Three Chairs, Walnut Springs, Texas, 1990*  
*Bolt Bins, Hallettsville, Texas, 1988*  
*Calipers & Gears, Hallettsville, Texas, 1988*  
*Vernon Barrow & Grandson, Denison, Kansas, 1989*  
*Cash Register, Sedalia, Indiana, 1989*  
*Pepsi Bottles, Sedalia, Indiana, 1989*  
*Work Apron, Sedalia, Indiana, 1989*  
*Texaco Station & Repair, Walnut Springs, Texas, 1990*

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Folio I  
Oregon

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
*The Central States*  
(End of Folio III)

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



8x10½" Finished size, 12 images

# MADE OF STEEL

## Folio IV — North Dakota

My wife's family is from the far northwestern corner of North Dakota. Visiting there for family reunions and other functions, I was not at all surprised to find the same kinds of garages and machine shops I'd seen all over the rest of the country. Her uncle, Kenny Heckman, is now retired from active farm life, but every tool in his shop is ready for use and any repair work as though he were still there every day. His farm is on the edge of a now-empty town called Alkabo. This town, too, was a wealth of photographic opportunity. A few miles to the east is the thriving metropolis of Crosby, population 1,201. Trust me and go there in July for the Threshing Bee if you want to see old machines and machine shop guys in action.

All of the images, save one, in *Made of Steel, Folio IV - North Dakota* are from a digital camera – an Olympus C8080W. They are among the first of my fine art photographs that I made without the use of a traditional film camera. The sole exception is the portrait of Kenny Heckman which was made with my 2¼x3¼ monorail film camera.

There are five folios in the *Made of Steel* series divided by region – Oregon, Washington, The Central States, North Dakota, and Joe Sasak.

Single Folio Price  
**\$145**  
 (plus shipping & handling)

[Purchase this folio online](#)

All Five Folios, Save \$100  
**\$625**  
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[Purchase all five folios online](#)

Photographs and text of machine shops, garages, and the men who work with steel. This project combines image and text. Each photograph shares the page with a quote from our conversations or an anecdote about the subject.



The Made of Steel Project

Folio I  
Oregon

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota  
 (more) ▶

Folio V  
Joe Sasak



# MADE OF STEEL

*Folio IV*  
*North Dakota*

by  
Brooks Jensen

Brooks Jensen Arts  
2007

*Folio I*  
*Oregon*

*Folio II*  
*Washington*

*Folio III*  
*The Central States*

*Folio IV*  
*North Dakota*  
(more) ▶

*Folio V*  
*Joe Sasaki*

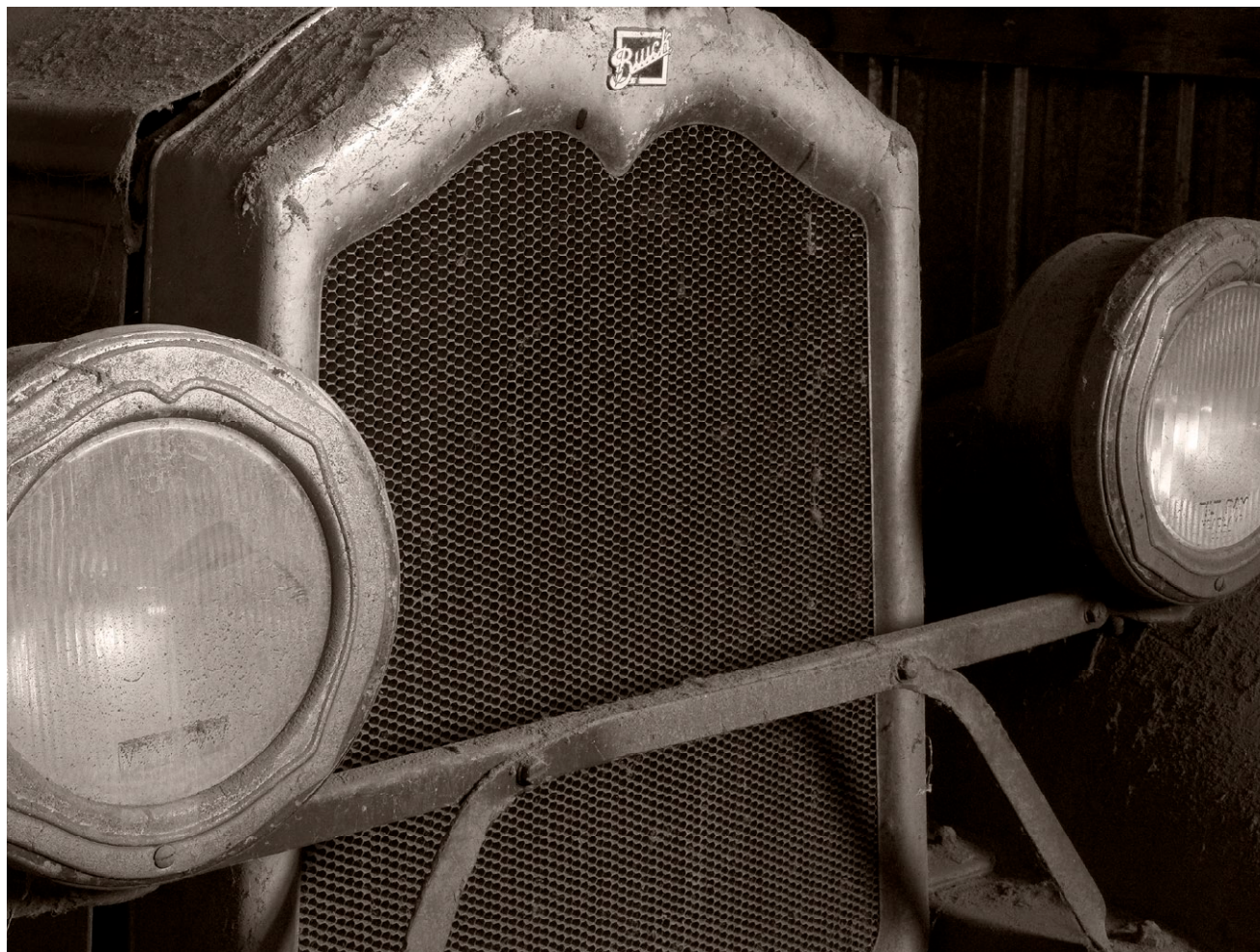


### BROKEN WINDOW SHARDS

Alkabo, North Dakota — 2004

*He'd been a bachelor all his life. He had a stroke and they took him to a nursing home where he died.  
The shop just deteriorated on its own for the next 30 years. There wasn't much left.*





### BUICK GRILL

Crosby, North Dakota — 2004

*He was not so much a mechanic as he was a collector. The barn was filled with cars,  
motors, grills, and parts of every kind — all covered in thick dust.*





### FORD, MADE IN USA

Crosby, North Dakota — 2004

*I reached out to reposition the metal parts for the photograph. "Here," he said, handing me some gloves.  
"Those things get pretty hot in the sun on a day like this." He was right.*





### JAR OF BALL BEARINGS

Heckman's, Alkabo, North Dakota — 2004

*Every machine shop is a history of the parts used, parts salvaged, parts saved, parts tucked away, just in case they are needed someday.  
You can tell a lot about a man by which parts he saves and how he saves them.*





SHOP WALL & SOOT  
Alkabo, North Dakota — 2004

*I tried to imagine this shop — without insulation, without even tarpaper on the walls — in winter. No wonder the rough boards were covered in black soot.*



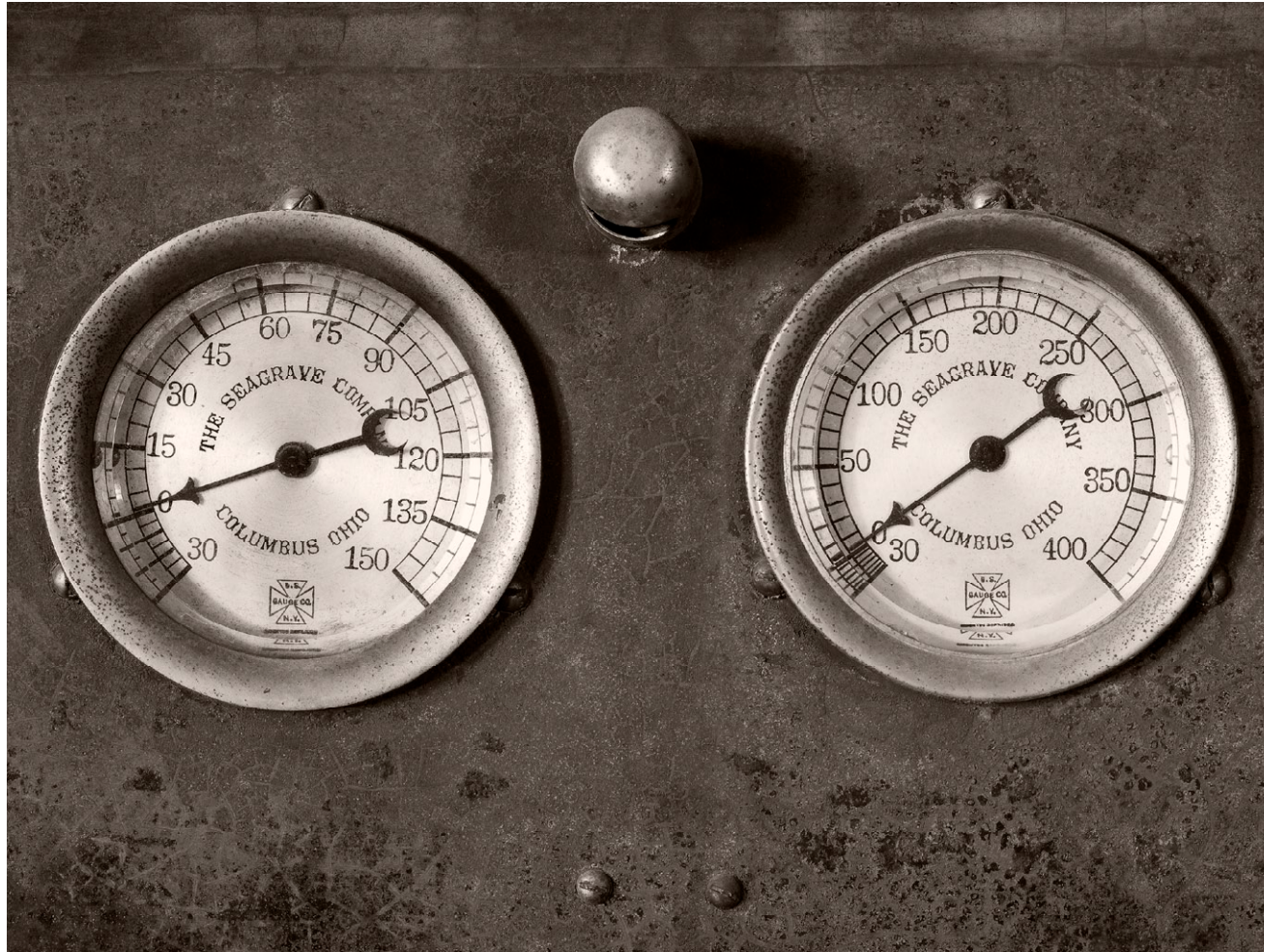


### THE MAGIC OF GREASE

Crosby, North Dakota — 2004

*"Folks think that being a mechanic is all about metal. Nope. The best mechanics know about grease and oil." I mentioned that I thought this was very Zen-like of him. "I don't know about that, but I do know about grease and oil."*





### THE SEAGRAVE GAUGES

Crosby, North Dakota — 2004

*From a strictly functional point of view, the fancy lettering and curved pointers are not necessary. "They do add something, though," I commented, "that is aesthetically pleasing." "Hell, yes," he agreed. "Ain't no virtue in being ugly."*





### TYSEE'S SHOP

Crosby, North Dakota — 2004

*A friend told me about Tysee and all his stuff. The place was open, so I let myself in and started photographing. For several hours, I kept hoping he'd show up, but he never did. I have a feeling I missed some good stories.*



FENDER AND HEADLIGHT

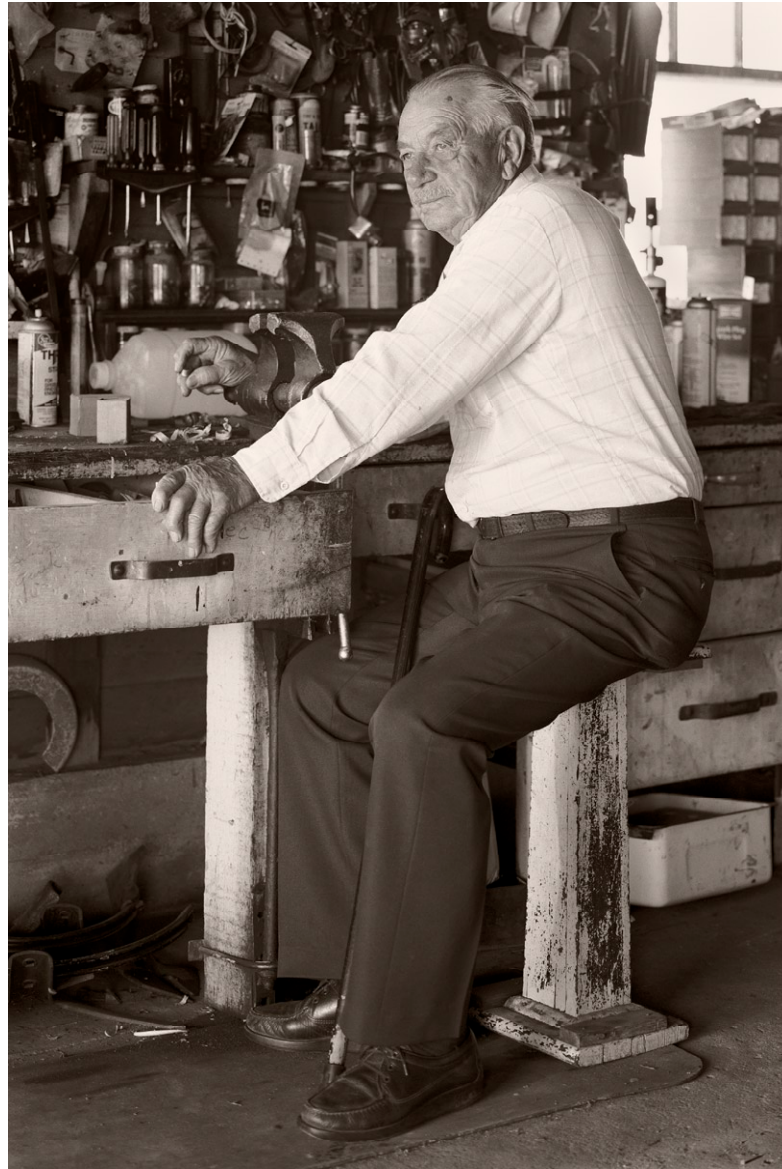
Crosby, North Dakota — 2004

*"Old cars are a thing of beauty, a thing of beauty, I tell ya."*

*Long pause, accompanied by a distant look.*

*"Curves like a woman. A real thing of beauty ..."*





**KENNY HECKMAN**

Alkabo, North Dakota — 2003

*I can advise you with some authority that you have little chance of beating Kenny at cards.*



KENNY'S CRESCENT WRENCHES

Alkabo, North Dakota — 2004

*Kenny was a farmer his whole life. He explained that what that really means is that he was also a mechanic, a carpenter, and a gambler, too. They're all part of farming.*





KENNY'S CRESCENT WRENCHES, #2

Alkabo, North Dakota — 2004

*I made two photographs of these same wrenches. I like them both. For the longest time, I tried to decide which I liked better, and then I realized that Kenny had more than one crescent wrench and didn't worry about it. Why should I?*

## COLOPHON

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*Folio IV – North Dakota*  
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Third Edition  
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## *Made of Steel – Folio IV, North Dakota*

### List of Prints

*Broken Window Shards, Alkabo, 2004*  
*Kenny Heckman, Heckman Farm, Alkabo, 2003*  
*Kenny's Crescent Wrenches, 2004*  
*Kenny's Crescent Wrenches, #2, 2004*  
*Tysee's Shop, Crosby, 2004*  
*The Magic of Grease, Crosby, 2004*  
*Buick Grill, Crosby, 2004*  
*Fender & Headlight, Crosby, 2004*  
*Ford, Made in USA, Crosby, 2004*  
*Shop Wall & Soot, Alkabo, 2004*  
*Jar of Ball Bearings, Heckman Farm, Alkabo, 2004*  
*The Seagrave Gauges, Crosby, 2004*

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Oregon

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota  
(End of Folio IV)

Folio V  
Joe Sasak





# MADE OF STEEL

## Folio V — Joe Sasak

The Made of Steel Project

I had a free weekend in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and the use of a rental car. On a whim, I decided to drive up to Green Bay to see where the Packers play football. I never got there. Along the back roads I passed Joe Sasak's place near Leroy, Wisconsin. For mysterious and unknowable reasons, his place just called to me. I stopped and introduced myself. He asked if I wanted to see his shop. Two days later I left with a few rolls of film, memories of an experience – and a *man* – I will never forget, and an appreciation for a way of life that is rapidly disappearing. I revisited him two years later. He loved the photographs.

*Made of Steel, Folio V - Joe Sasak* is as much a tribute to honor Joe and the men like him as it is a memory of my weekend there. It was listening to Joe tell stories for two days that first made me realize this "photography project" was as much about their stories as it was about my images. I recorded Joe using a microcassette recorder. The stories in the text are transcription excerpts of our conversations. All of these images are from new scans of the original 2¼x3¼ film negatives.

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8x10½" Finished size, 11 images

Photographs and text of machine shops, garages, and the men who work with steel. This project combines image and text. Each photograph shares the page with a quote from our conversations or an anecdote about the subject.

Folio I  
Oregon

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

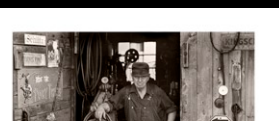
Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak  
*(more)* ▶



JOE SASAK

North of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there are small towns, all the remnants of a rural past. I had never seen a place like this before. It was a small town, a place where the people still know each other. I had heard that the people here were still making things, still working with their hands. I had heard that the people here were still making things, still working with their hands. I had heard that the people here were still making things, still working with their hands.



JOE SASAK

Joe Sasak is a man who has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands.



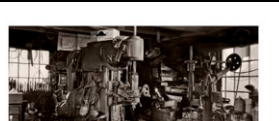
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WHEELS AND WHEELS

Joe Sasak is a man who has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands.



WATERBURY PLACE

Joe Sasak is a man who has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands.



SHANE'S CHAIRS

Joe Sasak is a man who has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands.



JOE SASAK ON FENCE ON HIS SHED

Joe Sasak is a man who has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands.



THE PINE CREEK

Joe Sasak is a man who has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands.



THE SHED

Joe Sasak is a man who has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands.



WORKING WITH THE WHEELS

Joe Sasak is a man who has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands. He has spent his life working with his hands.

# MADE OF STEEL

*Folio V*  
*Joe Sasak*

by  
Brooks Jensen

Brooks Jensen Arts  
2007

*Folio I*  
*Oregon*

*Folio II*  
*Washington*

*Folio III*  
*The Central States*

*Folio IV*  
*North Dakota*

*Folio V*  
*Joe Sasak*  
*(more)* ▶





## JOE SASAK

North of Milwaukee, Wisconsin about sixty miles, at the intersection of county road Y and county road YY (I will resist the temptation to propose any philosophical symbolism about this) you will find the town of Leroy, Wisconsin. Just outside of town a ways is Joe Sasak's driveway. For cosmic reasons I will never know, I pulled in, walked up to Joe and introduced myself. We started talking and two days later, along with a couple dozens rolls of exposed film, we said goodbye and I drove away.

Joe told me just a bit of his story — enough to tantalize and fascinate me with him, but not enough to totally satisfy my curiosity. He was born in 1915 and was 73 years old. He'd never been married. He'd lived his entire life in Leroy,

Wisconsin. Joe's father immigrated to the United States from Czechoslovakia. Of all the towns in America he could have chosen for his home, for some unknowable reason he chose the town of Leroy, built a house and raised a family there. Joe was born in the house his father built before the family got so large he needed to build the new house. From my observation the term "new house" was only relative to the "old house." The new house looked old and the old house looked, well, abandoned.

The old house was converted years ago into the shop. It's now a structure containing more tools that you could count in a week, thousands of scraps of metal collected over the years, and more grease than you could bottle. It also contains the

records of Joe's life. It can be seen on every shelf and tucked away in every tin can and drawer.

He took me underneath the shop where the earth was excavated away on the lee side of the hill. He showed me where he had to prop up the floor with 10-inch diameter tree trunks to hold up the weight of all the tools and metal scraps he had stored above.

"Yeah that leettle sheet was 'bout ready t' c'lapse so I decided it would be a goot thing if I wasn't in it when it went. Since I spend all my time here, dere's only one t'ing t' do an' that was t' prop it up." Joe was filled with wisdom like that if one can muster enough patience for it to surface.



### SASAK'S GLOVES

*"Eat it up. Wear it out. Make it do. Do without."*

*As a young boy, I first heard these words of advice from my grandfather. How foolish they seemed then, in my youth. I doubt if Joe had ever thrown away a tool in all his life. Screwdriver handles were now serving as lever controls. An old beer tap opened his front door. An ice pick was now a cotter key. I mentioned he was about due for some new gloves. "Aw dem sheets are okay, yet. Dere okay. I use dem for a rag when dey get too bad."*





JOE SASAKI

*"Oh, dat. I don't t'row dat away. We use dat yet. We can still make sumpin' outta dis guy. You can make a collar outta dis one yet – bore the t'read out – cut dis flat – maybe cut deese here corners off yet." He thought some more during a pause, "I could make a smaller nut outta dat yet, too. Never t'row anything away," he advised, "you never know when you might need it." There was another thoughtful pause after which he added, "Or if you'll be able to find it." As evidence of this wisdom, he pointed toward the door. "I made dis here door handle outta ol' beer tap." Then he turned and slowly walked around the shop, more searching his mind than the nooks and crannies of his shelves. Finally, from off in the corner I heard, "Here's dat leetle fart. I knew I had it somewheres."*





### THE REPAIR

*Dan, one of Joe's neighbors, came by to pick up an axle Joe had repaired. It had taken him three days of work to complete. "Oh, Joe can fix everything," he said admiring the new axle. Dan turned to me and began explaining Joe's work. "This thing here was built on a cast and when it came loose that cast iron all broke. Joe turned that piece out and made a steel one for me." Joe was over in the far side of the shop, but I could see he was listening. When Dan had finished his description Joe came over and added the final touches. "Den I couldn't hold the goddamn t'ing but I had enough on dere to machine it off and stick it on dere and cut dis out and den put dat in a chuck. Den I cut dis all back and stuck dis t'ing on and smoothed it out. Now it turns like new, only better. Oh, dem guys give me grey hair once in a while."*





### BRUSH

*"Whadya taking a picture of dat leettle sheet for?"*

*"I don't know, Joe. It's just an interesting looking brush."*

*"Oh. I never t'ought of it as being interesting. It's just my dust brush I use to brush the filings off my drill."*

*"Oh," I said. It seemed inappropriate to disagree.*

*"I got it from a friend. I'm pretty sure he painted with it, but it's no good fer paintin' anymore. But, it sure works just great to dust the filings off my drill press. Here let me show ya." He demonstrated, and it worked just fine.*



### JOE'S SHOP

*As we talked, a formation of Canada geese flew overhead and I mentioned how loud and how pretty they were. "Oh sheet dere here by da millions. Christ, when dey come da sky is all black with 'em. Once an' a while you'll find a whole field black with geese. When, those leettle sheets come dis time of year you here 'em first in this window and then they fade over to this window and that means dere headin' north. It's always nice when they come dat way." He stared at me seriously as though he was teaching a great lesson. "But let me tell ya, when ya here 'em outa this window an' then over t' this window they're headin' south. Den dere not so nice, cuz ya know." Here was a man who reckoned the spinning of the earth, the very global change of seasons by the sounds of the geese outside his workshop window. His workshop, his yard, his house, and the other few people in Leroy was a world big enough to satisfy Joe for 73 years. Some might scoff at this and say his was a restricted life. I admire him for knowing the definition of "enough."*





### WINDMILL AND WOODPILE

*I walked up and introduced myself. As I looked into his wizened face, I had misgivings about the wisdom of trespassing on his property. We started a conversation and within moments I saw that his countenance was not one of anger or suspicion but rather the natural facial expression of one who had lived alone and unmarried for 73 years. In his life, social skills and courtesy smiles were rarely needed. Everything about him tended toward worn-in comfort rather than the pretense of visual impression. Joe invited me into his shop and in the course of the afternoon let drop just a few tantalizing bits of his life's story. He talked less than he spit and it was clear that he valued the latter over the former a great deal. He was a man of priorities. When he couldn't find the right word to describe something (which was often) he readily substituted "little shit" and "old fart" and by this it was assumed I understood exactly what he was taking about because he did. His conversation was filled with pauses that stretched into quarter hours. He would then suddenly pick up the thread as though he had not stopped to gather his thoughts. He walked the same way, slowly and with frequent pauses. He seemed to assume that if I couldn't see it all around me, it would be no use telling me in words.*



WAUKESHA PLATE

*"Dey make good stuff." I had no doubt they had earned their reputation.*





JOE SASAK IN FRONT OF HIS SHOP

*Joe's expression left me doubting whether I was welcome or not. I soon learned to read Joe from his words and his actions rather than from his scowl. We spent two days together and were both sad when the time came for me to leave. He shook my hand and told me, "You come by anytime. I'll be right here." Two years later, I visited him again. True to his work, he was there. "Where you been? I t'ought you mighta forgot about me."*



### THE PIPE CUTTER

*Joe's is a world of iron and steel. His drills and saws turn slowly and with power. Like his tools, his every bodily movement is slow and sure and powerful.*

*He built his pipe cutter out of scrap and wanted to show me how well it worked. He stood still for four full minutes as the disc blade turned and sparks flew. Finally the pipe end fell off with a ring as it hit the floor. "Dat leetle sheet works gut, huh? You want me to cut a bigger one?"*

*Thirteen motionless minutes later, Joe smiled with pride as the cut end of the 2-inch solid rod fell to the floor. It glowed faint orange from the heat. "We'll just let it sit dere 'til it cools off," he said as he nonchalantly dusted metal bits off his overalls.*





### THE STOVE

*"Oh sheet yes it gits cold — down twenty t'irty b'low zero outside. But, it's never cold in here." Our conversation had arrived at a bragging point. "Sheet, yeab. This f'ing gits started in October an' never goes out 'til summer. I come out here in the mornin' its sixty seventy degrees. I stand all my wood all up. Den I put a great big one on the bottom and den I giver a start an' shut evert'ing off. Sometimes I doan hafta put not'ing in til two t'ree o'clock in the afternoon."*

*Joe built the stove. The main belly was an old water main dug up in Milwaukee. The top came off a boiler from an old freighter. The grid was from an old Victrola. He welded it there one day after having burned his arm by absent-mindedly leaning up against the stove to rest and warm himself. "Now ya can lean up dere an' stay toasty all day and never burn yurself no matter how hot th' fire is." I suspect it never occurred to Joe that, other than himself, this theory would never be tested.*

*"I used to have to put on my gloves to open the door cuz th' handle was so hot. I fine'y got smart one day and put on this new handle I made outa th' top of a brass bed post." I suddenly had this image of the bed in his room missing one post top. To a man like Joe, the practicality of a cool stove handle is much more important than the cosmetic of his bed. After all, he would handle the stove door every day, but who would ever see his bed?"*



WOODEN HANDLE  
PIPE WRENCH

*This was his favorite pipe wrench. He had inherited it from his father who had brought it with him from Czechoslovakia. Joe had tools everywhere and all of them looked quite used. It was easy to see that tools were the man's life.*

*"All your tools are old, Joe."*

*"Yeah, but dey all work. The t'ing is, you know, you gotta know how to use it. You could have a brand new one and not do nuttin' with it. You can break it by doin' nuttin' with it. Tools was meant to be used. Sometimes I buy old tools just to save 'em."*

*"You probably don't have anything that doesn't work."*

*"Nah, I jus' fix it."*



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Brooks Jensen Arts  
Anacortes, Washington, USA



The twelve images and text signature in this folio were printed on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gm/m<sup>2</sup> archival paper using Epson Ultrachrome archival pigment inks. Each image has been created by the photographer, produced to archival, museum standards.

The folio cover was debossed with the Trajan Pro typeface into Gilbert Oxford 100lb acid-free cover paper. The text pages were printed using Adobe's Caslon Pro and Trajan Pro typefaces.

Creative work with the images, layout, and design completed in June-September 2007.



## *Made of Steel – Folio V, Joe Sasak*

### List of Prints

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*Joe Sasak*  
*Joe's Shop*  
*The Repair*  
*Brush*  
*Sasak's Gloves*  
*The Pipe Cutter*  
*The Stove*  
*Horseshoes on the Stove*  
*Wooden Handle Pipe Wrench*  
*Waukesha Plate*  
*Joe in Front of His Shop*

The *Made of Steel* work has been produced in two previous folio editions. The original folios were a set of three, produced in 1993 as brown-toned, gelatin silver prints with a laserjet text signature in each. The three folios were *The Portraits*, *The Tools*, and *The Shops*. Each folio included five images. Twenty sets were produced of this edition.

The second folio version was published in 2003 as a *LensWork Special Editions Folio*. This edition was produced as warm-toned, gelatin silver prints printed from 425-line screen digital negatives. These negatives were scanned from original gelatin silver prints. This single-folio edition included twenty images and totalled of 34 copies.

This third edition represents a complete rework of the entire project. All images in this edition were produced from scratch, beginning with high resolution scans of the original negatives, or from digital camera originals. As such, every image is a new rendition. This Third Edition consists of five separate folios — *Oregon*; *Washington*; *The Central States*; *North Dakota*; and *Joe Sasak*. Each of the five folios contains twelve images, except the *Joe Sasak* folio which contains eleven images and one additional image on the introduction page. Simultaneous to these folios, an exhibition set of the entire body of work — consisting of all 84 images in the project — was produced in the summer of 2007.

Folio I  
Oregon

Folio II  
Washington

Folio III  
The Central States

Folio IV  
North Dakota

Folio V  
Joe Sasak  
(End of Folio V)

# Catalog Design and Production by Brooks Jensen and Holly Chadwick



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*The Made of  
Steel Project*

*Folio I  
Oregon*

*Folio II  
Washington*

*Folio III  
The Central States*

*Folio IV  
North Dakota*

*Folio V  
Joe Sasaki*