

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK

ART  
AT  
WORK



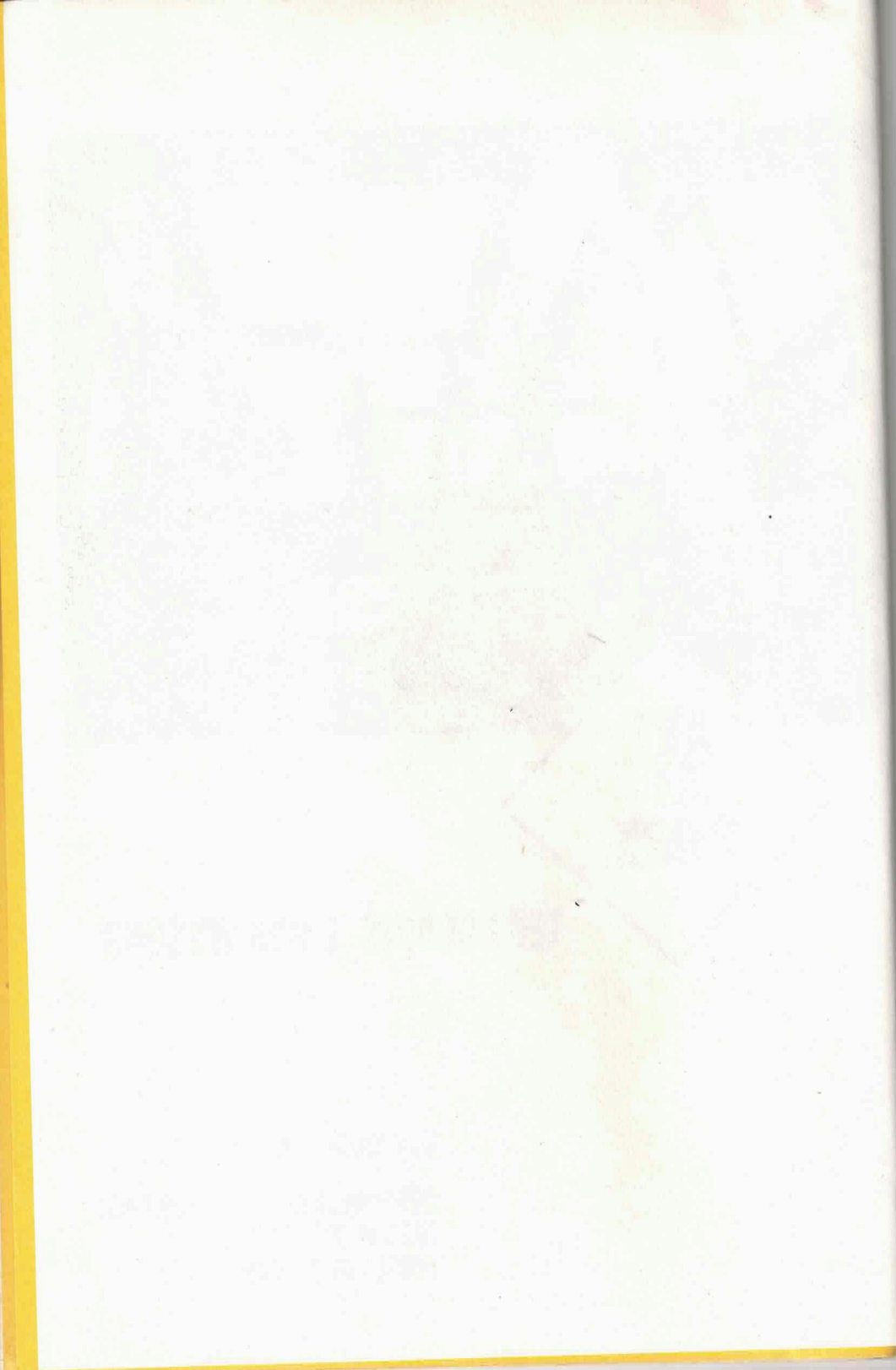


**ART  
AT  
WORK**

**TED HUCKINS LINDA WYSONG**

**MAY 7TH TO JUNE 3RD 1983**

**NORTHWEST ARTISTS WORKSHOP  
522 N.W. 12TH AVENUE  
PORTLAND, OREGON**



## **Many Thanks to our Sponsors**

**Carpenters Local 247  
Laborers Local 296  
Ironworkers Local 29  
Electrical Workers Local 48  
Operating Engineers Local 701  
Amalgamated Transit Workers Div. 757  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Bricklayers Local 1  
Cement Masons Local 555  
Sheet Metal Workers Local 16  
Roofers Local 49**

**Tri-Met  
Hoffman Construction  
WACO Scaffolding  
Donald M Drake Company  
Van Lom Concrete  
Mercer Industries  
Parr Lumber  
Gordon Coffey  
Employee Benefits Insurance  
Bill Nalto, Norcrest China  
Parker & Freshly  
Northwest Artists Workshop  
Metropolitan Arts Commission  
Al Glustl Wine  
Biltz Weinhard Brewing**

**A personal thanks to:  
Steven Telch and Sharon Niemczyk**



Upon entering the carpenter apprentice program about three years ago, I suddenly found myself in a new world. For the uninitiated, to walk into the rumble of activity that is constant on any construction site is awe inspiring and a bit frightening. The scale is huge, the noise is often deafening and there is much that can cause hurt and pain to a frail human.

If you watch closely, you soon realize that the whole process is choreographed with the beauty and precision of a ballet. Each person has a part (or job) that is performed in his own unique style. From an individual perspective, these jobs involve skill, ingenuity, some danger and at times the overwhelming boredom of endless repetition.

Still, the show is almost always stolen by the structure. (Perhaps this is appropriate, for often our buildings seem to allow room for the human factor only as an afterthought.) The materials of a project speak strongly and directly. The way these materials are used when forming the support system of a building tells us even more. Facades are constantly changing, but structure is less prone to fashion and addresses underlying values.

The opportunity to see buildings from the inside out has been one of my greatest satisfactions of working in carpentry. The training I have had as an artist has enhanced my appreciation for the materials and the craftsmanship. I hope *Art at Work* will open new perspectives and stimulate thought about the structures that shape our world.

Linda Wysong



## Art in Labor

As a laborer and an artist, I work on construction projects and art projects. In my view, the creative abilities and attitudes are similar in both fields. The difference is the degree of control I have over the product. In construction and art work, a blueprint or a sketch details the overall design of the product. The idea becomes reality when specially skilled individuals, working alone or collectively, fashion the appropriate materials into the objects of utility, beauty and expression that human necessity and creativity demand.

Unlike artists, builders haven't enough creative authority to design the structure, choose the material, plan the construction process or name the price of the finished work. However, if you listen, they point out that skilled, unionized builders interpret the design, fashion the materials, perform countless construction processes and collectively bargain for their wages.

Our workplace experience is a continuous effort to exercise enough creative authority to produce a structure that is "plumb and true," in a safe workplace, where we are respected for our abilities and rewarded for our contribution.

As both an art and construction project, *Art at Work* brings together the public and union tradesmen and women to broaden the dialogue about the current state of creativity and labor in the workplace.

Ted Huckins

# Workplace Aesthetics

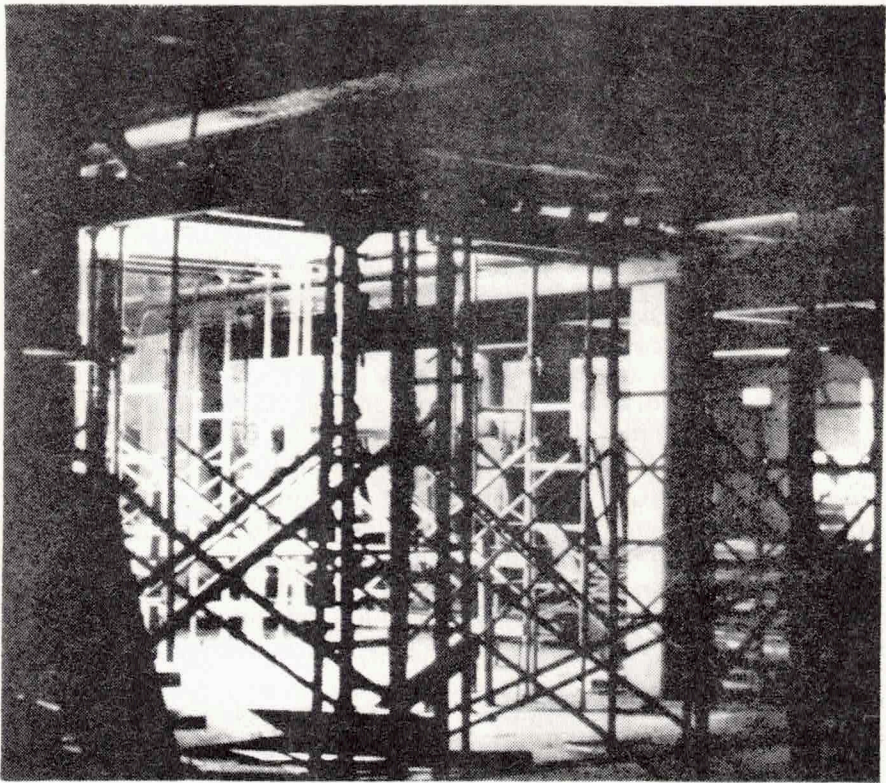


Photo by Gordon Coffey; selected from slide presentation.

## Workplace Aesthetics—

### Beauty & the Beast

The temporary structures that are the daily reality of the job site can be viewed on the simple level of function, yet they are also statements of both the workers' skills and the aesthetic experience of our industrialized society. Artistic considerations of *Art at Work* are multi-layered. Without attempting to draw up an exhaustive list, I would like to point to several general areas: materials, line, space and process.

Concrete-caked plywood, nubby reinforcing steel and rusting hardware are not the materials often associated with "art." Traditionally, though, art has been intimately connected with architecture, and building materials are often called upon to do more than provide shelter. Medieval sculpture was made from stone because their buildings were stone. Our buildings are made from concrete and steel. Thus it is natural that our sculpture is often made of these and other newer industrial materials. The physical fabric of a people's daily existence is an important key to exploring their experience.

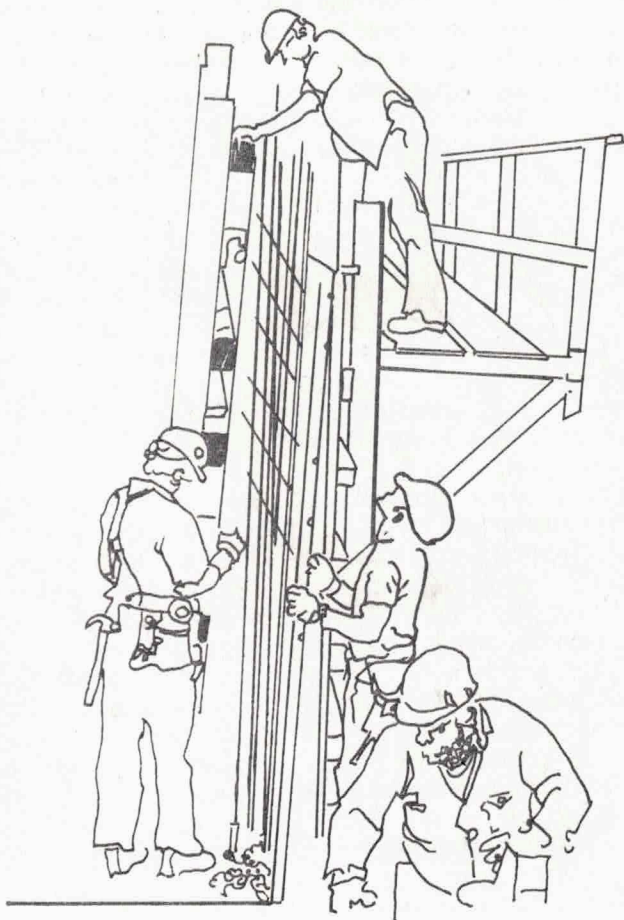
The straight line dominates on the construction site. It moves horizontally across the forms of a wall, vertically up braces of shoring and forms grids with curtains of steel. The straight line is not seen in nature but it is emblematic of man's heroic urge to build. The grid reflects modern man's emphasis on the measurable and the reproducible.

The lines seen in building are not flat marks on paper but three-dimensional forms that direct movement and change space. Spaces found within a single construction site are dramatically varied. A dark jungle of poles and braces composes a shoring system which contrasts with the open expanse of the top of the deck it supports. A wall may be placed in a deep hole or it may border an open plain. Wherever its placement, its interior does not easily accommodate the workers who are asked to crawl inside. Ironically, people working on sprawling construction projects often need to work in very restricted spaces. The understanding gained from forcing our senses to perceive the world in a new way through varied spacial experience is often a focus of art. It is one of the concepts behind this installation.

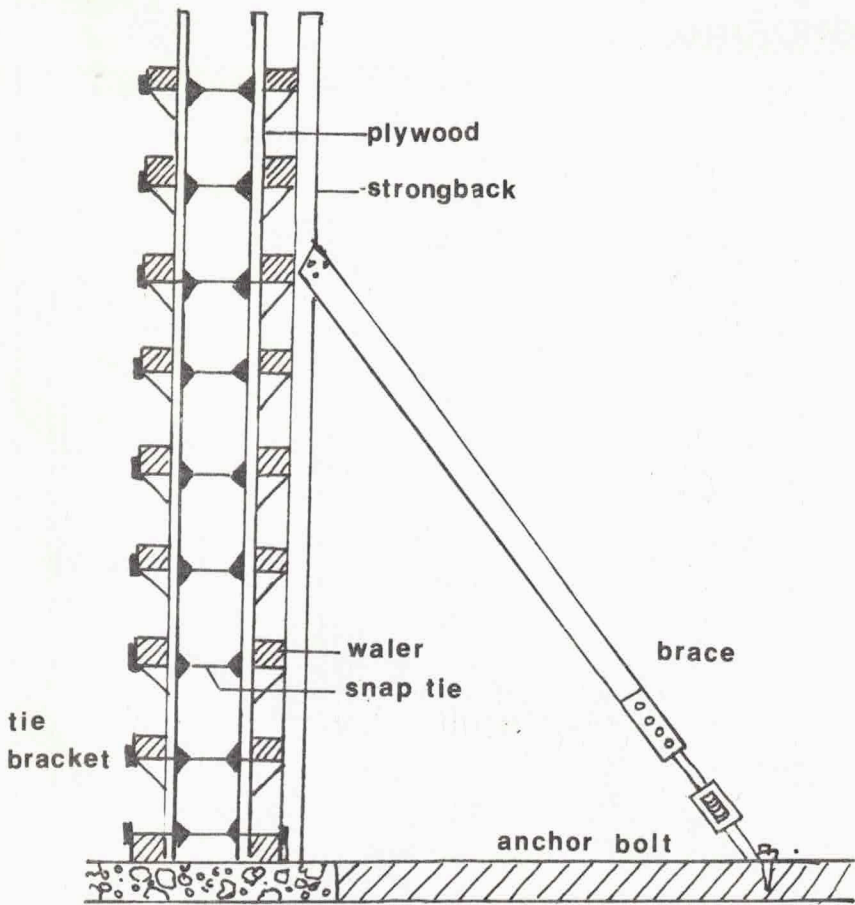
Another focus is process and the people who are a part of that process. We will let the people speak for themselves.

LW

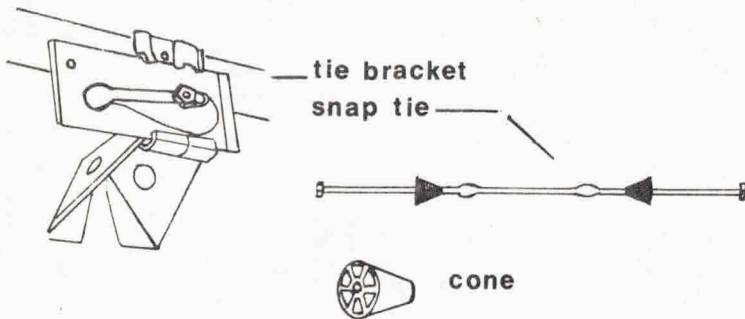
## WALL FORMS



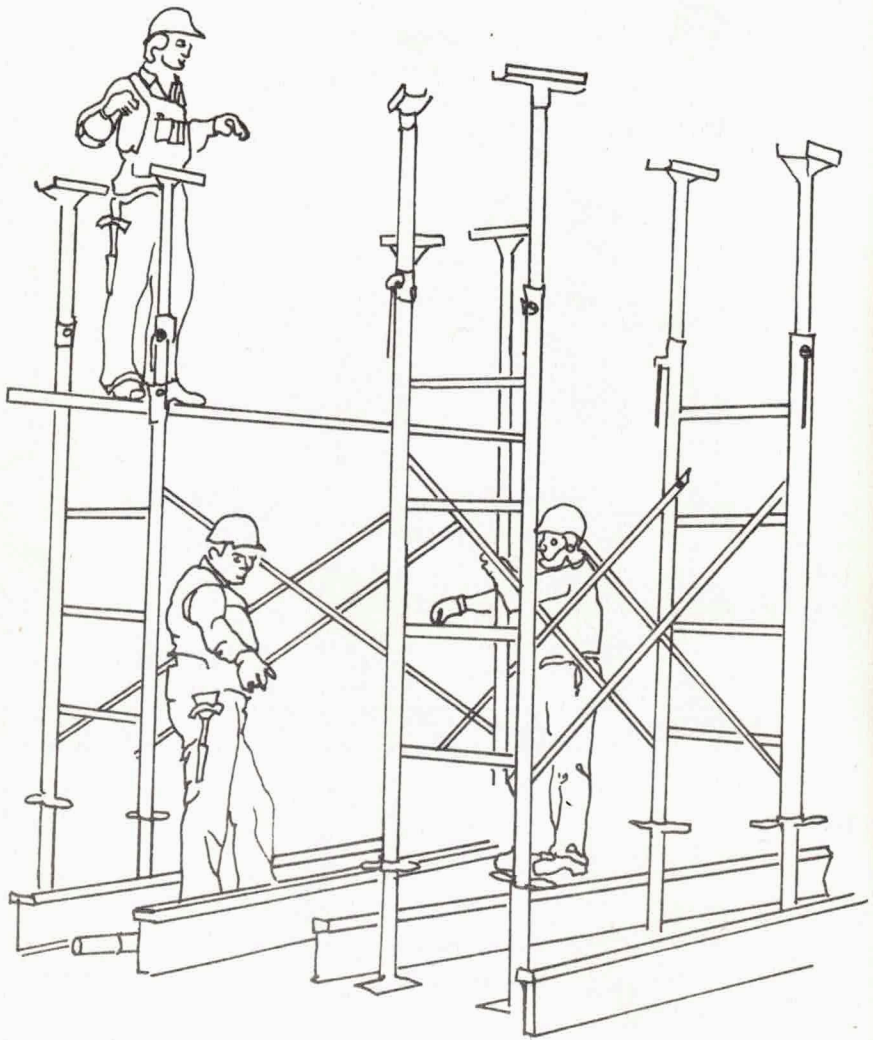
Carpenters and laborers are setting a reusable wall form. This form was placed with a crane forty times to construct the entire perimeter wall.



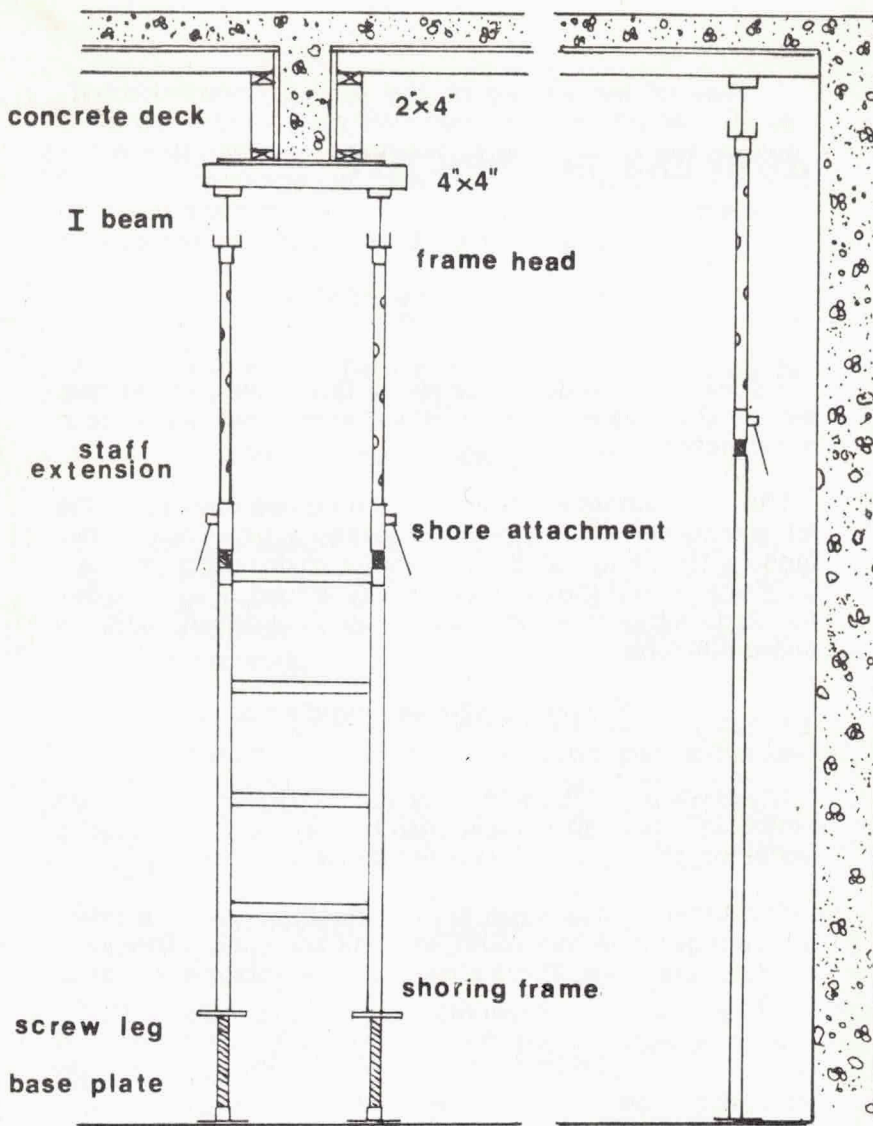
**Details:**



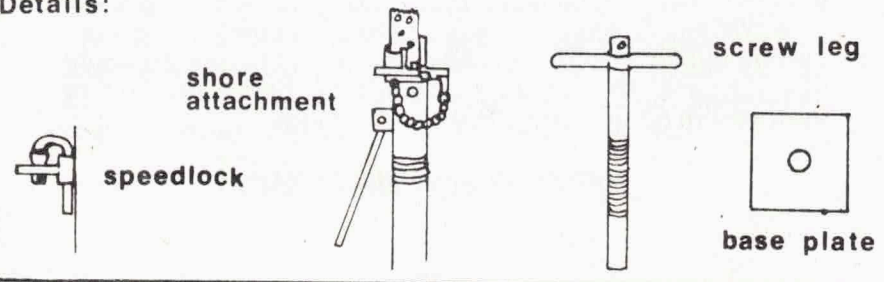
## SHORING



Laborers and carpenters selecting an I-beam to place in the shoring frame head. This shoring supports the deck while the concrete cures.



**Details:**



drawing courtesy of  
Steve Sigler, WACO Scaffold

## WORKERS' PERSPECTIVE

We may have to do it over two or three times sometimes, but, by God, we'll make it work! That is a real vital force in construction.

There's a whole lot of pressure on these guys to do the job quickly and efficiently because they're being paid all this money. They know all the quick ways to do things, from experience. And if they don't know something, they have this facility to figure it out in a quick way. That doesn't exist on non-union jobs.

Melinda Koken, carpenter 3 yrs.

I have been on jobs where five men were killed at different times...It is hard to tell a woman her husband isn't coming home tonight. This is why I fight for safety, constantly.

The older man is more knowledgeable, has more skills; the younger man has youth, stamina and speed. One averages out the other. There should be a fair mixture of both on a job.

Joe Stanley, carpenter 47 yrs.

We're usually under the gun and feel, 'I gotta look better than the next guy, because then I'll keep my job when layoff time comes.' Consequently, you see guys doing a lot of dangerous things to impress management. Often, management doesn't care, as long as you don't get hurt. Once you're hurt, you're out the door. They can't use you.

Van Arline, carpenter 11 yrs.

Workin' iron is a hard way to go. It's not an easy life. You're going to be away from home a lot. You're likely to see a lot of your friends get hurt awful bad...killed. You are going to see a lot of things and do a lot of things you will wish you had never seen or had to go through. But if you like a life that's as free as you can be, it's a good trade.

Jim Cheely, ironworker 15 yrs.

What makes a good carpenter is that he loves doing the work...I love it. I can't get enough of it.

John Jackson, carpenter 13 yrs.

Everything is predesigned, the steel, the form system. What you are seeing is not what I would call the art in work but the personality in work. Each person does the same thing just a little bit differently than the other, that is the individuality of the work.

Yes, I consider carpenters' work dangerous. It doesn't have to be dangerous. But for some reason, maybe it is fear of reprisal, people often don't report unsafe practices and due to the high production factor of today, a lot of people don't take the time to be safe and that is usually what causes the accidents.

Dennis Sustello, carpenter 12 yrs.

My first job was tearing out old insulation...it was at an oil storage facility in Portland. We were tearing down old asbestos covering with asbestos insulation behind it. We continued working at this job for a week not knowing that the material we were tearing out was actually asbestos. I had thought that the company we worked for, which had been in that field for 20 years, would provide the appropriate protective gear but they didn't...My glasses were so covered with asbestos fibers that I couldn't see through them and of course the stuff was all over my clothes...nobody seemed to really care, we were literally knee deep in the stuff.

Chuck Buyukas, carpenter 3 yrs.

I got tired of non-union work, I wanted to get more skill, to do things correctly instead of just slipping by, like they do a lot on non-union jobs. I tried to get into the union again, that was in '75. Finally by that time they were accepting women. It has worked out really well since then.

Every time I drive (over that bridge) I'm sticking my head out of the window looking at it, I love to look at it. I'm really proud of my part in it. Any time I'm with friends I say, 'I built that bridge.'

Kate Barrett, carpenter 11 yrs.

It takes a tremendous craftsman to take something from a piece of paper and make it stand there and be right. Because there is a large gap between what is in theory and what is in practice.

When a building was finished we used to have a 'topping off' party. It was a chance to step back and say, 'We all did it.'

Dennis McCarty, electrician 12 yrs.

There are some things I really like about carpentry. I've never made anywhere near this kind of money before. I like being outdoors, I like working with big groups of people. I like working on projects with people. I like the camaraderie. I like seeing things get made. I like using my hands. There is a lot I like but I don't like feeling that I might hurt myself. Almost every guy on my crew has a problem with his back or his arm or is taking pain pills.

Robin Boyce, carpenter 3 yrs.

Layout is the whole key to carpentry. If you can do layout work usually you can understand whatever you are doing even when it comes to fitting a joint.

George Edwards, carpentry 36 yrs.

When it comes to woodwork you have to learn to take pride in what you do...It is just like when you have done something good and nice, you can stand back and feel that you are pleased with it. But that is not the way they want it now. It's hurry up, get done with it.

So many of the jobs can be hard work and lousy work but if they treat you nice you can put up with lots of things and that is one thing I resent...The management and the foremen, they don't handle people like they should. Because if you treat a person right, you'll get more out of him than if you treat him just like a bull. It doesn't work that way, we are just human.

Helmer Johanson, carpenter 47 yrs.

You never get any credit for your work. Who gets the credit is the owner, the people who put up the money. I never heard anybody thank a carpenter for building a building.

Some accidents are pretty visible, but when you're breathing in some really bad fumes, who is going to say, 'You're gonna die, you better get off the job.' Nobody is going to tell you that.

You know what brought on unemployment and hard times...the military spending money where it shouldn't have been spent, with no return on it, forever. And who is making up for it now? You and every other unemployed person in the country, and all of our kids.

Joe Huckins, disabled carpenter, 25 yrs. experience

I go to work in the morning and get things organized. I have my own schedule. Then I catch the boss and ask him if he has any priorities. Generally I know as much about the labor work as he does, only maybe he wants something done right away.

Ted Barnett, laborer 21 yrs.

