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A PAIR OF STOCK SKATES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 Alex made the blocks from ash. He roughed out the shape with an axe and then whittled the form he wanted. The blocks of stock skates are like a boat, the blades the keel. The blocks are much narrower than the foot that rides them, and continue to taper to the blade. They are made so that there is the least chance of wood touching the ice. The openings for the straps are 1" x 1/4" slots, cut 5/16" down from the top of the block. He first drilled three holes in from each side with a 3/4" drill, then chiseled out the slot. He worked from both sides toward the center, and once open he ran a hot bar of metal through the slot. He finished the three slots, then turned the block bottom up in the vice, drew a line down the center, sawed on the line to get started • then chiseled out a slot to receive the feathered edge of the blade. He chipped a space wide enough at the heel to set the screw hole flush with the wood. There are a number of ways of attaching the blade to the block. The block could have been drilled through from side to side and a pin driven the hump on the blade, but Alex felt a tighter job could be had by drilling two tiny holes down from the top, putting a strong wire through the hole in the hump and feeding the ends up through the tiny holes. He gripped the wires in pliers, pulling up and twisting them together, drawing the blade tight. He drove the wires into the wood. Then he put in the screw at the heel.

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