



Pins & Tales

Summer 2016

THE eMAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN PERIOD FURNITURE MAKERS

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ON THE COVER

Cherry Tall Clock

Clock Works by Eleazer Carey (1769-1820) Windham, CT.
8 day brass movement—scroll top cherry case with mahogany inlays probably made by David Goodell (1753 – 1832), Pomfret, CT.

Primary wood: Cherry
Dimensions: 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ " Wide x 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ " Deep x 89 $\frac{3}{4}$ " Tall

Courtesy of American Clock and Watch Museum, Bristol, Connecticut.





Period Furniture

Summer 2016

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PHILADELPHIA
MUSEUM OF ART

CCHS
CHESTER COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I got back from the Midyear Conference at Thaddeus Stevens last night. What a great weekend!

The presenters—Mary May, Will Neptune, and Mike Pekovich—all did a great job. This year, we added a new set of optional “after the Conference” workshops, the idea being that a lot of people are not necessarily ready



to head home at noon on Sunday, and those who signed up for the Monday Chester County Historical Society Tour would have a whole afternoon to kill with nothing to do. Steve Latta and I worked out the idea of having each presenter—and then a few others who may not have been Saturday presenters—do more informal and up-close workshops, with a cap of 12 participants for each one. Will did a demonstration on stack laminating and bricking a curved table apron and another on installing hardware by hand. Mary did an excellent carving-gouge sharpening demo and an in-depth look at laying out and carving moldings, while Mike Pekovich showed his method for making very simple jigs to accurately rout mortises for setting hinges and half-mortise locksets.

I have used his methods for a few years now, and I can tell you, they work great! Mike’s other presentation was basically a continuation of his “Photographing Your Work” presentation that he gave to the whole group earlier in the morning: “Now that you have the photo, let’s head to the computer and see what can be done with Photoshop.” For those with the right mind-set (which means those who can stand spending even more time in front of the computer), it was great. Yours truly did a demo on Federal-style shaded fans and another on alternative methods for cutting dovetails (not with router jigs; I have no idea

how to use them!), which inadvertently turned into a dovetail demo concentrating on sharpening. But sharp chisels are pretty important when cutting dovetails, aren’t they?

What I also wanted to talk about here was the Friday trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. What a fantastic museum! As a furniture maker, going to museums always makes me feel a bit like a barbarian. You can imagine what it’s like going with 60 or more furniture makers! Here we are in one of the top museums in the country, with any manner of “fine arts” and “decorative arts”—paintings, glass, ceramics, sculpture (Tom Sears and I were looking at a marble sculpture of a woman that was absolutely breathtaking)—and the whole group basically racing by all of it to look only at the furniture. “Look at that inlay!” “Check out the Townsend shell carving!” “Look at the veneer work on that chest of drawers!” This is stuff that most of the world wouldn’t even notice, even if it was pointed out to them!

Granted, the Midyear is a time that we set aside to feed our addiction to period furniture making, and the museum trip is the same. But I shudder to think of all I missed: not only the furniture I didn’t see, but also the sculptures, blown glass, ceramics, and paintings. They’ll have to wait for another day. Maybe next time I go to a museum, I’ll shut my eyes to all the furniture and only look at the rest. Nah—never gonna happen!

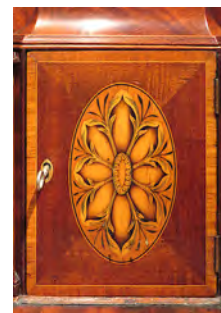


PHOTO BY BOB VAN DYKE



President's Message

DALE AUSERMAN
Michigan

It is early summer as I write this, which means I am deep into an enjoyable type of seasonable stress. Severely competing with my available shop time are vegetable gardening duties (my second most important hobby) and the usual heavy load of SAPFM issues and happenings.

And I continually make things worse as I cannot resist taking classes from our wonderful professional members before I have completed projects from prior classes. It's clear that I need to adjust my priorities before my shop fills with ongoing projects. Furthermore, I know that I am not alone, as I suspect most SAPFM members are fortunate to have more on their "to do" lists than available time will support, resulting in a full and rewarding life. Nonetheless, balancing resources (in this case, time) with desired achievements (completed projects) is always a challenge.

SAPFM faces a different challenge of resources versus achievement. The

members benefiting from our mission, and also reduces (through loss of membership fees) the financial resources available. It is important that we do all we can to grow the rolls of members benefiting from SAPFM.

As reported in the nearby "Board Update" article, Dave Redlin's Outreach Committee is working hard on several fronts to promote membership. Dick Reese's Chapter Support Committee is actively following through on a plan for strengthening chapter operations and for adding chapters in underserved regions, all of which will have a positive effect on membership levels. But, based on my own experience with SAPFM, there is much individual members

"...based on my own experience with SAPFM, there is much individual members can do to increase the membership rolls."

volunteers of the Board, chapter leaders, committee heads, and many members are working hard to achieve the mission of SAPFM: *To create a forum for the understanding, education, and appreciation of American period furniture.* Many efforts are under way to improve delivery of services to members, strengthen chapter activities, enhance our educational publications, and continue the tradition of excellent Midyear and other meetings. But the achievement of our mission is resource-limited on one hand by limits on the number of members served and on the other by financial constraints on the extent of services we can provide. We find that the membership count of SAPFM has been flat or slightly declining over the last few years (a little under 1,200 as of May), which limits the number of

can do to increase the membership rolls.

About 10 years ago, as my kids became adults and I had more free time and less-pressed financial resources, I decided to get back into woodworking in a serious way, joining the local woodworking guild as a way to grow my expertise. Guild member Ed Stuckey, then also leader of the SAPFM Great Lakes chapter, noticed my interest in working in higher end furniture (contemporary styles at the time) and invited me to attend his nearby SAPFM chapter meeting. I had not heard about SAPFM, and not knowing much about period furniture at the time (and thinking the Society must largely do hand-tool work), I initially declined. But Ed was persistent, saying the chapter had a great bunch of members, and that hand-tool use was optional. So I decided to attend a free chapter meeting to see what SAPFM

was all about. I've never looked back. The fellowship in SAPFM is a wonderful benefit (my best friends are now all SAPFM members), and I have learned to greatly appreciate period furniture and its associated history, all while my skills (including hand-tool use) have grown immensely. As I have tremendous access to many design and other craft resources, I look forward with great anticipation to each and every SAPFM meeting, be it a small group in somebody's shop, a chapter meeting, or the major Midyear meeting. All of this because Ed was convincingly insistent that I give SAPFM a try.

Thus I encourage all members to help recruit new members. Invite a friend or associate to accompany you to the next local chapter meeting. Pass the SAPFM website link to other woodworkers. Show a copy of the *American Period Furniture* journal to a fellow worker, or a church or service club member. Make sure they understand that SAPFM welcomes all skill levels, especially novices with a desire to learn. If you know of someone who has let his or her membership expire, try to understand why and make that person feel welcome to come back. Make a point of mentioning all of the great online resources at your next guild or other club meeting, and help all potential comers to understand that a SAPFM membership is the very best value in woodworking. It will only continue to get even better as additional members join. —DA



Dale Auserman, President



Board Update

JIM SHAPIRO
California

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SAPFM 2016 BOARD

SAPFM 2016 BOARD MEMBERS

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As you may know from a recently circulated email to members, we have made a change to the publication schedule for our annual journal, *American Period Furniture*.

A couple of factors led us to make this change. We had received numerous comments from members saying that they enjoyed having the journal over the holidays but never knew exactly when to expect it. While that little bit of imprecision may seem appropriate to a group who (most of the time) favors handwork over CNC, the feedback we got was strong enough for us to reexamine the timing. It also happens that a late December publication date, coupled with a year-end “record date” (the date at which one must be a member in order to receive the journal), causes confusion. We had to guess how many journals to print in order to ensure we’d have enough for members renewing right at year-end, as well as a buffer stock for future

purchases, etc. As a result, we decided to move the record date so it comes before the publication date and to move up both sufficiently to distribute the journal in mid-December.



FISCAL CALENDAR CHANGE

On the subject of date changes, we elected to move our fiscal year from December 31 to March 31. Our Annual Meeting takes place in January, so this allows us to capture the financial impact of that event, including pre-registrations, in a single fiscal year.



LIFE MEMBER CERTIFICATES

We recently distributed certificates to all Life Members. Please consider either a one-time (\$1,000) or four-installment (\$250) Life Membership to SAPFM. It supports our not-for-profit mission of providing education and resources in the field we all love. And when you receive your certificate you get to make a frame for it; please send in pictures! We are also instituting a few changes to the membership renewal process to make it easier to know when your



membership is expiring so that you can renew it without any guesswork. We will automate the sending of reminders at several intervals near your membership expiration date and are working on displaying your renewal date on the website when you log into the members’ area. Regardless of when you renew, the renewal will take place “as of” the expiration date; there has been and will continue to be no disadvantage to renewing early. Last on the membership front, we are increasing our efforts to get the word out through selected advertisements in various publications and meetings, via an effort headed up by Dave Redlin.



Board Update

(continued-2)

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SAPFM 2016 BOARD



CHAPTER SUPPORT

The Chapter Support Committee has been working diligently to support and coordinate with the local groups. The major activity since Dick Reese took the helm of this committee has been working on creating a list of

chures to local stores and other venues woodworkers are likely to frequent. Distribution of brochures and counter-top boxes is expected soon.



FIRST-QUARTER MEMBERSHIP LISTS

The first-quarter new-member lists were sent to the chapter leads, as well as first-quarter lists of members who did not renew during that period. We want to be sure that all who can benefit from chapter involvement will be able to!



VOLUNTEER!

Please remember that SAPFM is a member-run, volunteer organization. If you would like to participate in any committee or on the Board, let us know. We welcome the help, and it's a lot of fun! As always, we are keen to have your feedback and ideas, so please don't hesitate to contact any one of your Board members (listed on the previous page, or on the website—see contact info in the members' directory). —JS



turnkey events/presenters that chapters may call upon for a chapter meeting. By mid-July we expect an initial group of over 20 presenters who can be contacted. They are all available via the website to chapter leads, along with lead times, costs, etc., involved with bringing some excellent programming to their meetings. All are of high quality, and four are Cartouche Award winners! Of course, numerous chapters have for some time been creating content like this; the idea is to make as much of it as possible accessible to all chapters. We are in debt to those chapters who have blazed the trail here.



SPREAD THE WORD

On the SAPFM membership promotion front, most if not all chapters have agreed to help distribute bro-

SPONSORED AWARDS

SAPFM has so far this year sponsored three woodworking show awards in order to encourage and reward makers in our space. Awards have ranged from \$200 to \$250 in keeping with the categories at the



shows: "Best Traditional Design" at the Minnesota Woodworking Guild Northern Woods Show; "Period Furniture and Traditional Craftsmanship" at the Texas furniture makers show; and "Traditional Woodworking Award" at the Design in Wood

Exhibition at the San Diego County Fair. I attended the latter annually as a child, and while at that time I was more interested in the funnel cakes





Note the Change

DALE AUSHERMAN, *Michigan*
JIM SHAPIRO, *California*

ANNUAL DUES MUST BE PAID UP BY OCTOBER 31

American Period Furniture will be shipped to the membership prior to the holidays. Members must have their dues up-to-date by October 31 of the the year to receive it on time.

Get your
issue of
*American
Period
Furniture*
on time!

The SAPFM journal, *American Period Furniture*, is typically delivered sometime between late in the calendar year and early the following year. We have reviewed the publication schedule and can now ensure that it comes out before the holidays each year. Doing so will solve a number of issues, including allowing members to enjoy having the journal to read over the holidays. In concert with this change, we are revising the date at which members must be active (dues paid up) in order to receive it.

Prior to this year, a copy of the journal was mailed to all SAPFM members who were active on December 31 of the year of publication. For 2016 and beyond, this will be changed to members who are active (dues paid up) as of October 31 of the year of publication. In order to enable mailing the journal by the second week of December, we have to prepare a mailing list early in November. Prior to this change, we required either guesswork in November as to who will have paid up by year's end and/or a second and more expensive mailing to account for membership renewals that would come in after early November and before December 31. This change will eliminate these costly complexities. With this change, all members continue to receive a journal mailing for each year of membership.

So that members do not miss receipt of a journal, it is important that members ensure that their membership is current as of October 31. While we make every effort to notify members when their membership is about to expire, those efforts are not always successful. You can log into the member area of SAPFM.org at any time to see your date of renewal. If for any reason your membership has lapsed on or before October 31, you will not get a journal for that year. Those who join on or after November 1 will not receive their journal until the next edition is mailed.





HIGHLIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE CHAPTERS

Great Lakes Chapter

Spring Meeting

Andrew Messimer, Michigan

The Great Lakes Chapter held its Spring meeting the weekend of April 16-17. The meeting started with a show-and-tell. Bill Vetter brought in a pepper mill he turned and was seeking advice on finishes. Andrew Messimer brought in a Sack Back Windsor he completed recently. Jim Crammond showed a Windsor stool he made from figured maple. The maple was destined for the fireplace, but Jim noticed the distinct figure when he started splitting it. Doug Moulder brought in several pieces to share. The first was a Japanese-style tool box. He also brought in several Shaker oval boxes. The last thing he shared was a blade and cartridge for a SawStop table saw. Doug had an incident earlier in the year when using a dado set in his table saw. Fortunately for him, the saw worked as it should so he still has all of his fingers.



Doug Moulder with his toolbox and Shaker oval boxes

After lunch we had several presentations. Ralph Babcock shared with us several table saw sleds he made on the cheap with plywood. Following Ralph, there was a group presentation on sharpening edge tools with various media. Jim Crammond went first. He



Ralph Babcock and his table saw sled

showed how he uses a bench grinder to get a hollow grind and then free-hand hones his tools with oil stones. Next, Ed Stuckey sharpened a chisel with diamond stones and the Veritas sharpening jig, employing a secondary bevel. He also showed his method for sharpening gouges with the Koch sharpening system, which uses a sort of buffing wheel with a honing compound. After Ed's presentation, Trevor Smith shared his technique using Shapton ceramic waterstones. David Boeff then presented, using sandpaper abrasives and the Work Sharp tool sharpener. The final presentation of the day came

from SAPFM president Dale Ausherman. Dale shared a tool he created to help organize his cut lists for projects. He uses Excel to create an organized cut list and determine the board feet he will need. Then, after purchasing his lumber, he creates a plan of how each board will be used by making scaled drawings of each board in PowerPoint and then divides them up to optimize the use of each board.



Trevor Smith

On Sunday morning, John Fitzpatrick gave a presentation on the con-



1. Minnesota Chapter
2. Rock River Valley Chapter
3. Great Lakes Chapter
4. Iroquois Chapter
5. New England Chapter
6. Gateway Chapter
7. Indiana Chapter
8. Ohio River Valley Chapter
9. Delaware River Valley Chapter
10. Chesapeake Chapter
11. Blue Ridge Chapter
12. Carolinas Chapter
13. Peach State Chapter
14. Lone Star Chapter
15. San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
16. SoCal Chapter
17. Florida Chapter
18. Backcountry Carolina Chapter
19. Tidewater Chapter
20. Southern New England Chapter



Chapter News *(continued-2)*

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE CHAPTERS



John Fitzpatrick and his mini-Highboy

struction of a mini-Highboy he made at the Woodworking Workshops of the Shenandoah Valley with Jeff Headley and Steve Hamilton. He discussed the carcass assembly in class and the challenges he faced for the remaining build at home. The final presentation of the weekend was with Tod Herrli. Tod gave a presentation of the methods he uses to tune up a complex molding plane. He shared what he checks on the plane when trying to determine if it is

worth investing in. Using an antique ovolo plane, he showed truing up the sole with a shoulder plane and adjusting the wedge to fit properly. Then, using various grinders and buffers, he reshaped the iron to match the sole and sharpened it.

Thanks again to everyone who presented and brought items to share. We look forward to our Fall meeting, October 22-23, 2016.

Southern California Chapter

The spring meeting of the So.Cal chapter of SAPFM was held at Cer-



Alf Sharp with members of the So.Cal SAPFM Chapter Spring seminar.

ritos College and honored to host Alf Sharp for a three-day seminar. Alf covered turning and a cabriole leg for the students at Cerritos College during the day on Friday, then presented an informative lecture on the history of furniture on Friday evening. Saturday and Sunday, Alf concentrated on the construction of a Philadelphia tilt-top piecrust table. Alf covered the carving for a hairy-paw foot, the carved elements on the pedestal, and a unique method of creating the edge molding and shaping the top for the table. Everyone enjoyed the extremely informative weekend.



Alf demonstrating carving the knee of a Philadelphia tilt-top table at the Spring meeting of the So.Cal SAPFM seminar.

Delaware Valley Chapter

Jim Marsh—New Jersey

The Delaware Valley Chapter's Fall Meeting was held at Doug Mooberry's shop (www.kinlochwoodworking.com), Kinloch Woodworking. Situated in the Historic District of Unionville, PA. our all-day meeting began with wonderful warm apple cider donuts and fresh coffee provided by Doug's wife Pat.



Tod Herrli demonstrating grinding a molding plane iron



Chapter News *(continued-3)*

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE CHAPTERS

Kinloch Woodworking is composed of two buildings, one is a beautiful late 19th century house serving as a showroom filled with a wide range of furniture from wonderful period reproductions, Shaker, contemporary items, as well as antiques including a sofa believed to belong to Martha Washing-



ton. During our tour we enjoyed seeing a magnificent 36" wide piecrust table with solid crotch mahogany, tall case desk with many hidden compartments and two examples of Wharton Esherick's desk, one done in curly maple and the other in a flame birch. It was real eye candy with Grandfather Clocks, spice chests, tables, and chairs, with commentary from Doug on each of the pieces. Doug also showed slides of prior work such as bedpost carvings, finials,



and other 18th-Century reproductions.

We then moved to Doug's workshop which is in a two story Barn behind the main showroom. One of Kinloch's employees, Matt, demonstrated cutting and installing butterflies using a router freehand, cutting to the "line" with minimal cleanup with a chisel for the corners; this man has nerves of steel. Matt also demonstrated their way of cutting dovetails, making and installing inlays and cutting mitered intersecting joints for sash bars in glass cabinet doors.

A few miles from the main showroom and workshop we were treated to Kinloch's wood barn. We were astonished to see a collection of some of the finest woods; mahogany in nearly 4 foot widths, tiger maple 5" to 6" thick and 20" to 30" wide and several other species. It is an amazing and well-cared



for collection. If you are interested Doug also sells the four-foot-plus mahogany planed and sanded to 60 grit.

Next of was a presentation by Ashley King, a horologist, appraiser, and lecturer on clocks. Clocks are his passion; he studied in Germany learning his craft. He showed various clock forms including a wooden clockworks, and wood clock cases from various periods. The woodworker's artistry in selecting the proper woods for making both the gears and cases was of great interest.

Lastly, but certainly not the least, John Owen showed us what he learned



over his past 30 years of carving. John studied with various carvers and always looked for better methods of working. His workbench became a simply-constructed flat surface at a height he



found suitable. From the lighting of his work, the various ways he holds the different carvings, and the clever way he holds and stores his chisels, he found what he didn't like and continually improvised until he found how he wanted to work. What John showed us were simple and practical ways to approach carving.

If you are in the Unionville PA, neighborhood take the time to stop by as I am sure you will enjoy a walk through the showroom and will be welcomed.



Chapter News *(continued-4)*

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE CHAPTERS

Rock River Chapter

April 23 Meeting

David Gooding—Illinois

SAPFM Rock River Valley Chapter held its April 23 meeting at Larry

completed works, construction of replacement base moldings for columns, and photos of a completed Queen Anne desk.

The afternoon presentations were given by the members. Arnie Bandstra gave a slide-show presentation of the highlights from the SAPFM Winter



Mauritz's residence in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. The meeting was attended by 19 members and guests.

Show-and-tell items included a Bible box, box stool, side table, small chest, dressing table, a slide show of

Conference in Williamsburg.

Larry Mauritz gave a presentation on his many museum-quality half-scale pieces that he has completed. He talked about how his construction techniques, finishes, and drawings have evolved from the first knee-hole desk to the almost-completed highboy.

Larry Heuvelman gave a presentation on his "salt box"-style home that he has built and the drawer construction for the kitchen, a built-in pantry, and door construction for the home.

Tom McMahon gave a presentation on applied carvings. He had examples of failed applications and explained why they failed. He also showed the best material for applied carvings and how to apply them.



Tom McMahon (l) and Mike Mason (r)



Philip Eves



Larry Mauritz

Our next Rock River Valley Chapter meeting is scheduled for September, 2016, in Illinois.



Events/Happenings

GIL TYLER, *Connecticut*
JAY STALLMAN, *Georgia*

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITIONS, LECTURES, AND FORUMS

Yale University Art Gallery

**“Art and Industry in Early America:
Rhode Island Furniture,
1650-1830”**

August 19, 2016–January 8, 2017

This groundbreaking exhibition presents a comprehensive survey of Rhode Island furniture from the colonial and early Federal periods,



including elaborately carved chairs, high chests, bureau tables, and clocks. Drawing together more than 130 exceptional objects from museums, historical societies, and private collections, the show highlights major aesthetic innovations developed in the region. In addition to iconic, stylish pieces from important centers of production such as Providence and Newport, the exhibition showcases simpler examples made in smaller towns and those made for export.

<http://artgallery.yale.edu/exhibitions/exhibition/art-and-industry-early-america-rhode-island-furniture-1650-1830>

Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum

**“Wallace Nutting: Preservation
Pioneer”: Exhibit highlighting the
100th anniversary of Wallace
Nutting’s Webb House**

July 4–October 30, 2016



Wallace Nutting opened the historic Joseph Webb House to the public for the first time on July 4, 1916. Exactly 100 years later, to the day, the exhibit will celebrate and show the role Wallace Nutting played in raising interest in colonial history. Wallace Nutting was a true pioneer in the emerging fields of historic preservation and the study and appreciation of American decorative arts and architecture.

Wonderful furniture!

The three house museums are filled with wonderful period furniture and, Yes! George Washington slept here. Read about Washington meeting Rochambeau for strategy during the Revolutionary War. See some great furniture, both period and Nutting.

<http://webb-deane-stevens.org/100th-anniversary-of-treasured-landmark-opens-exhibition-at-wds-on-july-4/>

Winterthur Museum

**“Made in the Americas: The New
World Discovers Asia”**

March 26, 2016–January 8, 2017

You’ll see American and “Chinese Chippendale” furniture, Japanned highboys and dressing tables. Where did the designs come from? A new exhibit points the way.

“Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia” examines the profound influence of Asia on the arts of the colonial Americas. Featuring some of the most extraordinary objects produced in the Americas, this scholarly exhibition is the first Pan-





Events/Happenings (continued-2)

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITIONS, LECTURES, AND FORUMS

American study to explore how craftsmen across North, Central, and South America adapted Asian styles in a range of media, from furniture to silverwork, textiles, ceramics, and painting.

<http://www.winterthur.org/?p=1236>

Winterthur Museum

National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors (NAWCC)
“Clocks at Winterthur”

2016 NAWCC Ward Francillon
Time Symposium
October 6–9, 2016



Sponsored and organized by the National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors, the symposium will be the first at Winterthur to focus exclusively on the museum’s horological holdings. A roster of eminent speakers will address important clocks and watches in the collection, highlighting their mak-

ers, regions, craftsmanship, and cultural significance.

<http://www.clocksatwinterthur.com/index.html>



Early American Industries Association

“Eastfield Historic Trades Sampler”: Four days of workshops on early American crafts

July 28–July 31, 2016

The Early American Industries Association’s “Eastfield Historic Trades Sampler” will be held on Thursday, July 28 through Sunday, July 31, 2016, at Eastfield Village, East Nassau, New York. The program this year will include making domed wooden boxes; carving fish decoys; smithing iron utensils; tinsmithing; decorative painting; flint knapping; making an atlatl*; and black powder shooting. Each project is led by an experienced tradesman.

The name “Eastfield Historic Trades Sampler” reflects what the association actually offers—a sampler of various trades with an opportunity to learn about them while completing a small project related to the craft.

atlatl* —Visit the website for Wikipedia definition

<http://eaiainfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Description-of-program.pdf>

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

“American Made: Treasures from the American Folk Art Museum”

July 2–September 18, 2016

600 Museum Way,
Bentonville AR, 72712
(479) 418-5700

America has always been a nation of makers. The things we make tell the story of who we are. “American Made: Treasures from the American Folk Art Museum” features 115+ objects, including quilts, carvings, signs, samplers, weather-vanes, whirligigs, and more—hand made by Americans when our nation was young. The exhibition is organized by the American Folk Art Museum in collaboration with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

This clock is American period furniture. What we consider “country” furniture today (and as period woodworkers we typically don’t appreciate too much) was really the majority of 18th-Century furniture. The vibrant decoration speaks as loudly as carved mahogany. Have a blast; have some color!





Events/Happenings *(continued-3)*

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITIONS, LECTURES, AND FORUMS



<http://folkartmuseum.org/exhibitions/american-made-treasures-from-the-american-folk-art-museum/>

VISITING CHICAGO THIS SUMMER?

Art Institute Chicago

“Shakers and Movers: Selections from the Collection of Dr. Thomas and Jan Pavlovic”

Through Fall 2017



For Shakers, work was a form of worship, and objects were expressions of their attempt to create heaven on earth. They employed unique techniques to build furniture that was like their faith: honest, simple, and humble. Featuring over 20 such objects generously loaned by collectors Thomas and Jan Pavlovic, this exhibition—the first of its kind at the Art Institute—shows the range of items made by the Shakers in the late 18th and 19th centuries.



Also, in contrast to Shaker, see great period furniture in its permanent collection, such as this mahogany and zebrawood desk made in Norwich, Connecticut circa 1780. See them both in Chicago!

<http://www.artic.edu/exhibition/shakers-and-movers-selections-collection-dr-thomas-and-jan-pavlovic>

Milwaukee Art Museum

“The Art of Carving”

Now open at the Constance and Dudley Godfrey American Art Wing

Carving is more than just a type of decoration. It can augment forms and structural details, emphasize the flow of a design, communicate ideas, and stimulate the imagination. This gal-



lery explores the “Art and Mysterie” of carving through some of the finest examples of 18th-Century American decorative arts.

The gallery brings together 50 of the most celebrated examples of early American carving from both local and national collections. Two videos created for the gallery, as well as engaging comparisons among a variety of objects from print sources and stove plates to chairs and bed posts, transform the way visitors think about “The Art of Carving.” The exhibition is now open in the Constance and Dudley Godfrey American Art Wing of the Milwaukee Art Museum.

<http://www.chipstone.org/content.php/27/Exhibitions>

San Diego County Fair

35th Annual “Design in Wood: An International Exhibition of Fine Woodworking”

*June 3–July 4, 2016
Del Mar, California*

Presented in association with the San Diego Fine Woodworker’s Association. This is possibly the largest woodworking exhibit in the world. Many different categories are being judged including “Traditional Woodworking: Furniture.”



Events/Happenings (continued-4)

MUSEUMS, EXHIBITIONS, LECTURES, AND FORUMS



You gotta see this!
Ladies' portable desk – Awarded in 2015 exhibition to Bob Stevensen (Recognition Award for Traditional Woodworking—Furniture—was presented by Society of American Period Furniture)

<http://www.sdfwa.org/design-in-wood-exhibition/>

2016 ADA/Historic Deerfield Antiques Show

October 8-9, 2016

11:00 am-6:00 pm

Deerfield Academy Hockey Rink
Albany Road, Deerfield, MA 01342

Attention! Attention!

This is a double/triple bonus!

See, touch, turn 'em over, check 'em out, and see how they were made...at the Deerfield Antiques Show.

You get the best hands-on experience at a great antiques show! While you are here check out the great furniture at Historic Deerfield—just don't touch!

There's something for everyone at this annual two-day event that brings the country's leading antiques dealers to Deerfield. Browse through thousands of rare objects, from furnishings to carpets to quilts. Admission to the show is \$15 (free for members of Historic Deerfield) and includes access to the Flynt Center of Early New England Life and the Apprentice's Workshop at Dwight House. Don't miss out on this opportunity to connect with dealers, collectors, and scholars—all in a classic New England village.

<http://www.adadealers.com/html/show.php>



*Visit a
Museum
this
Summer!*





Events/Happenings

BOB VAN DYKE
Connecticut

CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS FOR THE PERIOD WOODWORKER

School is “not” out for the summer!

*Why should I take a class?
That's just for
beginners, right?*

The experience of taking a class from a master furniture maker is unparalleled. Working alongside someone who has spent the better part of his or her career both making furniture and teaching furniture making can teach you more in one week than you had realized possible. We all work in our own shops, usually by ourselves—and the furniture that's produced is amazing—but when you take a class, you see methods that you probably never even thought of; you get answers (sometimes subliminally) to questions you might not even realize you had and, most important, you are setting aside dedicated time to work on that project and that project only—no interruptions, no phones, no work stuff—and you are working with and getting to know a whole lot of other like-minded people in the class. What could be bad about all that?

The following is a partial listing of project-oriented period furniture-making classes at some of this country's best-known schools for period furniture-making classes.

The Connecticut Valley School of Woodworking
<http://www.schoolofwoodworking.com/>

“The Joy of Woodcarving: Spend a Week Carving with Mary May” — August 8-12, 2016 ... [read more](#)



“Build a 17th-Century Joined Chest with Peter Follansbee”
September 30, October 1 & 2, November 5 & 6,
December 3 & 4, 2016, January 7 & 8 and
February 4 & 5 (2017) ... [read more](#)



Furniture Institute of Massachusetts
<http://www.furnituremakingclasses.com/>

“Build a Chippendale Armchair” — August 1-12, 2016 ... [read more](#)
“Ornamental Carving with Phil Lowe” — August 22-26, 2016
... [read more](#)



Hobbs Woodworking School
<http://hobbsfurniture.com/>

Marc Adams School of Woodworking
<http://www.marcadams.com/>

“Make a Chippendale Dining Chair with Alf Sharp” — July 25-29, 2016
... [read more](#)



“Painting with Wood: French Marquetry with Patrick Edwards” — August 22-26, 2016
... [read more](#)



Woodworking Workshops of the Shenandoah Valley
<http://http://www.wwotsv.com/>

“Building a Virginia/North Carolina Huntboard” — Aug 15-19, 2016
... [read more](#)



Midyear Conference

JIM ALTEMUS
New York

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2016 MIDYEAR CONFERENCE

The 2016 Midyear Conference marked the 15th summer gathering of SAPFM, and like the first, was held at Thaddeus Stevens College in Lancaster, PA.

It was certainly a milestone for Steve Latta, who was instrumental in getting the concept of the Midyear started. This year, we had 77 registered attendees, along with several guests. Once again, the college proved to be an outstanding venue for the conference, with excellent facilities and classrooms, plus top-notch dining and social-hour experiences.

Friday's bus trip prior to the conference was to the Philadelphia Museum of Arts. The museum gave us a special program on the history of local Philadelphia cabinetmakers and their clients, along with a guided tour of the conservation lab. We also had a fascinating talk about locally made pieces in one of the period rooms, which had been rescued and re-created from a prominent local 18th-Century home. The provenance of some of the furniture had been done by using the furniture in family portraits as a guide, which is painstaking research.

Of special interest was a set of 10 highly painted pieces of furniture (sofa, chairs, and stool) that had been made for a Philadelphia family by a local cabinetmaker in 1806. The set had been dispersed as family situations changed, but remarkably, all the pieces were found through antique dealers and family descendants from as far away as Georgia. The museum is in the process of restoring these pieces, which

will be placed in a separate exhibit this coming September.

Saturday's program included presentations by Mike Pekovich, Will Neptune, and Mary May.

Mike Pekovich talked about oils and varnishes and the various oil/varnish blends that are on the market. The focus of the presentation was on the simplicity of this method of finishing and the fact that the process really begins at the lumberyard with careful selection of the wood. Careful surface prep is key before beginning the gradual building of successive layers of finish, ultimately finishing with a coat or two of wax. Mike cleared up some of the confusion about sandpaper and steel wool and stressed that this was a very "obtainable" finish. He also went into the steps he takes for a simple padded shellac finish on smaller furniture projects.

Will Neptune's presentation focused on case goods construction systems and various methods for installing case dividers. He demonstrated housed tapered dovetails as a common Boston technique to attach tops was demonstrated, along with a review of construction problems encountered on curved and serpentine front chests of drawers. The sheer number of examples Will brought could have filled up the whole weekend, let alone just an hour-and-a-half demonstration! As usual, Will showed his





Midyear Conference (continued-2)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2016 MIDYEAR CONFERENCE



creativity in using techniques, giving the maximum strength with minimum effort.

Mary May focused on carving techniques for applied leaf carvings, a cartouche, and rosettes. Always the teacher, she focused on which tool would

give the cleanest result for a variety of cuts, focusing on keeping a clean edge and knowing how to read the grain. Plus, in a carving such as a cartouche, the focus was on how to initially set the layers of the cartouche prior to the actual carving to obtain an even surface for each layer.

Saturday night featured work by several members, students, and former students of Thaddeus Stevens. The quality of the work was spectacular.

On Sunday morning, Josh Lane, now curator of furniture at Winterthur, gave an excellent presentation on the development of the high chest of drawers from the 1600s through the late 18th Century. He covered both the evolution from single-piece chests to the two-piece chests-on- legs, along with joinery techniques and evolution



of carving ornamentation.

Following Josh, Mike Pekovich discussed ways to photograph furniture to maximize an image for presentation or use in a publication. Mike stressed that this can be done without a huge investment in lighting or other equipment but that it does require some basic components: a good backdrop, a decent camera, and good lighting. He also gave a good summary of how to set up a camera, distance from the subject, flash or no flash, and some ba-

brought to display. There was an impressive array of Federal tables, large and small chests, and the incredible reproduction of the Studley tool chest that Jim Moon had just completed.

Sunday afternoon was devoted to the optional workshops. The Monday tour of the Chester County Historical Society was sold out. All in all, a very successful weekend, and I'm sure a good time was had by all. —JA



sic camera settings for best results. He demonstrated how subtle changes in lighting direction and backdrop can dramatically alter a picture. It was interesting to note that many magazines, including *Fine Woodworking*, can accept or reject pieces for inclusion in the magazine based on the quality of the image supplied.

As always, a highlight of the conference was the number of pieces people



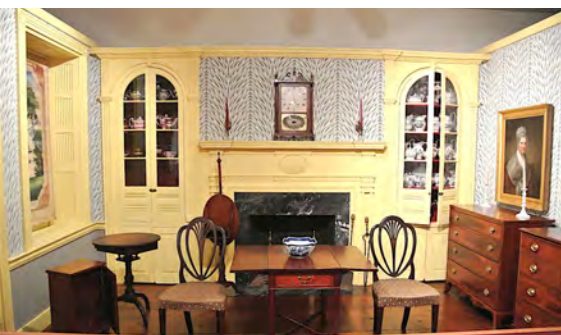
CONFERENCE PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIM ALTEMIUS, DOUG SNYDER, AND DALE AUSHMAN



2016 MIDYEAR CONFERENCE: CHESTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY TOUR

The already wonderful Midyear Conference was capped off by a special Monday tour of the Chester County Historical Society (CCHS).

Located in historic West Chester, PA, CCHS preserves and shares the area's 300 years of history through documents, photographs, and newspapers in the research library, along with seven galleries filled with engaging exhibitions.



There are many period rooms filled with furniture and other decorative arts (www.chestercohistorical.org). CCHS is usually closed on Mondays, but owing to their special appreciation of Steve Latta and his work, and their respect for SAPFM, they not only opened the doors but also conducted three fabulous tours with an emphasis on their period furniture.

They had pulled out key pieces of furniture, including desks, chairs, and spice boxes, for close-up inspection and photography. Ellen Endslow, director



of collections/curator, led the overall program and presented an exhibit and lecture on their special Chester

County spice box collection. She had pulled out six spice cabinets and two document (Bible) boxes for our "limited fondling," with most being representative of Chester County origin.

She informed us that while called spice boxes, these cabinets were usually used to hold valuables and were rarely used to store actual spices. She provided a photocopy of a period estate inventory that listed the contents of a spice box, none of which were spices. Understanding the SAPFM special consideration for period pieces, she gave us unprecedented access, allowing us to open doors, remove drawers, and take up-close photos.

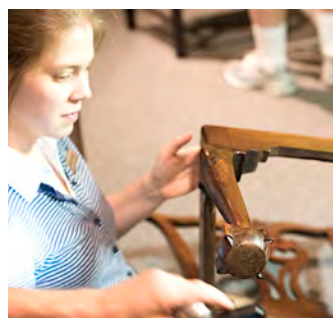
For a second tour, Heather Hansen, CCHS collections manager, placed about 15 period chairs in a room and gave a lecture on the key features. The chairs ranged from late 16th- to late 18th-Century. Again, we were allowed up-close inspection and photography. Heather turned over several chairs so that we could see construction details. She also provided a preview of upcoming major exhibition room changes, including the 2017 implementation of a room for open display of stored furniture, much as we see at the Yale collection. (If you plan to visit the remainder of this year and early 2017, best check which galleries are open.)



The icing on the cake was a special tour led by the knowledgeable Skip Chalfant, owner of H.L. Chalfant: American Fine Art and Antiques (www.hlchalfant.com) and a member of the CCHS Collections Committee. He took us through several beautiful period rooms with exquisite furniture and decorative art, many representative of Chester County origin. We saw rows of great tall-case clocks, including two examples with rare circular faces, and a signed Chester County fall-front desk.



We cannot thank CCHS and their staff enough for this very special hosting of SAPFM. Many of us have pledged to come back for an extended visit, and many period pieces have been added to our must-build bucket lists. Special thanks to student interns Kara Fritz and Kevin Pistiner, student volunteer John Brennan, and Venue Sales Assistant Ben Corry, all of whom helped to set up the spaces and guide the visitors. Special thanks also to Steve Latta for arranging this memorable visit. —DA





Winterthur's Spring Event

DALE AUSHERMAN
Michigan

WINTERTHUR FURNITURE FORUM—APRIL 7-9, 2016

Exotic Woods, Masterful Makers: Tropical Hardwoods and the Luxury Furniture Trade, 1600-1850

Winterthur Furniture Forums are a combination of tours, scholarly briefings, and demonstrations providing a deep dive into period furniture. Held annually each spring at Winterthur, the Henry F. DuPont estate museum in Delaware, the Forums provide an entertaining examination of period furniture history and characteristics, organized around a chosen theme for each year's meeting. Several hundred attendees are drawn from academics, high-end collectors, top dealers, museum curators, museum conservators, and furniture makers. My prior three trips to this forum viewed period furniture through the prism of the regional characteristics of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York—one regional theme each year. This year's theme, "Exotic Woods, Masterful Makers: Tropical Hardwoods and the Luxury Furniture Trade, 1600-1850," provided an orthogonal view from the perspective of the wood used in these beautiful works and how geography, economics, and trade, along with marketable beauty, drove the choice of woods available to makers at any given time and in a particular region.

While there have always been at least a half-dozen SAPFM members at the Winterthur Furniture Forums, this year we encouraged attendance through emailing and posting on the website. As a result, 23 members registered this year. This was a cooperative effort with Winterthur, initiated by former Board member Derek Swarbrick, to increase collaboration with SAPFM in pursuit of our common period furniture mission. In return for our attendance efforts, Winterthur supported placement of SAPFM promotional materials on their Forum registration desk.

As a result, attending members had many positive inquiries into the nature of SAPFM. Thanks to the efforts of Derek, as well as nearby chapter leaders Jim Chesterton, Charlie Driggs, and Mark Maleski, we expect additional joint activities with Winterthur.

We all learned a great deal at this Forum, including the significance of mahogany in 18th-Century furniture design, exquisite examples of mahogany and other exotic-wood furniture made in the major cabinetmaking centers of the Americas (from Boston, Newport, and Philadelphia to Nassau, Bahamas, and Havana, Cuba), and the importance of the historic trade in mahogany and other tropical furniture hardwoods such as ebony, cedrela, sabicu, satinwood, and rosewood in making these materials available to period cabinetmakers. We also learned of the amazingly early use of wind-, water-, and steam-powered sawmills for production of lumber and witnessed demonstrations by SAPFM member Alan Breed and Winterthur's Greg Landrey of the turning and carving of a piecrust table top. I also attended optional workshops as described at the end of this article. All of the Forum presentations were highly informative and entertaining, but space here allows only a few highlights.

Greg Landrey, Winterthur's director of academic affairs, provided the keynote address: "Exotic Woods and the Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library Collections." His presentation was the intersection of unusual trees growing in the Winterthur Gardens, reviewing key pieces in the Winterthur collection made of unusually beautiful wood or unusual species, and showing historical wood references



Benjamin Frothingham High chest. Sabicu and mahogany. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum, Bequest of Henry Francis du Pont, 1967.1445.

from the Winterthur Library. Pieces included the famous "island" mahogany Philadelphia "Van Pelt" high chest (1958.0592), a sabicu Charlestown, MA, Benjamin Frothingham dressing table (1967.1446), and an amazing Philadelphia tilt-top tea table (1960.1061) whose 36-inch top was of a single radial cut board (i.e., quarter-sawn). This board came from a tree with a diameter well in excess of seven feet! (The object numbers in parentheses allow one to find these pieces in the Winterthur Museum Collection Digital Database: <http://museumcollection.winterthur.org/>.) Interesting books from the library included a 1833 George Ritter Daybook with a listing



Winterthur's Spring Event (continued-2)

WINTERTHUR FURNITURE FORUM—APRIL 7-9, 2016

for an infant's mahogany coffin; a Peter Guillet *Timber Merchant's Guide* (Baltimore, 1823), which shows among other things how to best cut a ship's structural pieces from a tree; and the Romeyn B. Hough 1890 book, *American Woods*, which has actual wood samples on card mounts for indigenous American trees such as "Tree of Heaven" and "Poison Wood or Hog Gum." For the really dedicated maker, this latter book is still available via bookfinder.com for about \$5,000.

Jennifer Anderson, associate professor of history, Stony Brook University, presented "From Rainforest to Parlor: Mahogany in Early America." Prof. Anderson is the author of the recent book *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America*, which provided a portrait of the people, locales, and motivations that drove the voracious quest for mahogany to adorn American (and European) parlors and dining rooms, including the unfortunate use of slave labor. Her presentation reviewed similar topics in examining the connections among trees, objects, and people, and showed the consequence of mahogany use in terms of workers and environments. One consequence was the rhetoric of quality and expertise arising from lumber companies as they competed to convince buyers that their wood was the best. One 1811 advertisement from New York proclaimed: "FOR SALE – Mahogany, a competent judge was sent from this place, and employed six months in the woods of St. Domingo, selecting the most approved sticks." This competition especially intensified as prime geographic sources were used up and other locales were harvested, with attendant arguments over quality.

Kemble Widmer, co-author of *In Plain Sight: Discovering the Furniture of Nathaniel Gould*, gave a lecture on



Gould's sources and use of mahogany: "Ingrained: Nathaniel Gould and the Mahogany Trades in 18th-Century Salem." Kemble used data from the unexpected discovery of Gould's daybooks and account book in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society to show, among other things, detailed analysis of lumber shipments, resale to other cabinetmakers, and numbers of mahogany versus walnut pieces produced by furniture type and time frame during Gould's active career. In the period 1758-1775, Gould sold hundreds of mahogany pieces, including 32 high chests or chests-on-chests, 27 bureau tables (some Bombé), 13 card tables, 93 tilt-top tables, 116 drop-leaf tables, and 387 chairs! He produced a similar number of walnut pieces. An interesting entry in Gould's daybook included a rosewood chest, and Kemble lamented that this piece apparently did not survive. He did, however, show a photo of a Massachusetts rosewood desk from the Historic Deerfield collection. There is no board wider than nine inches making up this desk.

The Forum always includes a few selected presentations of theme-relevant pieces from the Winterthur collection. Amy Griffin, Lois F. McNeil Fellow, Winterthur Program in American Material Culture, revealed a mahogany caned Grecian couch (1957.0575) by Thomas Needham of Salem. Rosalie Hooper, Fellow, Winterthur Program

in American Material Culture, discussed a 1750 -1780 Newport tilt-top tea table that has been attributed to John Goddard (1959.2648). The table was made of mahogany, zebrawood, satinwood, red cedar, and other tropical hardwoods. And Catharine Dann Roeber, assistant professor of decorative arts and material culture, reviewed a lap desk (or Patent Desk 1997.0018) inlaid with over 22 exotic species. A period hand-drawn diagram with annotation of the wood types is shown in the Winterthur Digital Collection.



Newport tilt-top tea table, Attributed to John Goddard. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum. Bequest of Henry Francis du Pont. 1959.2648

Alexandra Kirtley, curator of American decorative arts, Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) and our recent host for the Lancaster Midyear PMA tour, presented "The Most Fashionable Assortment: Woods in Philadelphia Furniture, 1700 - 1820." Illustrating largely from wonderful pieces in the PMA collection, Alexandra reminded us that while much furniture was made from native maple, walnut, and cherry, the use of exotic (imported) woods was extensive, especially in high-end furniture. One illustrative piece was the American black walnut "barley twist" chair, which served as the inspiration



Winterthur's Spring Event (continued-3)

WINTERTHUR FURNITURE FORUM—APRIL 7-9, 2016

for SAPFM co-founder Steve Lash's chair, reported in the 2014 *American Period Furniture* journal. (Steve made his re-creation of cherry for reasons noted in the article.) While the PMA data lists this chair as American, there

Page Talbott, president and CEO of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, presented "What's in a Name? That Which We Call a Rose(wood) by any Other Name Would Smell as Sweet."

She said that many different species have been represented as rosewood over the years. She included the genus *Pterocarpus*, which includes the common name of *Padauk*, and showed a spectacular 1759 Thomas Chippendale breakfront that's now part of the UK Dumfries House collection. This 18th-Century estate houses an unrivaled collection of Chippendale furniture, saved from

listed endangered species (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Page related that recent efforts resisting illegal logging activities in Peru and Cambodia have tragically resulted in the murder of several individuals involved in protection of the exotic wood trees. (SAPFM members must be vigilant in their acquisition of exotic woods to ensure compliance with CITES and related regulations.)

Another incredibly knowledgeable speaker was Dr. Adam Bowett, an independent furniture historian and period furniture author from North Yorkshire, UK. He spoke on "Tropical Woods in British and North American Furniture, 1600 - 1800: A Political and Economic History." Adam is author of *Woods in British Furniture Making, 1400-1900: An Illustrated Historical Dictionary* and several other notable books on British furniture. Illustrated with beautiful works from both the UK and America, his presentation discussed in detail the ebb and flow of the historic timber trade between the new and old-world continents and how this impacted the materials appearing in furniture objects over nearly five centuries. It was particularly interesting to see how the lumber trade was affected by various geopolitical treaties, including those that ended the American Revolution. Bowett showed an 1808 specimen of a lady's workbox by the furniture company Gillows of Lancaster and London. This box had 72 inlaid pieces on its surfaces, each representing common, as well as "rare and curious," woods from around the globe (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady%27s_Workbox,_1808).

Focusing on specific exotic wood species, Gerald W.R. Ward, senior curator of American decorative arts and sculpture emeritus at the Museum of



Lap Desk inlaid with over 22 exotic species. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum, Purchase with funds provided by the Winterthur Centenary Fund 1997.0018

is evolving thinking on this. In fact, a major point made by several Forum speakers was that geographical source of component wood, even secondary wood, is no longer thought to be a strong indicator of regional attribution, since native wood for cabinetmaking was a major export from America to European countries. Such wood was often used in furniture that was destined to be shipped back to America.

Alexandra spoke to the major use of mahogany, as well as less common woods, such as ebony and satinwood. She showed examples of chairs with primary wood entirely of ebony which, even in the period, was rare and expensive. Satinwood came to be commonly used as veneer and inlay in the Federal and Empire periods. She also demonstrated the value of the wood database site <http://www.wood-database.com/>, which contains tools for wood identification and in-depth articles, e.g., "Sorting out Satinwoods." (Links to this tool are on the SAPFM website under "Research Tools" and "Manuals and Publications.")

auction by the benevolence of Prince Charles. Genuine rosewoods belong to the genus *Dalbergia*, all of which have a strong, sweet smell that persists for many years, explaining the name rosewood. Page spoke about pieces made of *Dalbergia latifolia* (black rosewood) and *Dalbergia nigra* (Brazilian rosewood). She showed rosewood pieces made by Thomas Seymour, Isaac Vose, Charles-Honoré Lannuiet, Duncan Phyfe, and a gothic revival armoire by Crawford Riddell. The Riddell piece was part of a suite of furniture originally to have been installed in the Lincoln Bedroom at the White House for the presidency of Henry Clay. Clay lost the election in 1844, and Daniel Turnbull, a Clay supporter, purchased the suite for installation at his famous Rosedown Plantation (<https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/louisiana/ros.htm>). A 13-foot-tall rosewood gothic revival bed from this suite can be seen at the Dallas Museum of Art (www.dma.org/collection/artwork/crawford-riddell/bed).

Brazilian rosewood is now a CITES-



Winterthur's Spring Event (continued-4)

WINTERTHUR FURNITURE FORUM—APRIL 7-9, 2016



Snakewood and its namesake. Photos courtesy of Gerald W. R. Ward (Snake photo from internet)

Fine Arts Boston (MFA), presented “The Red and the Black: Snakewood and Other Tropical Hardwoods in Early New England Furniture.” Snake-wood (also called letterwood because the figure sometimes has the appearance of written letters) has characteristic snakeskin patterns and vies with lignum vitae as the heaviest wood in the world. It comes from the coastal regions of northeast South America but is not on the CITES list of protected species. Only the heartwood is attractive and represents much less than 10% of the volume of a typical log. Ward related that snakewood was used as a major decorative element in early New England cases and chests (Early Co-

lonial, Mannerist, Jacobean, etc.) but disappeared from American use when the Dutch and British traded New York colonies for South American Guianas colonies, with the resulting Dutch South American colonies becoming off-limits to British trade.

A special session of the Forum was a lecture/video assist demonstration on shaping and carving a piecrust table top by Greg Landrey and Alan Breed, SAPFM member and cabinet-maker from Rollinsford, NH. Greg demonstrated turning of the 36-inch mahogany top using a re-creation of the big crank- wheel-powered lathe in the Dominy workshop now housed at Winterthur. Power was alternately

provided by Winterthur Furniture Curator Joshua Lane, Winterthur Senior Conservator Mark Anderson, and visiting scholars from China. Following the lathe demo, Alan demonstrated, via large-screen video projection, the rough sawing and final hand carving of

the pie-crust edge.

Many of us have seen the 18th-

Century Dominy Clock Shop and Woodworking Shop re-created at Winterthur and enjoyed Curator Emeritus Charles Hummel's book, *With Hammer in Hand: The Dominy Craftsmen of East Hampton, New York*. In support of the Forum theme, Charles gave a presentation, “Harvesting Honduras Mahogany: The Dominy Connection,” in which he shared research of extant mahogany pieces actually produced in the Dominy shop, including photographs. He also reminded us of an ongoing University of Wisconsin Madison Digital Library project known as The Dominy Craftsmen Collection (<https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/dominy/>) which, when complete, will contain a revised and enlarged digital edition of *With Hammer in Hand*, downloadable for the public.

Robert Mussey, author of the beautiful book, *The Furniture Masterworks of John and Thomas Seymour*, took us into the fascinating story of early machine veneer sawing with “Plain, Branch, Mottle and Curl: Circular-Sawing of Mahogany Veneers in Boston by Baldwin Mills, 1825-1859.” Some may recall that Robert gave a presentation of the work of Isaac Vose at our Midyear Conference in Sturbridge. He related that the first American steam-powered circular veneer mills were “developed” by Adam Stewart and deployed in Baltimore in 1817. This patented saw was about four feet in diameter and sawed veneer about 1/8” thick from seven-foot logs measuring up to 20 inches in diameter. The “blade” consisted of “circumference” teathed segments mounted around a central wheel. Robert indicated that Stewart apparently stole this concept from a patent for much larger saws developed by Marc Brunel of London, who had his own veneer mills in England. Brunel's segmented blades were up to



Joshua Lane powering the Winterthur lathe while Greg Landrey turns the table top. (Photo courtesy of Dale Ausherman)



Winterthur's Spring Event (continued-5)

WINTERTHUR FURNITURE FORUM—APRIL 7-9, 2016

13 feet in diameter! These blades were not like current circular blades with “discs” of constant thickness, but were segments mounted to wheels whose thickness was a foot or two at the hub. The sawn veneer was flexible enough that it peeled away from the saw blade, much like a modern meat slicer in a butcher shop or deli. This technology eventually became integrated into the Boston Chickering Piano factory, where from 1847 to 1858 over 1.2 million square feet of veneer was sawn. The concept of machine-sawn veneer in the early- to mid-19th Century was completely new to me. It's interesting that the Stewart sawmill was deployed in 1817, the year that Thomas Seymour stopped working for himself. I wonder what he thought of the technology in his declining years and how this technology affected cabinet shops after 1817.

I attended two of several option-

ture Making, as well as examples from Winterthur, to give insight into secondary wood used in British furniture, “complicating” prior wisdom about the availability and use of temperate and tropical forest species in both England and America. He had available a late 17th-Century London chest from Winterthur (1970.0428) and proceeded to remove drawers for close inspection by our small group. The beautifully decorated chest, of oak, walnut, and palisander (Madagascar rosewood), inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, was finely constructed and finished on the exterior, but the interior was extremely rough, showing axe marks and hewing of the drawer backs to make for thin ends to be nailed to the drawer sides.

Adam also opened my eyes to other early sawmill technology, showing use of multi-bladed (straight blades) water- or wind-powered mills for sawing planks on the European continent as early as 1670, with high rates of production of “wainscot” oak throughout the entire 18th Century. But for economic and sometimes political reasons (sawyers' trade “unions”) pit sawing continued in England and the American colonies well past this time. He showed photos of 17th-Century drawer sides that clearly exhibited the evenly periodic and precisely parallel



High chest drawers in Macroscopic Study workshop. Left to right; sabicu, mahogany, walnut. (Photo courtesy of Dale Ausherman)

Based Macroscopic Study of Tropical Hardwoods.” The object was to learn to recognize features of wood by eye to help in identifying wood types and in distinguishing temperate and tropical hardwoods. They provided our small group with plastic, scratchless optical loupes and pulled drawers from gallery highboys to show us the differences between walnut, sabicu, and mahogany, and the especially challenging task of distinguishing walnut from mahogany. A Benjamin Frothingham high chest was primarily of sabicu. Greg also showed us the construction details of the curved back of laminated rosewood on a Victorian-era highly carved chair and a large piece of his own satinwood veneer. Joshua showed burl veneer on a table drawer front. The group then reviewed several other key gallery pieces exhibiting the use of exotic hardwoods.

Thus I completed my fourth Winterthur Furniture Forum. I have thoroughly enjoyed them all and recommend that SAPFM members attend these if possible, as they provide an enjoyable yet scholarly foundation to our period building pursuits. —DA



Axe marks and crude thinning to support nailing of drawer back to sides on 17th century chest drawer. Photo courtesy of Dale Ausherman, with permission of Adam Bowett.

al workshops. One was “Secondary Woods in British Furniture,” by Adam Bowett. Adam's workshop drew on furniture examples from his aforementioned book, *Woods in British Furni-*

saw marks indicative of powered sawing versus the more irregular marks associated with pit sawing.

My other workshop, led by Greg Landrey and Joshua Lane, was “Object-



Reeding Tapered Legs

KEN JOHNSON
Georgia

SEYMOUR WORK TABLE: AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

For some time, I have wanted to make a copy of a table I saw at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston.

I later saw another, nearly identical example in the book by Robert Mussey, *The Furniture Masterworks of John & Thomas Seymour*.

After much effort to get accurate information on size and details of turnings, with help from Phil Lowe and the fine people at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA, <http://www.mfa.org>), I was able to undertake making these legs.

TURNING THE LEGS

I made practice turnings of the leg until I felt it was a good representation of the original. Ultimately, I went to the MFA with a sample leg and held it up near the original, which was in the museum. My sample leg was still too fat at the narrowest point (ankle). I was attending a class with Al Breed, and with his help we got the prototype to be proportionally accurate to the naked eye.

To make the turnings, I used pattern layouts to help with the effort. Simple home-made ones seem to be the best.



Template with turning

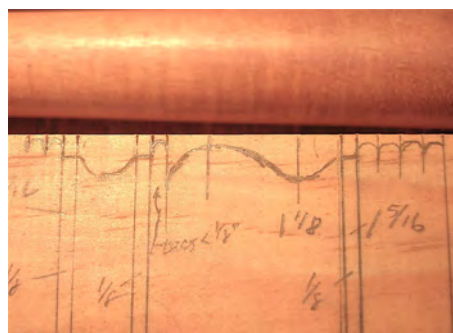
Here is a completed section with the pattern. There were only three different depths of the turning, making it easier to turn. The beads at the top were defined by the size of the homemade beading turning tool.

With the legs turned out satisfactorily, I was ready for the reeding process.

TOP OF LEG



Turned leg before reeding



Turning template

Diameters and distances from the floor were easy to reproduce. The exact shape or form of the concave and convex curves was done with visual comparison to my prototype. Since the legs are approximately 18" apart, the eye is not likely to pick up any slight differences.



The inspiration for my project was from a photo in Robert Mussey's book, *The Furniture Masterworks of John and Thomas Seymour*, published in 2003, from an exhibit at the Peabody Essex Museum, Peabody, MA.



Reeding Tapered Legs *(continued-2)*

SEYMOUR WORK TABLE: AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

REEDING

The legs are tapered, which means the reeds will have varying radii along the length of the leg.

I drew a set of full-size plans for the legs based on measurements from MFA, historical practice information from Phil Lowe, and enlarged drawings from various books. Using this information, I was able to determine the radius of each reed at the top, middle, and bottom of the leg.

A local machinist produces indexing wheels from acrylic plastic to any format desired. He could provide multiple rings with indexing holes of any increment desired. I opted for three combinations.

Using the indexing wheel, I built a homemade system to manually reed the legs. Using the methods recommended by Al Breed, I used old hacksaw blades for the scrapers and a block of hardwood for the handle. I built a frame to allow the hardwood holders to travel within to ensure consistent cutting. The block just fit inside the frame of the reeding box with no side-to-side play.



Leg in reeding box with cutter block

I took the extra time and effort to center the cutter in the block, since at times it is necessary to reverse the direction of travel of the cutting block

based on grain orientation.

This picture includes the scraping block for the top section (T) of the reeding process.

I used three blocks with cutters of different radius: one for the top, center, and bottom sections. I then used additional scrapers held by hand to clean up and complete the transition.

In the photograph, the last reeding is shown after the use of the scraper, and prior to the clean-up with carving tools and hand-held scrapers.

The other sections have been cleaned up with tools but are not yet sanded.

THE TOOLS I USED FOR THE REEDING

This is a close-up of the scraper mounted in the “handle” block. I used old hacksaw blades and a Dremel tool and angled the contour like a cutting tool.



Close-up of scraper

I would sharpen the blades at least once while doing each leg. I used



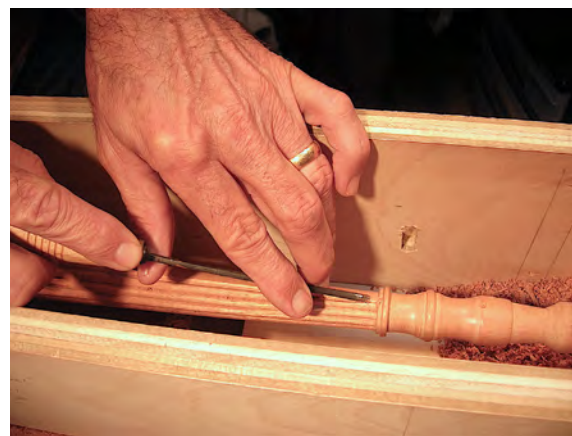
Reed scrapers

a gouge stone to touch them up.

The hand-held scrapers are shown sitting on top of the block scrapers.

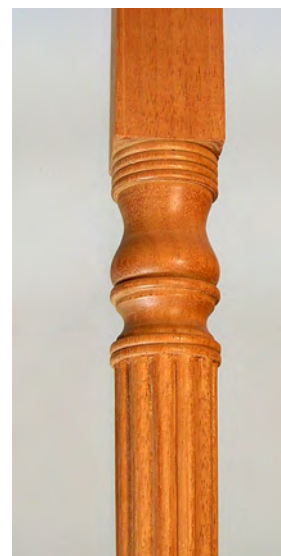
CLEANING UP THE ENDS OF THE REEDING WITH A CARVING TOOL

Using a reverse-bent carving chisel, I was able to terminate the reeding into the bead. The same procedure was used for both the top and bottom ends of the reeding.



Carving end of reed

THE REEDING COMPLETED ON THE LEG (TOP AND BOTTOM SECTIONS)



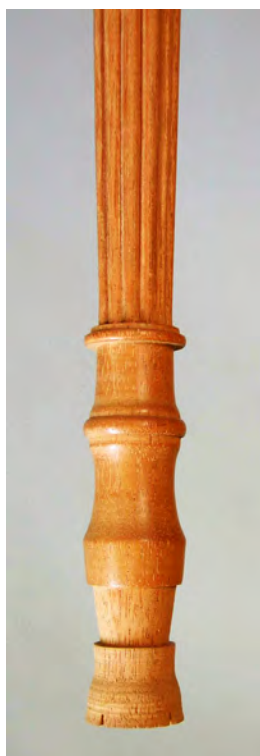
Completed leg—upper portion



Reeding Tapered Legs *(continued-3)*

SEYMOUR WORK TABLE: AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

COMPLETED, FINISHED, AND ASSEMBLED



Completed leg—lower portion



Seymour leg with finish and brass round cup castor



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AUTHOR



Patriotic Bandings

JIM SHAPIRO
California

FLAG YOUR PROJECT FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY!

At the end of his terrific videos on banding, Steve Latta exhorts the viewer to come up with his or her own new designs, limited only by imagination.



Colored veneers from
B&B Rare Woods,
Golden, Colorado.

<http://www.wood-veneers.com>
Call and mention SAPFM
for a 10% discount.

I wanted a patriotic banding for a project I had planned, and while the design imagination took place 240 years ago, I thought I'd share the result with fellow SAPFM-ites. I've included a few notes on construction that are more general and might augment the trove of info available to those looking to make bandings.

I started by obtaining some red, white, and blue veneer from B&B Rare Woods in Golden, CO. This is nicely consistent-color material, but it is definitely "colors not found in nature." I'm afraid Period Purism (an ethic I hew somewhat strongly to) might frown on such wood for a piece, but that, as they say, is beyond the scope of this article. After fiddling with various configurations of stripes, which would have been the easiest way to go, I decided nothing

could beat the American Standard.

First, I need relative dimensions. A quick search led to <http://www.usflag.org/flagspecs.html>. For my desired finished banding width, I could fit 11 plies of the veneer I had purchased. I figured I'd go with two plies on the outside as a border and nine red-and-white stripes, which is close enough to 13 for government work, at least in terms of getting the visual concept across. Using the proportions from the website gave me the width of the blue field and each striped segment. After making three laminated sub-parts—five plies of blue, four-ply alternating red and white, and five-ply alternating red and white—I took to the miter box to cut segments. I did give brief consideration to somehow adding white stars but quickly decided that the size of my fingers and remaining years of my life made that impractical and a poor use of time, respectively.

I used the method Steve describes of taping segments together and squirting a little glue between each one before placing it in a press, which is essentially a constrained set of clamping cauls to keep things aligned. I noticed that the five-ply blue and the five-ply stripe were of slightly different thicknesses, so I found a piece of dense foam sheet and placed it between the top caul and the pack. Thus the alternating sub-parts of the glued-up pack remained aligned on the bottom, with all the variation in thickness showing at the top. This made it easy enough to true up with a plane. I had to

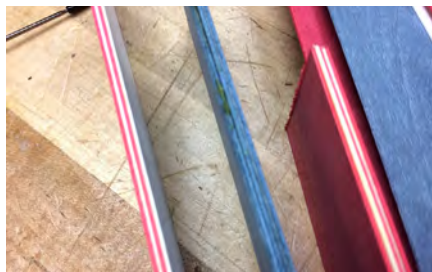


The most perfect form of shavings yet devised by man...

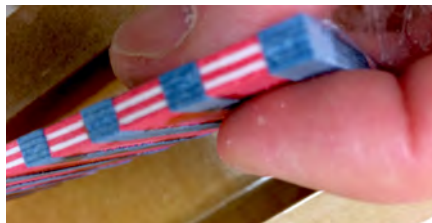


Patriotic Bandings *(continued-2)*

FLAG YOUR PROJECT FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY!



First glue-ups: four-stripe, five-blue, and five-stripe



Five-blue and five-stripe cut and glued in alternation



The glue-up showing the foam pad used to accommodate the differing thicknesses



Bring the assembly to one thickness.



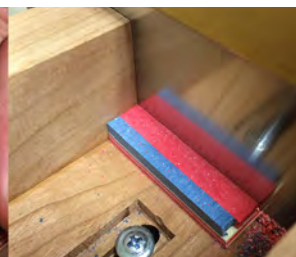
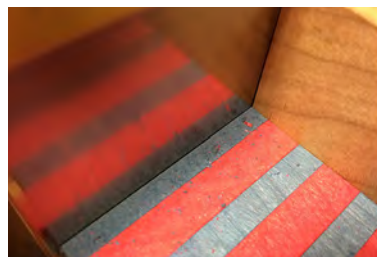
Finished result after gluing to the four-stripe section and skinning top and bottom in blue

keep the segments short because I didn't have any long pieces of foam, but these were easy to glue up once flattened.

Next came the lamination to the lower striped segment and the addition of the blue border. All done and Yankee-Doodle-Dandy, or so I thought. My wife opined that the flags would be more obvious if somehow delineated from one another. I settled on white vertical separators. It turned out that cutting a single ply in the miter box produced too much fuzz at the bottom of the cut, so I made a measuring jig to cleanly chop the short



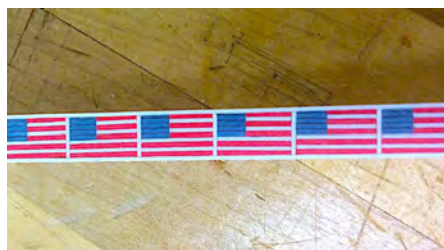
Second round, at top. Both blue and striped sections made overlong...



...then cut in miter box to correct dimensions



Jig to cut interspersed white vertical pieces



Finished second version

white pieces to length with a plane blade. This time, gluing up the alternating top layer of the flag segments was a little less straightforward. Since I had to separate each complete flag sub-part, I needed to account for the saw kerf in deciding how long to make each one. I elected to make both the blue and striped portions overlong by at least a saw kerf, so I could separate the completed flags cleanly at each end. Next time I think I will calculate the widths and saw kerf precisely and reduce the number of required cuts by one-half, cutting right between the complete flag sub-part.

Construction of this layout was otherwise the same as the prior one, albeit with a few more steps to get the flags separated from one another and interspersed with the white verticals. I also elected, on advice from aforementioned aesthetic expert, to use white plies at the top and bottom, rather than blue. I have to admit she was right (again). —JS



All That Shimmers...

MICHAEL MASCELLI
New York

ALL THAT SHIMMERS...REALLY IS HORSEHAIR!

“The amazing properties of horsehair fabric”

Even if you are relatively new to the study and appreciation of period furniture, there is a very good chance that you have seen upholstery fabric made from real horsehair without even realizing it.

There is nothing quite like the lustrous shimmering black surface or the silky almost other worldly feel of a seat cover made using the long mane and tail hair of horses along with other fibers, and some remarkable skill at the loom.

men’s hats for several generations. The famous stovepipe hat of Abraham Lincoln is a classic example.

It seems clear that the practice of cutting one’s hair is a fairly modern convention, and so it is certain that humans have been braiding our own

employing threads of silver and gold. These were of course luxury goods, traded across the continent and even to the shores of the 13 American colonies on the verge of revolution. It was, however, at this time in Prussia that some enterprising weavers serving the royal court figured out a way to use the abundant local supply of horsehair to weave a new luxury cloth to compete with the expensive imports.

By the end of the 18th Century, the Prussian weavers were flourishing due to the demand for the robust and handsome new cloth they were now producing in great quantities.

It is entirely possible that the black horsehair cloth fabric on the dining chairs George Washington ordered for Mount Vernon, came all the way from Prussia by way of London.

By the early 19th Century an equally ambitious Englishman, John Boyd, was working in his cottage shop in Castle Cary, Somerset. This area had been a center of weaving since the 1300s and Boyd developed a way to hand place each of the long mane and tail hairs “across” the loom (the weft), and then weave them into a sturdy cotton or linen thread (the warp). The John Boyd Textile Company was founded in 1837, and remains as the sole English producer of horsehair cloth to this day.



When you think about a pre-industrial world where everything was “natural” it is not hard to imagine our ancient forebears looking at the perfectly straight and remarkably tough mane and tail hair of horses as a versatile raw material. Similarly, it is well known that the unique property of beaver fur, which allows it to be bonded into a durable and waterproof felt material, nearly caused the extinction of these industrious mammals in the 17th and 18th centuries. And the unwitting hatters were literally driven mad by the constant exposure to mercury fumes used to process the fur into the durable fabric that was used on virtually all

hair for at least a few millennia. The first uses of horsehair were likely by the nomadic Arabian tribes whose skill at domesticating and breeding horses is legendary, and this is probably equally true for the nomadic peoples of the great Asian steppes, such as the Buryat of Mongolia. These cultures used braided horsehair for any number of practical purposes, from ropes, to fishing lines to jewelry.

An Industry Is Born

At the height of the Renaissance in Europe, the French, Italians and English were producing woven fabrics from the most common coarse sackcloth to brilliant silks and satins, some even





All That Shimmers... (continued-2)

ALL THAT SHIMMERS...REALLY IS HORSEHAIR!

By the mid 1800s Boyd had expanded his operations into a water-powered mill and by 1900 over 200 employees were involved in the production of horsehair cloth.

As with so many images of the English industrial revolution created by Charles Dickens, it is easy to get a mental picture of the weaver at the loom being handed individual strands of horsehair by a child laboring long hours in harsh conditions. In 1870 the new child labor laws prohibited much of this exploitation, but production of horsehair cloth was still a very labor-intensive process.



The hand-selected hairs are graded by length, thickness and color, and put up into hanks which have to be “carded” or pulled through a series of thin tines to ensure that they are untangled and ready for weaving. The best hair can be up to 30” long, so that is the maximum width of the finished cloth, though most average between 25 and 28 inches.

Interestingly, there was a small American presence in this unique market, and in 1837 a patent was issued to Charles R. Harvey of Poughkeepsie NY, for a “Hair Seating Loom,” which essen-



Charles R. Harvey's “Hair Seating Loom” of 1837, US Patent No. 490 A

tially introduced water power to the previously fully hand and foot operated looms of the day.

A Fashion Is Born

With the ability to produce horsehair cloth in quantity came the challenge of finding markets for this somewhat stiff and difficult-to-work-with material. It was the French who pioneered the use of a mixture of horsehair and linen as the perfect under support for the many-layered women's petticoats of the high-style French Court. The French word for horse hair is *les Crins* and when combined with linen, it came out as *crinoline*, a term still used today for a stiffening fabric in either men's or women's fashion. It also became clear that the natural water repellency of the cloth

made it an ideal outer layer for carriage blankets lined with wool or fleece.

But it was the influence of the iconic English furniture designs of Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite that cemented black horsehair cloth as the only choice for the elegant backdrop upon which to place some perfectly placed gleaming brass “nails.”

Much like the beloved rosewood and brass on classic hand tools, the combination of lustrous black and brass suited the designers and managed to capture the fancy of a wide public who made this elegant combination popular for most of the 18th Century, into the Empire period

and beyond to Victorian times.

There are many variations of this chair style, and also in the pattern of the decorative nails. It is common for these to be referred to in contemporary accounts as *chaires doub'l nailed* if they had two rows of bright brass.

The fashion for heavy formal couches in the Empire period was also



Classic Look—Shield back chair with black horsehair cloth



well complemented by black horsehair cloth, and numerous patterns and colors were being introduced including royal blue, which is featured prominently on several handsome pieces in The Hermitage (Andrew Jackson's home) collection, likely from a Philadelphia maker. The collection also has a number of other pieces done in horsehair cloth, including both sofas and side chairs, as does the nearby Belle Meade Plantation, proving that this fashion was not limited to New England. And to add another presidential connection, Abraham Lincoln also owned both a rocker and a sofa done in classic black horsehair cloth, now in the collection of the University of Illinois.

So from the Federal styles of Washington to the Victorian tastes of Lincoln's time, horsehair cloth was a standard of both durability and décor.



All That Shimmers... *(continued-3)*

ALL THAT SHIMMERS...REALLY IS HORSEHAIR!



Working with Horsehair Cloth

While not common, there is still much horsehair cloth in use for both historic reproductions and high fashion furniture work. It is a unique material and does require some special techniques, which I was fortunate to be able to employ on a historic chair project. Thanks to



the efforts of Don Williams, I was able to provide some upholstery services on an original US House Member's chair from the mid-19th Century, done in black horsehair cloth. This project was done with a "minimally intrusive" treatment, which meant that we were

only allowed to add a very few fasteners to the original frame.

My task was to cut and fit the horsehair cloth, carefully hand sewing all of the seams, while my colleague David Blanchard had the tedious task of cutting the pins out of the decorative nails and installing them one by one with hot melt glue!

The weaving of the cloth with the strands of hair going across the weave leaves short "tails" of hair on the edges, and there is a strong tendency for these to unravel or run. Careful cutting with a sturdy pinking shears leaves a serrated edge that is less likely to run, but care must always be taken when cutting around obstacles like arm stumps or back legs, not unlike handling fine silk

fabric. However, horsehair cloth is much more robust and has a hand feel more like automotive vinyl than silk. And in order to make it conform to the shapes and contours of the

upholstery, steam is necessary for even the gentlest curves. The application of the steam really does "tame" the horse, but it also immediately makes the shop smell like a barnyard!

The narrow width of the material is approximately half that of most modern upholstery fabrics, and that can require seaming for large pieces. While this can be done by hand it is difficult to get a perfect seam without machine sewing. It is also possible to create corded welting, but this really does need a commercial sewing machine to achieve a neat, even welt. The prices for horsehair cloth can vary greatly, but are in the range of \$100-\$300 per yard, so for a small period side chair, this may be twice as much a high-quality

leather. Both fabrics were utilized on the originals, but side by side, the cowhide looks like a plain brown suit and the black horsehair with tacks look like an elegant tuxedo.

There are a number of sources of supply for genuine horsehair cloth, including several German firms and John Boyd in England. It is possible to find these with a simple Google search, and there are also a number of suppliers on Ebay, some of whom have old stock, which due to the amazing resilience of hair, is usable for centuries. It is important to get cloth all from the same dye lot for larger pieces or suites. Modern versions may use synthetic fibers in place of or in addition to the traditional cotton or linen warp threads. —MM

There is a fascinating video available on YouTube showing how the cloth is woven... [click here!](#)



A FEW OF HORSEHAIR'S OTHER USES

- **Fishing Line**—so durable it can be used for generations.
- **Fishing Gloves**—before there was neoprene these kept hands dry.
- **Milk Sieves**—made with both mane and tail hair for different coarseness.
- **Instrument Bows**—the finest bows have been made of horsehair for centuries.
- **Shoe Brushes**—still the preferred choice for hand-buffing shoe polish.
- **Paint Brushes**—those wonderful round and oval brushes that grandpa used to whitewash the house and stain the barn.
- **Upholstery Stuffing**—curled horsehair is considered the premium material for under upholstery stuffing.



Lost Wax Casting

NANCY COGGER
Wisconsin

DUPLICATING BRASS PERIOD HARDWARE

The duplication of brass period hardware is possible through the use of the “lost wax” casting process.

In lost wax casting, an original piece of hardware is taken through three main steps to achieve the end result of a nearly exact duplication of the original.



Lost wax casting was originally used thousands of years ago by the Bronze Age people to make spearheads and jewelry. The desired object would be made from beeswax, and the object would be surrounded by sand and clay to form a solid container with a small opening at one end. Molten bronze was then poured into this opening, and the hot metal would replace the wax, filling the cavity in the exact shape made by the wax template. After cooling, the sand and clay would be removed, and a bronze version of the wax object would be revealed.

The modern process, which was used originally to cast gold, silver, and platinum for jewelry, was developed about 100 years ago. But improvements in rubber technology for the initial mold, and new wax varieties, have increased the accuracy and diminished the shrinkage to less than 2%, so as to make the reproduction of hardware feasible.

In the process of reproducing a piece of hardware, the original brass is supported in a small box by a thin wax sprue, which will later serve as a channel for injecting the liquid wax. Liquid rubber is poured around the brass and the supporting sprue. After 2-3 days of set time, the rubber mold is removed from the box and is carefully cut open along the line of the plate. The original is removed, and the remaining cavity in the rubber mold is an exact negative impression of the original. These rubber molds are very durable and can be used repeatedly for up to 25 years, perhaps longer.

The next step involves creating the wax positive of the piece of hardware. The rubber mold is put together, and liquid wax is injected into the empty mold via the channel left by the wax sprue. Once the wax has hardened, the mold is reopened to reveal an exact wax replica of the original.

A bit of trimming is done to ensure that the wax is perfect. Numerous waxes are then attached by their sprues to a column of wax, which is about 8 inches tall and about an inch in diameter. The result looks a bit like a tiny Christmas tree with the waxes on their sprues serving as the branches.

A tree of waxes is placed into a metal can or flask, and a liquid plaster, called investment, is carefully poured around the waxes. The can is baked in a kiln for several hours to harden the investment and burn off the wax so that all that

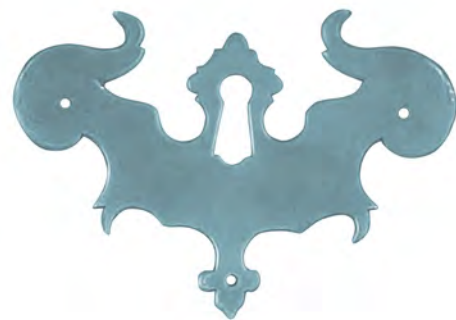
remains is a negative impression of hardware in the investment plaster.

Molten brass is injected into the cavities made by the wax via a centrifugal process or a vacuum process. Generally, small hardware, such as posts, bails, and smaller plates and knobs are made using the centrifugal process, and larger items, such as Sheraton knobs, are made using the vacuum process. In the centrifugal process, a charge of molten brass is introduced into the can, which is then spun at the end of a long arm. The long arm is also spinning inside the centrifuge so as to multiply the centrifugal force. Vacuum casting uses a pump to evacuate the air from the chamber in which the can is placed. The investment mold is charged with the molten brass, and the force of the vacuum pulls the metal into every space left by the tree of waxes.

The metal solidifies, and the investment plaster is broken away and carefully removed to reveal a brass version of the wax Christmas tree. The brasses are removed, the sprues cut off, the hardware polished and then patinated to create the antique look that is so desirable.

A SUMMARY OF LOST WAX CASTING

1. Make rubber mold from original piece of hardware
2. Cut open mold
3. Reassemble mold, and fill with liquid wax; let harden
4. Remove wax replica of hardware, trim and attach to wax column
5. Place wax tree in can and fill with investment plaster
6. Heat in kiln to burn off wax and harden investment plaster
7. Inject molten brass into investment plaster in can via centrifugal or vacuum process
8. Remove investment plaster, polish, and patinate



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Changes in the Period Furniture Maker's Tool Kit: Benjamin Seaton (ca.1797) to Duncan Phyfe (ca.1846)

In this article I will discuss the changes in bench chisels and squares that had occurred by the end of the period furniture era (arbitrarily set at 1845, which roughly correlates with the widespread incorporation of machine methods in furniture fabrication).

An interesting observation is that by the end of Duncan Phyfe's career, these cabinetmaking tools had all reached their current form, at least for high-end tools, and are interchangeable with many modern examples.

style chisels were available for heavier use, such as millwrighting, house construction, etc. Benjamin Seaton's chest included both types. The firmer chisels in the Seaton chest all had square edges. Beveled-edge bench chisels did not become available until around

press as to what a paring chisel is.

For cost reasons, chisels during the early part of the era were commonly made by laminating a thin layer of steel to wrought iron as discussed in previous articles; however, by 1850, chisels made entirely of cast steel were being made and were marked "Cast Steel" as an indicator of a quality item, and the term *cast steel* was used into the 20th Century (Figure 2). The advantage of cast steel over previous tool steels was that the cast steel was much more consistent and of higher quality than the blister steels formerly used. Unfortunately, the term *cast steel* has justifiably caused some confusion. It is simply a description of relatively uniform temperable carbon steel that was developed in the mid-18th Century. Tools using cast steel were forged and tempered in the usual way and not cast. See Ashley Iles for a description of how a chisel was produced in 19th- and 20th-Century Sheffield, England.¹

As a historical note, since firmer chisels were much more frequently used than mortise chisels in furniture construction (and other trades as well), the survival of firmer chisels is much lower. They were literally used up, while 18th-Century mortising chisels survive in reasonable numbers.

Early firmer chisels were tapered along the width, which resulted in changing cutting-edge width as the chisel was sharpened. This would result in reduced workshop efficiency, since tool sets could not be reliably gauged.



Figure 1—Typical 19th-Century chisels, square-edge and bevel-edge firmer chisels and bevel-edge paring chisels.

CHISELS

A complete listing of the Benjamin Seaton chisels is available and has been discussed previously. I have been unable to locate a description of Duncan Phyfe's chisels. The period

1825 (Figure 1). As any cabinetmaker knows, a beveled-edge chisel provides much-improved access for cutting joints, particularly dovetails. Paring chisels, which are considerably longer than bench chisels, were available dur-

An interesting observation is that by the end of Duncan Phyfe's career, these cabinetmaking tools had all reached their current form at least for high-end tools and are interchangeable with many modern examples.

cabinetmaker would have used primarily firmer and mortising chisels. Tang chisels are typically used for light-duty application, such as furniture construction, although the more robust socket-

ing the second quarter of the 19th Century and were widely used by cabinetmakers and patternmakers. I mention this because there seems to be some confusion in the current woodworking



Antique Hand Tools (continued-2)

USING AND COLLECTING ANTIQUE HAND TOOLS



Figure 2—Tool marked Cast Steel



By the 1850s, chisels were parallel along the width. One edge-toolmaker who has been the source of some confusion is John Green, who was a Sheffield edge-toolmaker and made some of the chisels in the Seaton chest. His tools were roughly contemporary with the York plane maker John Green (no relation), whose planes have survived in reasonably large quantities. Mortising chisels (inelegantly referred to as “pig stickers,” Figure 3) were tapered along the thickness to avoid sticking in the cut and not square or rectangular in cross section as some modern examples.

SQUARES

During the early period, it was common practice for squares and gauges (marking, cutting, and mortising gauges) to be made (Figure 4) by the cabinetmaker, as can be seen in the

Seaton chest.

By the end of the period, professionally made squares had become

readily available. Two examples are S. A. Jones (Hartford, CT, 1838-1841) and Tidgewell & Co., Middletown, CT. Jones also produced rules, bevels, and gauges.²

These squares are very similar to modern squares, such as those currently made by Joseph Marples. It was common for manufacturers to use exotic woods, such as rosewood and ebony, for square handles. This practice extended to large, commercial square manufacturers, such as Stanley and Disston.



Figure 5—Squares by S. A. Jones and Tidgewell & Co.

recesses for pocket-knife handles. I recall Ken Roberts bringing in a parcer that he had recently acquired from Marples to a tool collectors’ meeting; it had been used in square manufac-

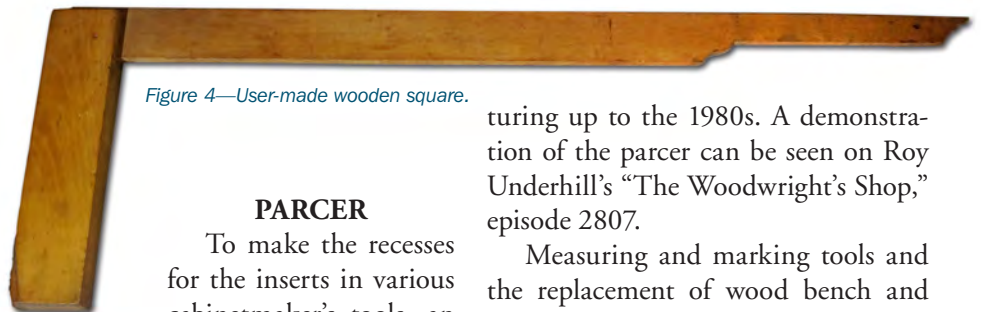


Figure 4—User-made wooden square.

PARCER

To make the recesses for the inserts in various cabinetmaker’s tools, an ancient tool called a parcer was used, which is similar to a bow drill with a breastplate. The twin cutters in the parcer had integral stops and were rotated in a template to produce the desired shaped recess to a uniform pre-set depth determined by the stops. This tool was also used to produce similar

turing up to the 1980s. A demonstration of the parcer can be seen on Roy Underhill’s “The Woodwright’s Shop,” episode 2807.

Measuring and marking tools and the replacement of wood bench and joinery planes by metal will be the topic of the next “Antique Hand Tools” article. —CW



Figure 3—Typical cabinetmaker’s mortising chisel; note tapered cross section.

References

1. Iles, Ashley. *Memories of a Sheffield Tool Maker*. Apple Valley, MN: Astragal Press, 1993.
2. Kijowski, Gene W., ed. *Directory of American Tool Makers*. Hebron, MD: Early American Industries Association, 1990.



Around the Shop

BOB VAN DYKE
Connecticut

MIKE PEKOVICH'S DOPEY DOVETAIL TRICKS!

“These tricks are really only useful if you are cutting the tails first.”

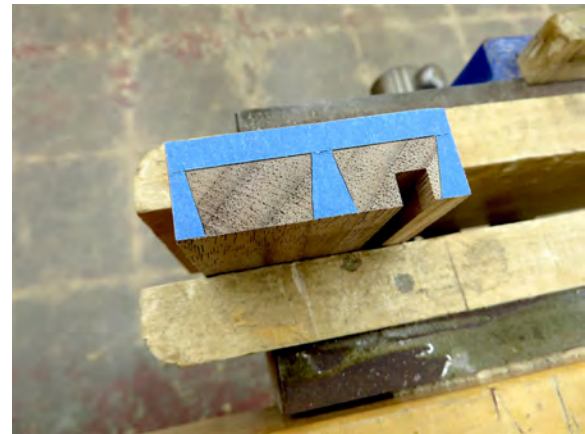
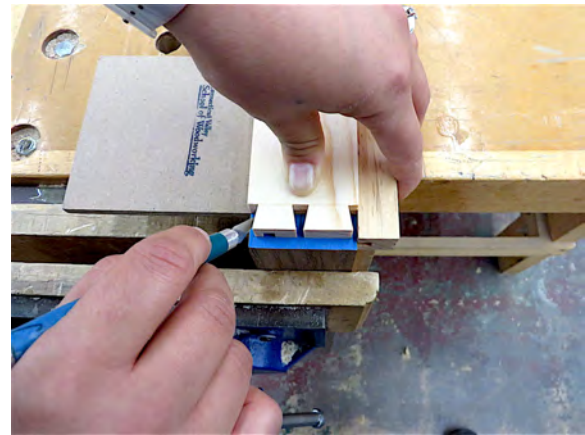
I love giving Mike Pekovich a hard time every time he shows me another trick that he has come up with to make cutting dovetails easier. When he first showed me the blue-tape trick, I shook my head and laughed. After I saw the dovetails that a class full of beginners cut, I stopped laughing and started paying attention!

Mike takes a step back from everyday tasks, thinks about them, and then comes up with a way to make them easier for a beginner to have total success. And you know what? Even if you've been cutting dovetails for years, maybe something here will make the job just a bit easier or better. Keep your eyes (and your mind) open!

The Infamous Blue Tape

Mike had been doing this in classes at my school for a year or two before he published it in *Fine Woodworking* magazine. Will Neptune saw the article and

“What’s up with this blue tape? Is it for real?”



he asked me, “What’s up with this blue tape? Is it for real?” I told him what my first reaction to it had been, but then I told him how beginners were having total success with it. Then I told him to think about laying out pins on the end grain of a ring-porous wood such as walnut or quartersawn white oak. Even if you’ve been cutting dovetails for years, the blue tape on end-grain white oak makes a huge difference!

Use a fine knife, like an Exacto. You’re really only cutting through the blue tape and barely into the wood itself. When you’re cutting your pins, you can actually feel the saw just touching the tape. What you have to pare is obvious—any wood outside of the blue needs to be pared—and don’t cut into the tape!

called me up. Like me, Will knows and respects Mike’s skill and techniques, so

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BOB VAN DYKE, CONNECTICUT VALLEY SCHOOL OF WOODWORKING



Around the Shop

(continued-2)

MIKE PEKOVICH'S DOPEY DOVETAIL TRICKS!

Clamp on a Fake Rabbet

If you are cutting tails first and are using the table saw to do it, then the



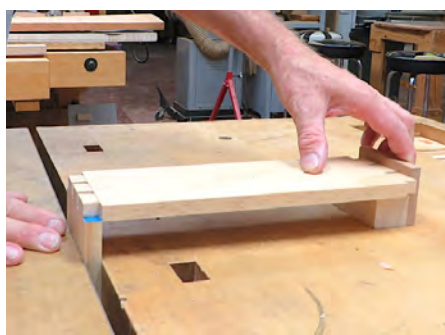
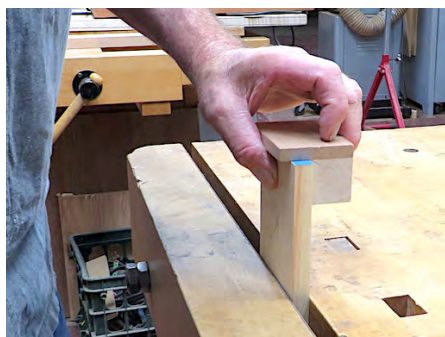
next logical step is to cut a shallow rabbet on the inside face of the tail. That makes it 10 times easier to transfer the tails to the pin board.

Or you can clamp on the "fake rabbet" so it's perfectly flush with the baseline on the tails. Line the "rabbet" up to the face of the pin board and make your transfer. The pine fence aligns the edges of both boards.



If You Cut the Tails First as Mike Usually Does

I learned to hold the pin board even with the side of my #4 hand plane when it was on its side. Tighten the board in



the vise, and slide the plane back. Now rest the other end of the tail board on the side of the hand plane. Some vises are mounted in such a way that this technique does not work so well.

Enter Mike's "flippy block." The pictures are self-explanatory. If you cut the ends of the block square when you make it, then you can also use it as a saddle square! —BVD





Members' Gallery

LUKE ADDINGTON
Arizona

MAHOGANY TRESTLE TABLE

Maker: Luke Addington

Tucson, Arizona

Contact:

Email: addingtonfurniture@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.addingtonfurniture.com>

Description: Trestle Table

Dimensions: 72" L, 30" W 30 H

Wood Species: Primary—African Mahogany,
Honduran Mahogany

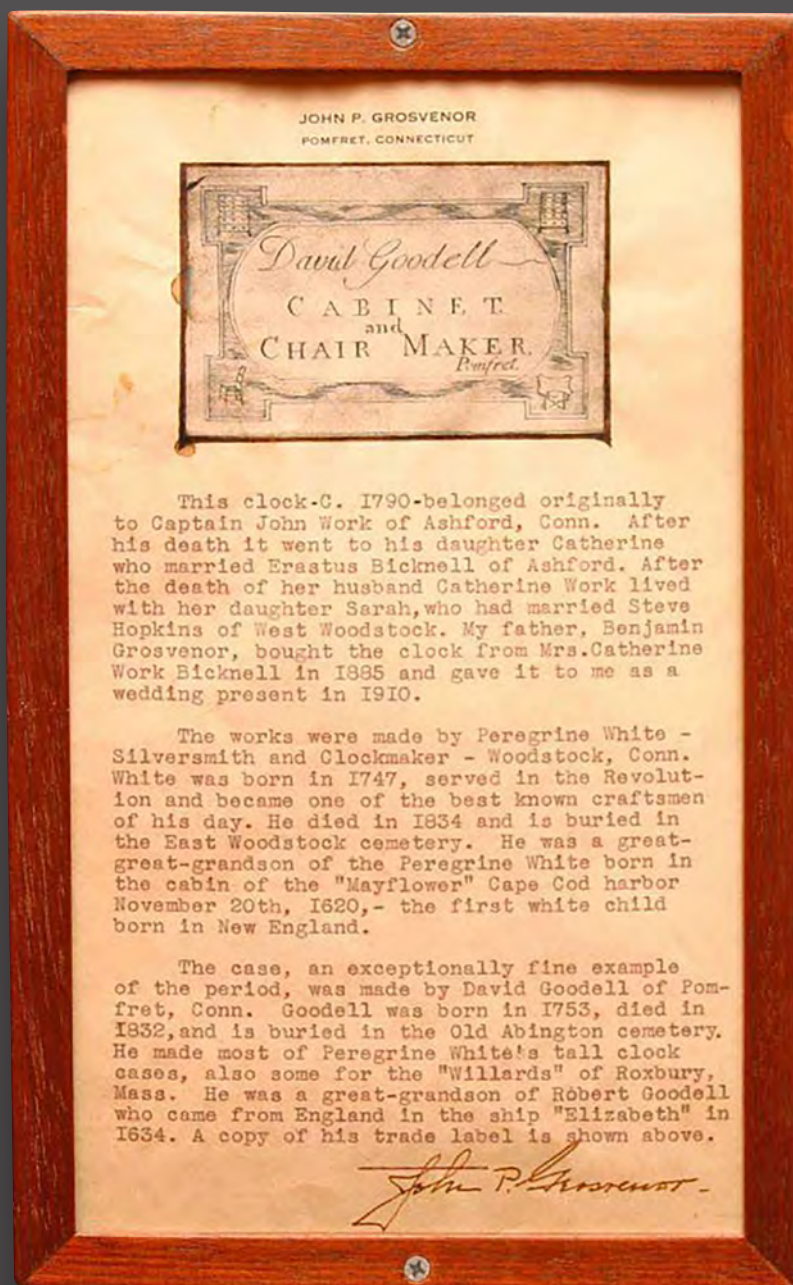
This table was made entirely by hand except for the cove molding. The joinery consists of draw-bored mortise & tenons and through-wedged mortise & tenons. All of the curves and heavy chamfers were made with a spokeshave. A 50° pitch smooth plane left the final surface on all flat areas and the spokeshave for the curved sections. The top is finished with polyurethane and the base with Osmo.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LUKE ADDINGTON



Time for Provenance



MULTIPLE IMAGES OF THIS CLOCK AND ITS PROVENANCE DOCUMENTATION APPEARED ON A "LIVE AUCTION" ONLINE, FOR PUBLIC VIEWING, BY A MASSACHUSETTS DEALER IN 2010.

While searching for information on Pomfret, CT, cabinetmaker David Goodell, the presumed maker of the clock case pictured on our front cover, I came across this provenance document displaying Goodell's trade label—originally found attached inside the door of the important Capt John Work (Ashford, CT) Cherry Chippendale Tall Clock. Goodell also made cases for nearby Woodstock, CT, clockmaker Peregrine White. —BVD